

CRM Case Study – from WiredContact
Prestige Resorts
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Prestige Resorts Connects with WiredContact Enterprise for CRM

Founded in 1982, Prestige Resorts & Destinations is a single source connection to the hospitality industry, providing superior representation and advisory services to meeting professionals around the world. Prestige acts as a total site selection resource by connecting meeting and event planners to a global network of high quality resorts, hotels, destination management companies (DMCs). In addition, the company represents a select group of member properties. As a result, meeting planners enjoy turn-key site selection and preferred pricing for the best-known hospitality brands in the world, including The Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons and Fairmont, as well as a collection of four- and five-star independent luxury hotels.

Supported by 15 administrative and management employees, Prestige's 30 sales partners provide meeting planners with complete site selection services, including contacting properties, generating proposals and preparing comprehensive property comparisons to assist with the decision-making process. In addition, Prestige's sales partners function as an extended sales team for Prestige's member DMCs, hotels and resorts.

According to Tori Trobak, Director of Administration, Prestige's success is directly related to the quality of the relationships it maintains. "Our business is all about connecting meeting planners with the hotels, resorts, and DMCs – which means our business is all about relationships," she said. "That's why a customer relationship management system is a critical part of our company's infrastructure."

The Challenge

Since 2004, Prestige was using WiredContact for ACT!, a web-based system that used ACT! as its database engine. While the system was easy to use, Prestige had customization and relationship management needs that the ACT!-based system couldn't address.

For example, Prestige needed to track and report on the sources of the leads it sent to its member hotels and DMCs, which the former system couldn't support. Prestige also wanted to customize templates for its diverse customer base, so that an independent hotel or resort could be represented differently than a global hotel chain.

In addition, Prestige relied on an external ACT! reseller for system changes and overall support. "If we had a problem and our reseller happened to be busy, it might take days for the problem to be resolved," said Trobak. "Needless to say, this was a great source of frustration for the sales team as well as management. It was clear that something had to change."

The Solution

Prestige began searching for a CRM system in February 2008. The company initially selected Entellium, which promised the level of customization that the company wanted. After several months, however, it became clear that the system wasn't as flexible as initially expected. Prestige halted the conversion process and the team restarted its search. This time, they reached out to WiredContact and were delighted to learn about WiredContact Enterprise. WiredContact Enterprise is a flexible, affordable CRM web-based solution that offers powerful CRM capabilities previously exclusive to higher-end, more expensive solutions.

According to Trobak, it quickly became clear that WiredContact Enterprise not only offered robust, easy-to-use CRM features, but also the level of customization that Prestige needed. "The WiredContact team understood our company's needs and showed us how the tool could be tailored for our business," she said. "We were very impressed."

The company also evaluated Salesforce.com, but negated it quickly based on cost and implementation. "WiredContact Enterprise was definitely more affordable than Salesforce.com," said Trobak. "In fact, based on our analysis, over a three-year period WiredContact Enterprise will cost Prestige approximately 35% less than Salesforce.com." Another key benefit was the ease of transition, since WiredContact Enterprise has a built-in conversion utility to transfer all of the information from ACT! into a new relational database.

In addition to affordability and ease of implementation, WiredContact now offered hosting services, in addition to the self-hosting option. "We don't have an IT department, so the fact that WiredContact would host and maintain the system was a definite plus for us," explained Trobak. Given these benefits, Prestige selected WiredContact Enterprise as its CRM platform.

The Benefits

Working closely with the WiredContact team, Prestige began the conversion and customization process in February 2009 and went live in March. Because the users were already familiar with the earlier version of the product, training was easy. "A group of us went through training at WiredContact, developed a sales manual, and sent it out to the field," says Trobak. "Most of the sales team members were able to complete the training in a couple of hours, so they were up and running in no time."

The team began to see the benefits of customization almost immediately, particularly in the area of lead management. For example, a sales person typically sources 10 or more hotels for a customer. These leads are recorded in the WiredContact system, sent out to member and non-member hotels, and tracked through the evaluation, selection and contract process. "Having this information at their fingertips makes it faster and easier for our sales team to meet the needs of their various customers, whether it's an event planner,

hotel, resort or DMC,” said Trobak. “In fact, with the customization that WiredContact enables, we’ve been able to cut the time it takes our sales partners and managers to enter sales opportunities by 50%.”

Reporting is another area that has been transformed by Wired Contact Enterprise “With our old system, if I wanted a particular list of customers or properties, I had to request it from our reseller,” Trobak said. “Now I can easily run a lookup and find the information I need. That’s saved me countless hours – and headaches.”

Another new feature that the team appreciates is the expanded lookup function. In the past, users had to enter exact search terms to get the record they needed. Now, they can find records using “contains”, “starts with,” and “greater than” and similar terms, which greatly streamlines the search process. “When you have hundreds of Ritz-Carlton contacts in your database, it’s impossible to remember what the exact name of a particular hotel is,” said Trobak. “Now we can just plug in ‘Ritz-Carlton’ and quickly scroll through the results. It’s one of those small things that make a huge difference in our day-to-day lives.”

For Trobak, one of the biggest benefits has been the exceptional customer service she has received from WiredContact. “When I email the team with a question or problem, I usually hear back from them within the hour – and sometimes within minutes,” she said. “From our initial meeting through implementation and ongoing operation, they have consistently gone above and beyond my expectations. I couldn’t be happier with the customer service.”

Looking forward, Trobak envisions that WiredContact Enterprise will remain an important part of Prestige’s operations. “With the level of customization that WiredContact supports, I’m confident that it will grow and evolve along with our business,” she said. “And best of all, I can focus my time and attention on other parts of the business, knowing that our CRM system is in excellent hands.”

Pull Quote:

“By implementing the customized lead management and tracking capabilities of WiredContact Enterprise, we’ve cut the time it takes our sales partners and managers to enter and manage sales opportunities by 50%.”

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