



TOURISM WHISTLER

Overview

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Travel and Tourism/Not-for-Profit

Customer Profile

Tourism Whistler is the official marketing body for Whistler, British Columbia, Canada, representing more than 7,000 members who own, manage, and operate properties or businesses on resort lands.

Business Situation

Tourism Whistler experienced difficulties tracking contacts and suffered from having too many databases, which made critical marketing and membership information difficult to find and share.

Solution

Working with its partner, Ascentium Corporation, Tourism Whistler implemented Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM, which helps its approximately 60 users better share information, save time, and improve productivity.

Benefits

- Easier access to information
- Tight integration with other technologies
- Improved technology adoption
- Rapid customization

Association Uses CRM Solution to Prepare for 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

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Karen Playfair, Director of Finance, Tourism Whistler

Tourism Whistler is the official marketing body for Whistler, British Columbia, Canada, representing more than 7,000 members who own, manage, and operate properties or businesses on resort lands. An old contact management system made it difficult for Tourism Whistler to track its key marketing and property contacts efficiently. The problem was exacerbated by the organization’s many outdated databases, which made information even more difficult to find and share. Working with Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Ascentium Corporation, Tourism Whistler deployed Microsoft CRM and integrated it with Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003. With its recent upgrade to Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM 3.0, Tourism Whistler benefits from seamless information sharing across the organization and gains higher user adoption.

“We’re much happier with Microsoft CRM.”

Karen Playfair, Director of Finance, Tourism Whistler

Situation

Located approximately 75 miles north of Vancouver, British Columbia, Whistler is a bustling tourist destination for skiers, hikers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. Along with Vancouver, it is the co-host of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The task of attracting visitors to the ski hills, walking paths, and shops—and filling the resort’s 115 hotels, condos, and bed and breakfasts—falls to Tourism Whistler, a marketing body established in 1979 by the provincial government. Tourism Whistler represents more than 7,000 members who own, manage, and operate properties or businesses on resort lands, including hotels, restaurants, activity operators, and retail shops.

“In the marketing and sales business, we live and die by our contacts,” explains Karen Playfair, Director of Finance for Tourism Whistler. Unfortunately, Tourism Whistler’s 10-year-old contact management system couldn’t efficiently track those contacts. In addition, the organization suffered from having too many databases—somewhere between 10 and 15 by Playfair’s count—which made critical marketing and membership information hard to find and share. “As you can imagine, there was a great deal of duplication and a lot of trouble managing those various databases,” Playfair says. In addition, because of their advancing age, she says that the databases often became corrupt and were increasingly difficult and costly to maintain.

Solution

At Tourism Whistler, people were clamoring for a new solution. “We reached a critical point where our employees said, ‘Hey, get us something. Either update the Maximizer or get us a new system!’” Playfair says. So the association began evaluating several solutions, including Microsoft Dynamics™ CRM. “We looked to Microsoft CRM because

we’re basically a Microsoft® shop,” Playfair says. “All our tools are Microsoft, and our financial system is Microsoft Dynamics GP. That’s the environment we work in.”

Tourism Whistler narrowed its list of candidates to two solutions, and then chose Microsoft CRM, in part because of its integration with the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 messaging and collaboration client. “One of the things that really attracted us to Microsoft CRM is that, combined with Microsoft Outlook, it’s just like one product,” Playfair says. “In anything else, you’d be duplicating efforts in two separate products.” Another consideration that weighed in favor of Microsoft CRM was the partner organization that would be deploying the CRM solution. “We really wanted to work with a partner that was just that: a partner,” Playfair says. “We wanted someone who could provide a solution, not just sell us software. That’s what we found in Ascentium Corporation.”

Based in Bellevue, Washington, Ascentium is an integrated business, marketing, and technology consultancy and a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner. Ascentium provided Tourism Whistler with a range of services for its Microsoft CRM deployment, including implementation, data migration, and training. Perhaps equally important, according to David Kohar, Ascentium CRM Practice Director, the consulting company helped Tourism Whistler think through and establish processes for using Microsoft CRM to improve its communications with key constituencies.

Benefits

Tourism Whistler initially deployed Microsoft CRM 1.2 and recently upgraded to Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0, which provides a wealth of benefits. “Tourism Whistler can now better profile their constituents and provide them more timely and effective communications

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For more information about Tourism Whistler products and services, call (888) 869-2777 or visit the Web site at: www.tourismwhistler.com

that are aligned with their interests,” Kohar says. There are also the following other benefits.

Easier Access to Information

In the past, information about contacts, properties, and property ownership was spread among various databases, making it difficult and time-consuming to find, access, and use. With Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0, the same information is readily available to all Tourism Whistler employees, which makes tracking contacts a breeze. That, in turn, is helping the organization successfully showcase Whistler as part of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Tight Integration with Other Technologies

Its previous contact management system wasn't well integrated with the association's other technologies, often leading to inefficiencies. The tight integration between Microsoft CRM and Outlook means that both systems work almost as one—helping Tourism Whistler save time and increase productivity.

Improved Technology Adoption

Unlike the previous system, which suffered from low user adoption, Microsoft CRM has been readily embraced by the 60 system users at Tourism Whistler. Even employees who did not have experience working with a CRM system have been eager to use it. “There are a lot of people who are saying, ‘Wow, this is great. I can track things I couldn't before,’” Playfair says. “We're much happier with Microsoft CRM.”

Microsoft Dynamics

Microsoft Dynamics is a line of integrated, adaptable business management solutions that enables you and your people to make business decisions with greater confidence. Microsoft Dynamics works like familiar Microsoft software such as Microsoft Office, which means less of a learning curve for your people, so they can get up and running quickly and focus on what's most important. And because it is from Microsoft, it easily works with the systems your company already has implemented. By automating and streamlining financial, customer relationship and supply chain processes, Microsoft Dynamics brings together people, processes and technologies, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of your business, and helping you drive business success.

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to: www.microsoft.com/dynamics

Software and Services

- Microsoft Dynamics
 - Microsoft Dynamics GP
 - Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2003

Partner

- Ascentium Corporation

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