

Sage 300 ERP and Sage CRM enable Island Lake Resort to grow despite stiff competition



Customer

Island Lake Resort Group

Industry

Hospitality and Restaurant

Location

Canada

Solution

Sage CRM &
Sage 300 ERP

The Island Lake Resort Group offers wilderness adventures, such as Cat skiing and heliskiing in the Canadian Rockies. Founded 20 years ago by three locals, the Group now boasts 230 employees and five companies that include restaurants and three resorts: Island Lake Lodge, Powder Cowboy, and Mica Heliskiing.

“Over the past ten years,” said Darryn Shewchuk, Director of Sales and Marketing, “The number of back-country adventure operations in the Canadian Rockies—which comprise more than 90 per cent of the worldwide market—has tripled. Yet skier days have remained constant. This means the environment is much more competitive.” To grow, the Group wanted an enterprisewide CRM system that would enable it to improve its marketing. In addition, after many years successfully using Sage Simply Accounting, the Group wanted to move to an enterprise-class accounting system that could accommodate its expanding operations.

“We chose Sage 300 ERP and Sage CRM,” explained Shewchuk, “because they allowed us to not only integrate accounting and CRM data but also data from our third-party point-of-sale and reservation systems. This gives us complete information about customers and prospects for all of our companies. These applications are web based, which is important because we travel constantly and need access. They’re scalable, enterprise products that can handle our growth. And they’re fully customizable.”

“Previously, we had no follow through. Sage CRM allows us to be more structured in organizing and managing our campaigns.”

Darryn Shewchuk,
Director of Sales and Marketing
Island Lake Resort Group

Challenge

In an ever increasing competitive market, Island Lake Resort Group needed a CRM solution that would help them to market more effectively to remain profitable - and grow. They required a customizable system that would allow for data from reservation and point-of-sale systems.

Solution

The Group migrated from Sage Simply Accounting to Sage 300 ERP for enterprise-class accounting and Sage CRM from a competitive CRM product. Sage CRM provides comprehensive information about customers and

prospects’ - enabling the Group to more effectively market its tours - and integrates with Sage 300 ERP as well as third-party POS and reservations systems.

Results

Sage CRM enables the Group to maintain and grow profitability despite intense competition, by giving the Group a huge competitive advantage. Bookings have increased by as much as 50 per cent every year since implementation. Sage 300 ERP has allowed it to manage this growth.

“Sage CRM allows us to contact a huge number of people likely to be interested and offer them a last-minute discount, which is better than having an empty seat. We can also slice and dice our customer data to create targeted marketing campaigns that appeal to different demographics.”

Darryn Shewchuk,
Director of Sales and Marketing
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Sage 300 ERP manages growth

The move from Sage Simply Accounting to Sage 300 ERP has enabled the Group to manage rapid growth. The Sage 300 ERP database is powerful enough to handle all of the Group's customer records. Because all of the applications share data, duplicate data entry has been eliminated. Accounting data from all the resorts and restaurants can now be consolidated or used to create detailed reports and financial statements for each company and department. Bonnie Pelletier said, “Because we no longer create these reports manually, we've saved two or three days each month.”

The system's web-based implementation also enables the accounting department to better meet the needs of different businesses. For example, said Pelletier, “Because I'm the only one qualified to oversee accounting, we previously had to do all our accounting in one physical location. However, one operation wanted to pay its bills onsite. Now, Sage 300 ERP makes all of this information available through the web so I can oversee that operation online.”

Sage CRM propels growth

Sage CRM enables the Group to maintain profitability and grow quickly despite intense competition.

As with airline tickets, seats on a Cat skiing or heliskiing tour are perishable. For example, on any given day, a heliskiing tour can accommodate four groups of four people. If one seat is empty, that helicopter loses 25 per cent of its revenue—and all of its profit. Therefore it is essential for the company to keep tours full. The Group uses Sage CRM to manage this effort.

The first step is finding the limited pool of people interested in Cat skiing or heliskiing, which costs \$600 to \$2,000 per day. The obvious place to start is existing customers. Shewchuk said, “Previously, we had no database of customers that everyone could access. Information about existing customers was sitting on waiver forms in boxes, and we did nothing proactive with them. I used a personal CRM product to keep track of guests in one of our operations, but we couldn't expand it to multiple

users and multiple locations. Now we have a complete database everyone can access that contains 6,000 existing and 25,000 potential customers.”

About the newer Powder Cowboy and Mica Heliguides operations Shewchuk said, “We didn't have existing customers so we had to be proactive about getting new ones. We ran contests to get the names and contact information of people interested in Cat skiing and heliskiing, then used Sage CRM to store these leads in our database.”

With this customer and prospect database in place, the group now uses Sage CRM to manage email marketing campaigns to keep seats full. Shewchuk said, “Sage CRM allows us to contact a huge number of people likely to be interested and offer them a last-minute discount, which is better than having an empty seat. We can also slice and dice our customer data to create targeted marketing campaigns that appeal to different demographics.”

When these campaigns are completed, Sage CRM tracks results and can be used to set up tasks to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. Shewchuk said, “Previously, we had no follow through. Sage CRM allows us to be more structured in organizing and managing our campaigns.”

When guests call in to make a reservation, clerks using the reservation system make use of the common database to better serve them. For example, they can see whether the guest has skied before or is a regular customer—not to mention whether the guest has a balance owing.

The use of Sage CRM has helped increase business substantially at the expense of the competition. From 2006 to 2007, bookings increased nearly 10 per cent for Island Lake Resort, which was already fully booked most of the time; 30 per cent for Powder Cowboy; and 50 per cent for Mica Heliskiing. Plus, business is on pace to continue this trend in the coming season. “Using Sage CRM has given us a huge competitive advantage,” said Shewchuk.

About Sage CRM

Over 14,000 small and medium sized companies across the globe use Sage CRM every day to accelerate sales, drive business productivity and make every customer interaction count. It is used by enterprising, growing companies seeking new ways to interact with customers, leverage the power of social media and take advantage of the latest mobile developments to further grow their business. When combined with Sage ERP, our customers enjoy better business insight, increased efficiencies and productivity, and gain a single, customer-centric view across their entire business. So whether you're just starting out or have already grown to several hundred employees, Sage CRM can help accelerate your business success.

Accelerate your business success with a free 30-day trial at www.sagecrm.com

