

**CASE STUDY**

# How Century 21 uses PayProp to master rentals through 2020 and beyond

**An interview with****Harry Nicolaides**CEO,  
Century 21 South Africa**Eva August**National Operations Manager,  
Century 21 South Africa**Savas Nicolaides**Principal Broker,  
Century 21 East Rand Jhb**Gena Felizardo**Regional Manager,  
Century 21 South Africa (East London)

As a well-established global property brand, Century 21 has over 12 000 offices – including 50 franchises in South Africa that stretch from Hoedspruit down to Cape Town.

Like the rest of the industry the company has battled ferociously through the pandemic, but thanks to PayProp's bank integration they could track the live impact of rent arrears on the business throughout.

Together with PayProp's advanced rental payment automation, this data helped provide the decision support for Century 21 to plan an ambitious expansion to 200 franchises.

**National**

South Africa

**900+**

Properties managed

**2012**

PayProp client

## Building business resilience in touch conditions

While 2020 floored many others with COVID-19-related challenges and lockdowns in South Africa and around the world, the Century 21 team was prepared. Thanks to the company’s culture of embracing PropTech innovation, the majority of Century 21 branches had already been using PayProp, some since 2012.

To see how this helped the business throughout 2020, we spoke to some of the biggest rental portfolio managers and the senior leadership team from the South African business.

South African CEO Harry Nicolaides, who is based in the Johannesburg head office, says Century 21 came out of the first lockdown eager and raring to go.



**Importantly, we had the right tools and systems in place to take advantage of the massive upswing that we experienced in market demand.**

As Harry explains, using PayProp across the majority of the network has allowed the company to run its rental business effectively and remain resilient in the face of market dips and rises. Cloud-based automation makes Century 21 more efficient and profitable, Harry says.

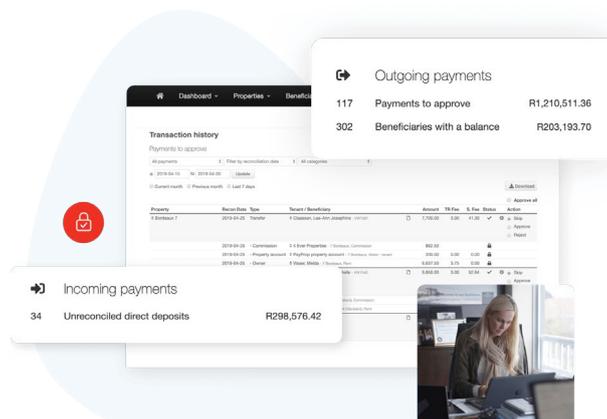
“We are not technical or financial people,” he adds. “We deal with property and therefore want to use the best technology available to make our day-to-day lives easier.”

Harry also emphasises the importance of accurate data when selecting a technology partner.

“We need accurate information that is always available on tap – to be referred back to in case of a dispute or audit.”

### BANK-INTEGRATED

Your client account balances are live and 100% accurate.



## Future-proofing their portfolio

While a long history of success in property sales has carried the 50-year-old brand through other difficult periods, Century 21 has seen a surge in demand for property rentals in recent years. At present, around 60% of its local franchises manage a rental portfolio in addition to sales, operated through a growing network of 420 rental agents.

Eva August, National Operations Manager, explains how Century 21 – like so many of its competitors – has realised the golden opportunity for recurring revenue offered by the rental market, supporting buyers and sellers in the long term.



**We have seen that success in sales comes with success in rentals. There's definitely huge room for growth in our rental business – and my role focuses on supporting this growth through monitoring performance. PayProp's reporting provides me with valuable insights about where we are sitting as a group.**

“PayProp is a life saver if you're interested in building, growing and managing a rental portfolio,” she adds.

“Efficiency is everything as time can kill deals – something I preach a lot at work. I'm always in a rush to get results and PayProp keeps up with my demand for quick and accurate numbers.”

### PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

See your portfolio health at a glance.



Century 21 has also benefited from using digital technology as a selling point when approaching new business prospects. Landlords in particular show significant interest in the platform's security features which protect all aspects of how their money is handled.



**We talk about PayProp during our sales process to reassure landlords that their money is safe and secure – and this includes managing their property deposits. We also see huge benefits in automating payment reminders on our trust account, both of which show our landlords that we are always one step ahead.**

## Immediate impact at all levels

As well as enhancing the productivity of management across the company's franchises, adopting PayProp across the majority of its property rental branches has made a huge difference from day one. The Century 21 office based in East London is just one of many success stories.



**When I started four years ago, it used to take us four days to process payments manually for 57 properties. It was impossible to grow at the same time. We can now manage payments for our current 261 properties as soon as they come in – and have much more time to focus on everything else.**

Aside from the visible timesaving, improved accuracy and smoother running of the office, Gena praises PayProp's ease of use and onboarding process – a crucial part of introducing any new technology.

“It's an easy and user-friendly platform that prompts you throughout. And we could get in touch with the PayProp team as much as we needed until we had everything up and running.”

In her team, some of their most important features include the letters of demand and the daily reports.

“PayProp is everything we expected it to be. Sometimes we look at each other and say we could never do without it.”

Gena also has the unique position of experiencing PayProp from a customer perspective too.

“I personally rent from an agency that uses PayProp, and as a tenant I get the same high level of service and information that we deliver to our clients.”

## Staying connected and informed

As the Century 21 network in South Africa covers such a wide geographical area, both staff and clients have become accustomed to communicating at a distance.

Eva August explains how the company had to pivot at pace and find better ways of connecting that allowed new sales and rentals to continue, even when physical viewings were not taking place.

“As the first lockdown started easing, we found that new systems of connecting would now be a permanent way of working. We’re very grateful that systems like PayProp – which facilitate automation remotely – allow us to continue connecting with clients, whether we can travel to work or not.”



**PayProp is one of the few providers really invested in our success, and always checking in on us. That’s something we appreciate a lot, taking the time to reach out and offer help.**

### PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND TRAINING

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The dashboard displays a 'Transaction history' section with a table of payments to approve. A summary box shows 'Outgoing payments' with 117 payments to approve (R1,210,511.36) and 302 beneficiaries with a balance (R203,193.70). Another summary box shows 'Incoming payments' with 34 unreconciled direct deposits (R298,576.42). A red lock icon is visible on the left. An inset image shows a woman working at a laptop.

Property	Recon Date	Type	Tenant / Beneficiary	Amount	TR Fee	S. Fee	Status	Action
Bordeaux 7	2019-04-25	Transfer	5 Claassen, Lee-Ann Josephine - VW1561	7,700.00	3.00	41.30	✓	Skip Approve Reject
	2019-04-25	- Commission	4 Ever Properties - 7 Bordeaux, Commission	862.50				
	2019-04-25	- Property account	6 PayProp property account - 7 Bordeaux, Water - tenant	200.00	0.00	0.00		
	2019-04-25	- Owner	5 Visser, Melda - 7 Bordeaux, Rent	6,637.50	3.75	0.00		
			6 Belle - VW1540	9,850.00	3.00	52.84	✓	Skip Approve

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