

Flow adds behavioural search functionality to proptech platform

By [Sindy Peters](#)

15 Apr 2020

Last year, local proptech company Flow launched with R20m raised in funding. The app, aimed at millennial renters, rewards good tenant behaviour, such as paying their rent on time and looking after their homes. A year on, with over 80,000 users, they've made some unique additions to the platform.

To find out what's new on Flow, and to get their take on proptech developments in SA, we chatted to Gil Sperling, CEO and co-founder of Flow.

Share with us some of the new developments and additions users can expect on the platform?

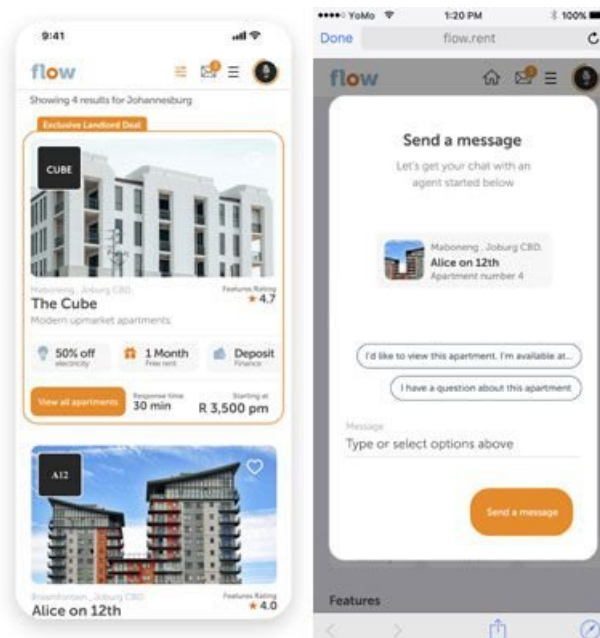
Gil Sperling: The latest iteration of the platform aims to provide a full-stack rental platform for the entire rental property marketplace, from tenants to landlords - and beyond. The arrival of 'behavioural search' within Flow is set to revolutionise the rental property space and make finding the right property even easier and more rewarding for 'Generation Rent'.

While the launch version of Flow gave renters and landlords a taste of the future of rentals in 2019, the 2020 iteration lays the tracks for the full rollout of what we envision for Flow. The behavioural search functionality matches highly profiled renters with the right properties and gives landlords the tools to retain good tenants.

The 'real-time' functionality removes the need for phone calls in the rental-hunting market – the properties a would-be tenant sees are available, in real-time, and the platform's functionality allows them to instantly connect with landlords for a quick turn-around on viewings and sealing the deal. The matching process maximises efficiency for landlords too, with up-to-date listings of their 'unsold inventory' constantly being served to the right rental candidates.



Gil Sperling, CEO and co-founder of Flow



■ ***Have you seen greater innovation taking place recently in the property rental space in SA and Africa?***

Gil Sperling: The property industry, locally and globally, is one of the least progressed verticals technologically, making it an industry ripe for disruption and innovation. It is also the most valuable asset class in the world and therefore holds the most value to be unlocked.

There's also a massive paradigm shift in how people should rent, which is inspired and driven by their lifestyle choices, and is something proptech could and should leverage big time. People are used to being connected all the time and transacting digitally, in real-time; and they want transparency in their dealings with companies (including their landlords). These are some of the key factors that inspired the creation of Flow. Through scaling with technology and economies of scale, we can revolutionise the economics of rent, providing a more seamless, end-to-end experience and unlock value to tenants and landlords.

That all said, the proptech scene in SA is very active and there are a lot of players operating here. What makes Flow stand out is that we are rental only and tenant facing.

■ ***Who are the other players in the local proptech scene that you admire?***

Gil Sperling: I would have to say PayProp because they created something in SA that is applicable to the global market (they've managed to scale globally in the UK and US).



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■ ***What are some of the current trends in millennial property renting?***

Gil Sperling: People are looking for short-term rentals with flexible leases, and special deals for moving in (from deposit finance to first month rent free etc.) – which ultimately makes renting cheaper for them.

■ ***With Gen Z joining the workforce and gaining greater influence over the next 5-10 years, how will Flow's strategy respond to this? How does the market in general need to respond?***

Gil Sperling: The big thing is that they'll be a rental generation, renting for longer than previous generations. The value that you were to normally find in the home buying market now needs to be unlocked within the rental space. Our vision for Flow is to be the household brand for rent; and for tenants and landlords to have the most seamless end-to-end experience for renting and living - which impacts their life and gets them into flow.

We're a platform approach to drive innovation within the proptech space – we're not looking to disintermediate anyone. Our focus is on putting things together in an optimal way using technology, which will provide the most innovation and value for everyone overall.



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■ ***Proptech has the potential to overhaul the entire property rental industry. Any advice for current local players?***

Gil Sperling: Recognise the opportunities that proptech can deliver in augmenting the current property market; not disrupting, but rather on improving it. Current local players should not be looking to disintermediate anyone, but rather, to

work together to find innovative and valuable solutions.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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