

Sage ERP Accpac and SageCRM Enable Island Lake Resort to Grow Despite Stiff Competition

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% 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 ERP Accpac and SageCRM,” 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.”

Sage ERP Accpac Manages Growth

The move from Sage Simply Accounting to Sage ERP Accpac has enabled the Group to manage rapid growth. The Sage ERP Accpac 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. Said Bonnie Pelletier, controller, “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

Customer

Island Lake Resort Group

Industry

Hospitality and Restaurant

Location

British Columbia, Canada

Number of Locations:

Three

Number of Employees:

230

System

Sage ERP Accpac
SageCRM



Challenge

Over the past ten years, competition in back-country adventure skiing operations has tripled while the number of skiers has remained constant. Island Lake Resort Group needed to market more effectively to remain profitable—and grow.

Solution

The Group migrated from Sage Simply Accounting to Sage ERP Accpac for enterprise-class accounting and SageCRM from a competitive CRM product. SageCRM provides comprehensive data about customers and prospects—enabling the Group to more effectively market its tours—and integrates with Sage ERP Accpac as well as third-party POS and reservations systems.

Results

SageCRM has given the Group a huge competitive advantage. Bookings have increased by as much as 50% year-over-year since implementation. Sage ERP Accpac has allowed it to manage this growth.

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 ERP Accpac makes all of this information available through the web so I can oversee that operation online.”

SageCRM Propels Growth

SageCRM 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% of its revenue—and all of its profit. Therefore it is essential for the company to keep tours full. The Group uses SageCRM 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. “However,” said Shewchuk, “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.”

For the newer Powder Cowboy and Mica Heliguides operations, said Shewchuk, “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 SageCRM to store these leads in our database.”

With this customer and prospect database in place, the group now uses SageCRM to manage email marketing campaigns to keep seats full. Explained Shewchuk, “SageCRM 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.”

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Director of Sales and Marketing
Island Lake Resort Group

When these campaigns are completed, SageCRM tracks results and can be used to set up tasks to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. Said Shewchuk, “Previously, we had no follow through. SageCRM 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 SageCRM has helped increase business substantially at the expense of the competition. From 2006 to 2007, bookings increased nearly 10% for Island Lake Resort, which was already fully booked most of the time; 30% for Powder Cowboy; and 50% for Mica Heliskiing. Plus, business is on pace to continue this trend in the coming season. “Using SageCRM has given us a huge competitive advantage,” said Shewchuk.

About Sage North America

Sage North America is part of The Sage Group plc, a leading global supplier of business management software and services. Sage North America employs 4,000 people and supports 3.2 million small and mid-sized business customers. The Sage Group plc, formed in 1981, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1989 and now employs 13,400 people and supports 6.3 million customers worldwide. For more information, please visit the website at www.SageNorthAmerica.com.