

Hotel Concepts' IDPMS Increases Revenue and Promotes Growth for Coast Hotels & Resorts



In today's hospitality industry, technology is as much a part of the guest experience as a mint on the pillow. So, when the management team at Coast Hotels & Resorts, a Vancouver-based boutique chain, decided to enhance the guest experience, they identified having a uniform technology platform throughout their corporate-owned and franchised properties as a critical component in their long-term strategic plan.

At the time, Coast Hotels had 35 properties scattered throughout Canada and the western United States; including British Columbia, Alberta, Northwest Territories, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California and Hawaii. Strapped with legacy systems in their Central Reservation Office, Coast was looking to remove the many limitations and inefficiencies that existed throughout their operations. Guided by the vision to revitalize the guest experience at every touchpoint, Coast focused their efforts on the seamless integration of their call center reservations, online reservations, front desk operations, and Coast Rewards program, as well as corporate and group sales. Additionally, Coast wanted to deliver a technology solution to their operations staff that would help make their jobs easier, complimenting an already proven Coast Hotels & Resorts service-oriented culture.

Today, Coast is enjoying the benefits of a complete technology overhaul, having installed the Hotel Concepts' IDPMS product suite including IDCRS for central reservations, IDPMS Front Office for property operations and the Customer Web Interface (CWI) for online reservations with guest profile management.

"Hotel Concepts brought a partnership approach to providing technology," said Tracy Gaudette, director of reservation services at Coast Hotels & Resorts. "They listened, became involved and took ownership of the results, which made us very comfortable that they knew and cared about making our company better. That confidence made working with Hotel Concepts a great experience."

To bring about the transition, Coast relied on Hyphen Information Systems, a Vancouver-based, internationally recognized consultant in the hospitality industry. Due to prior experience with Coast, Hyphen was well positioned to help translate their big ideas into a plan of action for the evaluation, selection and implementation of the new technology.

Neil Holm, president of Hyphen recalls, "Our role as consultant was to focus on the best CRS and PMS software solution available that fit Coast's core business of creating a better experience for their guests. Because of our familiarity with the existing Coast technology environment and our understanding of what their operational demands were going to be in the future, we were confident in our recommendation of Hotel Concepts' IDPMS."

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"Hotel Concepts **proved we were correct** in our judging criteria"

-Tracy Gaudette,
Director of Reservation Services
for Coast Hotels & Resorts

The process involved 18 months of due diligence, reviewing RFPs from 15 PMS system providers before whittling that list down to five potential prospects. Together, Coast and Hyphen identified the following as the critical components for the success of the project: a centrally-hosted and integrated solution with single image inventory; a direct connection to the Global Distribution System with efficient channel management; the ability to enhance the Coast Rewards Guest program; a operator-friendly interface; a reliable data source for central reporting; and a positive track record for support.

"We felt Hotel Concepts was the only prospect that could deliver on every criteria, resulting in a faster and more efficient reservation process and ensuring the maximum number of rooms are sold each night at the best rates," stated Gaudette.

The Hotel Concepts solution was initially rolled out at 10 Coast locations in western Canada beginning in February 2006, with the final installation of the \$1.5 million contract in July 2007, at one of Coast's United States properties. Currently, more than 26 properties are operating with the Hotel Concepts PMS system and the chain has grown with the CRO handling over 40 locations.

"Hotel Concepts proved we were correct in our judging criteria," continued Gaudette.
"The year-over-year reservations statistics speak for themselves."

Erik Weller, chief operating officer of Hotel Concepts recalls, "Coast's requirements fit so well with our leading-edge approach to technology that we knew, if chosen, we would provide them with an unmatched platform for growth. Being able to provide Coast with a direct link to Pegasus' UltraSwitch interface lends tremendous value to their brand and demonstrates the technical capacity of Hotel Concepts."

The expected results have been achieved with significant improvement to operations and to Coast's bottom-line: a call center voice conversion rate of 45 percent, up 1 percent year-over-year; a 10 percent increase of online reservations chain-wide from 2007 to 2008; Canadian property online revenue has increased 33 percent year-over-year; and chain-wide increased online revenues of 65 percent year-over-year. These advances are in part due to the IDPMS product suite providing users with a single-image inventory, offering convenient features such as direct online booking, last room availability, designated corporate rates, sold-out referrals to sister properties, and guest account management for frequent stay programs. Guests love the simple booking procedures both through the CRO and online, and with the same confirmation number for both CRS and PMS, confusion at check-in has been eliminated.

"We worked through each step in close cooperation with Coast, who turned out to be a very pleasant and professional partner," said Weller. "Since Hotel Concepts was able to convert large portions of the legacy data, the switch over was very smooth. Today, we can switch out a Coast PMS system in under two weeks and leave behind happy and well-trained people who use the system to its fullest potential. The Coast challenge turned into a success story for all concerned."



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