Started as a development firm in 1973, Orchard Commercial has grown into one of Silicon Valley’s most successful property management companies.

“Quality and integrity are the hallmarks of the company,” says Joe Lewis, President of Orchard Commercial. “Over time, we have developed a much more service-oriented company. We mostly manage properties for financial institutions, such as Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan, Wells Fargo, ING and Prudential. We have about 30 clients; 20 of those are institutional in nature, and the others are smaller, high net-worth individuals.”

Focusing exclusively on commercial properties, Orchard Commercial manages research and development, office warehouse and industrial space in California’s Silicon Valley region, with 10 million square feet in 185 buildings with 500 tenants. Over the years, the company has protected and grown real estate investments in addition to providing tenants with superior service. Covering all facets of the business, Orchard also offers accounting, construction, mechanical, maintenance, leasing and marketing services. To do all this, the company has auxiliary businesses that support the property management organization, including Orchard Construction and Orchard Services.

“Orchard employs about 80 team members,” Lewis says. “About 40 are in-house and 40 of them work out in the field.”

**ONE STOP SHOP**

As an organization, Orchard believes that its variety of in-house services makes it a much stronger and more desirable company. Instead of adding time
to the lease negotiations by seeking answers to tenant questions, Orchard has the knowledge and capabilities to meet their needs quickly.

“In our view, those are the critical components of operating a commercial property,” Lewis says. “In every lease deal that is made, there is some tenant improvement and there is some construction that goes on. We are able to know how best to satisfy that need; what that is going to cost, how quickly we can get that done and what the best way is to design that.”

The company’s in-house team exudes expertise in space planning, design and construction, which means that it can work closely with clients and be upfront with costs during the lease negotiation process.

“Because of our ‘one-stop shop’ and in-house team of experts we can expedite the transaction process,” Lewis says. “Our clients gain confidence in us because time is always of the essence.”

Lewis opines that timeliness is of great importance in Silicon Valley, and Orchard’s business model has been specifically designed to expedite deals.

“The Silicon Valley is a fast-moving place,” he says. “We’re engaging people’s wish lists, bringing their expectations to light, and then getting it done for them. If you sign a lease with us, our clients know that we are going to deliver the space on time as promised, and they’ll know the people who are going to do the work. That really matters.”

Orchard Commercial has received a number of awards throughout the years, including being named the 2010 Property Management Firm of the Year by the Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal. Serving both as a motivator for future success, the company’s accolades also reinforce its quality work.

“Property management and operating is only fun if you really do it well,” Lewis says. “We often say to ourselves that our job is to make the world a better place. We have 500 tenants and how we take care of those folks has quite a bit to do with how well their lives go. Striving to be the best is really fun.”

The firm also prides itself on its ability to match the experience provided by the industry’s top organizations.

“We compete with the largest real estate companies in the world,” Lewis says. “We are a regional firm. We personally know all of these buildings. I’ve been to all of these buildings. We are very engaged, and that’s what really matters.”

The team at Orchard Commercial also believes strongly in supporting and giving back to the community in which it works. The firm contributes 10 percent of its net income to the Orchard Commercial Foundation, which supports a number of local charities, organizations and institutions.

“There is incredible wealth in commercial real estate,” Lewis says. “Meanwhile, there are other people in our community who are really struggling with housing and other things. It has always seemed to us that a big part of good business is giving a portion of what we make away in a way that will make a real difference.”

As Orchard Commercial looks to the future, Lewis says the firm plans to continue to grow and improve.

“We really want to be bigger and better,” he says. “Our goal is to provide the best service possible and grow to be the largest commercial operating firm in the Silicon Valley. I think that we offer a valuable service with excellent people in a very unique hands-on approach.”