

Ryan Gilbert

Property Bridge

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS

EAST BAY BUSINESS TIMES CONTRIBUTOR

Ryan Gilbert dreams of making paper rent checks - and the landlord's monthly scramble to get them - go the way of the dinosaur.

And the 34-year-old CEO of Oakland's Property Bridge, the company he helped found four years ago with the goal of simplifying financial transactions for property managers and their tenants, is more than just a dreamer. Gilbert makes things happen, and his company's increasing foothold in a new business niche is one sign of his ability to do so.

"I think what we've managed to do, to a large extent, is change the way the industry is run," Gilbert said of his company's technological innovations that allow it to handle more and more of the country's rent transactions electronically.

He knows firsthand the need for a system that will streamline 'rent week,' the time of the month that can give headaches to landlords and tenants alike. Gilbert, a native of South Africa,

Property Bridge

Business: Real estate services
Address: 505 14th St., Suite 900,
Oakland 94612
Phone: 510-550-7211
Web: www.propertybridge.com

was raised in a family that has run a property management company in Johannesburg for decades.

"From a very young age, I realized what rent week was all

about," he said. "Our primary goal is that we deliver many ways for our customers to get paid."

His family background gave him the idea to invent a company like Property Bridge, and his Bay Area technology connections and experience working as a lawyer for Wells Fargo Bank helped give him the tools to put the idea into action and create a company that's rapidly growing. With 25 employees and approximately \$8 million in annual revenues, Property Bridge is slated to double its staff in the next year.

"The difficulty of the challenge, the opportunity, is something that drives me and my partners," Gilbert said. "I'd say we are competitive people and certainly like to win. That's helped us at Property Bridge, as we go into an industry that's very, very old and set in its ways, and propose new ideas and new solutions that we feel will bring about good change."



Stephanie Secret | East Bay Business Times