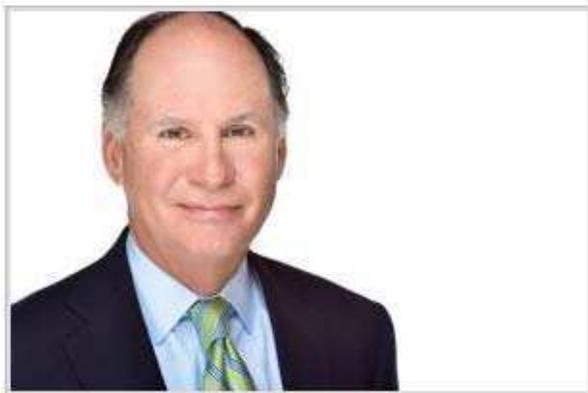


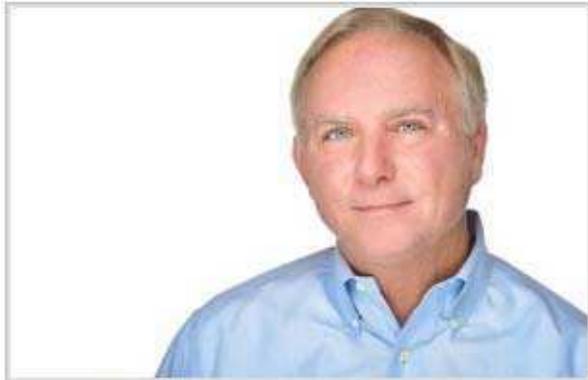


Powered by industry vets, St. Louis' Selequity ready to make its mark in real estate crowdfunding arena

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Mark Burkhart



AJ Chivetta

There's a reason why real estate crowdfunding platforms generate so much attention: Real estate is a proven investment. And until recently, it was out of the reach of most investors.

That is changing. St. Louis-based Selequity is the latest example.

The founders of this newest commercial real estate crowdfunding platform debuted Selequity in May during the TechCrunch Disrupt conference in New York City. Selequity is the first CRE crowdfunding company to participate in the tech conference's Startup Battlefield, where about 30 new companies competed before venture capitalists for the Disrupt Cup and a \$50,000 prize.

Selequity didn't win this prize. But the founders of the company — AJ Chivetta, Selequity's chief executive officer, and Mark Burkhart, a founding partner — said that the fact that Selequity was chosen to compete proves that CRE crowdfunding is an important tool today.

"Investors are looking for new ways to invest their money," said Burkhart, former chief executive officer of Cassidy Turley. "They aren't satisfied by just investing in the stock market, bonds or traditional investment vehicles. This allows them to invest in commercial real estate. Before, they many investors didn't have that opportunity."

Here's how Selequity works: It's an online platform connecting accredited investors to professionally operated, private real estate investment deals. Several investors can pool their money together to own portions of these commercial real estate properties.

The owners of these buildings can provide documents and building information to accredited investors through the online platform, giving these investors the tools they need to make educated investment decisions. Once they have invested their dollars, investors can then use Selequity's online tools to manage the performance of their commercial real estate investments.

"There is a pent-up demand for alternative investments," Chivetta said. "This is especially true for investments in real estate, which over time have proven to be very solid investments. It has been very hard for people to access this investment opportunity. Now, through crowdfunding, commercial real estate investments can be open to so many new individuals."

The team behind Selequity has plenty of experience in commercial real estate. Team members worked together at the former Cassidy Turley, building that company into the national firm that today operates as DTZ.

In addition to Burkhart and Chivetta — who, as a partner with the St. Louis office of law firm Armstrong Teasdale, was a member of Cassidy Turley's legal team — the founders of Selequity include Bill Florent, former chief financial officer of Cassidy Turley, and Maria Desloge, also of Armstrong Teasdale.

Together, these founders managed more than \$100 billion in real estate transaction volume and led more than 4,000 real estate professionals in 60 offices across the country.

Parker Condie, president of Coin Acceptors, Inc., a point-of-sale technology company, is also a founding member of Selequity.

"Our team has been together for a long time," Chivetta said. "To succeed in real estate crowdfunding, you need to understand the investor side and the operator side. We do. We know how deals are put together. If you track the history we all had with Cassidy Turley, you know that we were diligent about the kinds of properties and real estate we wanted to be associated with. We are still diligent about that."

Burkhart said that Selequity is ready to offer its first commercial property to investors through its online crowdfunding platform. The company will announce this property sometime this summer, Burkhart said. Tags | AJ Chivetta, crowdfunding, Mark Burkhart, Missouri, Selequity, St. Louis