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Meet the founder

Mark Woschnak has been at the forefront of Australian online solutions since the 1990s and today heads up Australia's #1 rental property website

Pioneer. That's the term most suited to rent.com.au CEO Mark Woschnak, who has spearheaded the new era of Australian information management since the uptake of internet and mobile communications in the 1990s.

Today, Perth-based Mark heads up Australia's number one rental property website, is president of the EGroup Association (for online entrepreneurs and owners), he holds a business degree and real estate licence, was previously a 10-year associate of the Australian Property Institute and is regarded as a leader in Australia for the development of emerging and online businesses.

With a strong business management background over a 23-year period, he is also a regular on the media scene, writing for and published in industry publications, such as *SOLD*, *Your Investment Property*, *Australian Property Investor*, *Money Magazine*, *Shares*, *BRW* and *National Accountant*, plus his opinion and expertise has been sought after by national television shows such as *The Money Show*, *Today Tonight* and *A Current Affair*.

"The management style best described for me is a 'visual mathematician' – I have had an ability to both visualise and promote market development, as well as understand the building blocks required and analysis necessary, therefore in most of my business experience I have been pioneering in one way or another, especially with the introduction of SMS and online services in the early 90s," says Mark.

Mark first rose to prominence in the emerging technologies arena when he launched one of Australia's first information, SMS and content services providers – InfoWave – and at the same time launched the first major internet-based real estate portal – RealWeb – in the early/mid 1990s in Sydney.

"It was new uncharted territory. We were pioneers with those environments. We had a smart team of local programmers and had licensed some technology from the US and Canada. Both businesses skyrocketed in development and take up. They were taken up by clients like Vodafone, Link, Macquarie, Bellsouth, Telstra and AMP – it was leading-edge technology," says Mark. "RealWeb was pre-realestate.com.au, so the take up of the real estate solution was also

very exciting. We had many of the major agencies using the services and that was all going well until the technology crash in early 2000. It wasn't the lack of product capability at the time, it was the lack of appetite for technology funding by investors that inhibited our ability to grow to the next phases of development."

Experience from those early days of online real estate solutions saw him launch rent.com.au in 2007 and within four years turn it into what is regarded as Australia's number one rental property website. And the trek to the top has been a strategic one. The Tanzania-born, Perth-schooled innovator has had a targeted 23-year background in property, finance and information services.

Mark was born in Africa and moved to Western Australia at the age of eight. He graduated from Curtin University with a Bachelor of Business with a double major in Marketing and Finance and won three University Course Awards along the way. He moved to Sydney after graduation to take part in a 12-month executive management program with Unisys, which at the time was the largest competitor to IBM, specialising in mainframe and data systems.

"It was my first move into what I thought was really the top of the computing and IT worlds. It was one of the most extensive graduate development programs around at the time," says Mark.

However, he quickly learnt data and hardware weren't for him. He was more interested in solutions. He stepped into property next, becoming the manager of business parks for Baillieu Knight Frank, then moved to AV Jennings for a brief stint before launching into his own agency, becoming a partner in a commercial industrial real estate agency in South Sydney, growing it to become a market leader and taking out an 'Agency of the Year' New South Wales award.

It was then that Mark launched InfoWave and RealWeb. "After the tech crash, I developed an investment property sales, private sale and mortgage brokerage business during 2000 to 2005, and then moved back to Perth in 2006 to focus on the development of rent.com.au."

"The reason why online is exciting is since it started, it represents a whole new environment that challenges the way traditional business is marketed. It wasn't just another new market or another new product, it was a whole new way of doing business – that's what made it exciting," he says.

MEDIA For interviews or more information, contact Anna Flanders 0410 551 048, annapearl@aapt.net.au.

Rent.com.au is Australia's #1 rental property website. It was launched in 2007 as a vertical solution dedicated to the rental property industry. It allows both private landlord and agency rental property listings, so today lists 50-60% of Australia's total rentals. Rent.com.au links renters, landlords and agents, plus provides Australia's first environment for landlords wanting to list a rental property or source quotes from agents in a professional single-form process.

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