Town Hall: The New Rules

REGISTER TODAY

Lisa Kobek, CustomerCount®

ResortTrades.com/LearningCenter

New Rules for Owner Communications
New Feature Launch!

TAILORED
Property Management Software
DESIGN / ADAPT / GROW

New Feature: Touchless Check-In & Check-Out

Many good things often come out of tough times! In continuing with our 35+ year focus of working with our customers to provide tools to meet their modern-day challenges, let us introduce to you the Touchless Check-In & Check-Out! Designed to limit guest and staff exposure to one another, RDP’s Touchless Guest Experience allows guests and owners to check-in and check-out via their mobile devices.

Unparalleled Owner features
Automated Owner Statements, Owner Portal, Owner Billing, HOA/Owner revenue management, all built to any Week, Season, Float, Fixed, or Split Configuration.

Double YOY Revenue
On average RDP customers double their profits in the first year due to process automation, commission free booking engine, and built in marketing features.

Outgrown Current System
RDP is customized to each property providing industry leading functionality to those ready to manage their resort with one robust system.

Why Choose Us?
▷ Cloud/On Premise Solutions
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▷ Dedicated Implementation Team
▷ All-In-One Solution

Timeshare and Fractional Management

Resort Data Processing (RDP) develops timeshare software for fractional properties, private residence clubs (PRC), and destination clubs. Guests and owners can reserve via the internet, and owner internet access includes the owner calendar and ability to view bills paid by the management company. Work orders and housekeeping history can also be accessed online. With a strong customer base and 30 years of experience in the complex area of owner managed timeshare software, the RDP system modules that are timeshare-specific are fully integrated with RDP's core property management system. RDP systems manage variations of fractional ownership like weekly, quarter share, membership and “point-based” resorts.

Resort Data Processing
Tailored Property Management Software
Sales: (877) 779-3717
Promotion Code: TradeUp
Web: www.ResortData.com
Email: Sales@ResortData.com
Address: 211 Eagle Road
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This unique opportunity, as an owner, affords you:

- International trading power,
- In house renting options,
- Or simply use the facilities for your enjoyment!

When your time is up, you will leave the association with your years of memories and have the freedom to move forward with your other vacation plans!

With none of the can’t sell, third party concerns.

Timeshare Resort Associations committed to this one of a kind opportunity, Florida State Department reviewed campaign, include:

- www.AllSeasonResort.net, Madeira Beach, Florida, Gulf Coast
- www.TheVoyagerBeachClub.com, Treasure Island, Florida
- www.NauticalWatchResort.com, Bellaire Beach, Florida

“We are looking to add new resorts as we speak.

Contact Phil Henry @ (734) 377-9240 today for one of these great resort packages!!! Also, if your resort would like to know how this works, JUST ASK PHIL!

*We also offer property management services for over 30 years.

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Providing Clear Communication Geared to Adapt to the Changing Business Environment

As we continue to navigate our way through this COVID19 environment, necessary precautions must be made - resulting in canceled meetings, new schedules, and different habits. We attempt to imagine the near future, the changes in practices and routines, along with the volatile economy, have placed businesses, clients, employees, and customers in an unprecedented situation.

Experts note that the progression to online retail operations and the movement away from brick and mortar stores is being accelerated by behaviors made necessary by the quarantine and shelter in place directives. Even the use of grocery shopping apps such as Instacart is picking up at a rapid pace as folks become more familiar and comfortable with the process.

Working remotely grows exponentially

Similarly, many businesses are choosing to implement remote work in hopes of maintaining as much regularity as possible.

However, in-person meetings and face-to-face experiences are a key part of business, both within the organization, as well as with guests and customers. Now more than ever, clear communication is vital to ensure information is being accurately conveyed and concerns are being properly addressed.

Facebook Live and Zoom may be great low investment options for smaller, more informal organizations and entertainment, but they lack the ability to control the conversation effectively and can feel chaotic or pointless at times. This can cause catastrophic damage to a brand’s value, integrity, and customer retention.

Enter The Contact Group (TCG) and its Founder/CEO David Costenbader who says “Our teleconferencing solution is a perfect remote engagement strategy during these times. Associations, Resort Developers, HOAs—all can benefit from our engagement marketing savvy and one-to-many phone technology that is accessible by any device. Our clients also choose us because of our large capacity and ability to produce a return on their objectives of effective communication and genuine conversations with their audience. They know that getting out in front of a crisis situation and presenting themselves as a trusted source benefits them as well as their stakeholders.”

Solutions for internal and external communications

TCG’s unique solution is perfect for both internal and external communications, no matter the size, with both audio and audiovisual session options. With their technology partner, Broadnet, they also offer the ability to host multiple speakers (no matter their location) and hold a moderated Q&A during the session, seamlessly. This way both the host and the audience are hearing the most pertinent questions and staying abreast of information that matters most. For audiences less than 1,000 participants, TCG offers an on-demand teleconferencing solution for use by department leaders to update their employees. The on-demand solution offers all of the functionality of the larger solution such as the ability to present a slide show.

The Contact Group’s solution has a patented dial-out function to invite people to a telephone conference, like a quarterly earnings call. They were one of the first to do virtual telephone town halls. For many years TCG hosted events for campaigns and nonprofits; and TCG was very influential in President Obama’s campaigns as a teleconferencing solution. They have also expanded into other areas. 31 out of 32 NFL teams use the product. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters with over a million members, a long-term client of TCG, scheduled an all hands-on deck “Total Teleconference” the first week in April. The platform will dial out to more than 150,000 UPS members and will have close to 20,000 dialing inbound.

Expanding to Travel and Hospitality Sector

While The Contact Group has seen major success in the political and non-profit sectors, it is strategically entering the travel and hospitality sector with initial projects for C.A.R.E. and VSA Resorts.

VSA’s first event is to their employee base, prior to a major renovation done to their property, using visual content and audio to discuss the renovation, so that before owners come to the property, staff can speak intelligently and answer questions. For another event, VSA Resorts selected to use streaming video to invite all of their owners. The live streaming event will have an interior design representative, chairman of board, and the president walk them through the renovation and answer questions in a controlled, moderated environment.

In the case of C.A.R.E., The Contact Group supported the organization with the unique “Total Teleconference.” C.A.R.E. was one of many organizations forced to cancel its upcoming annual conference and its president, Linda Mayhugh, wanted to ensure that members could still connect with each other at its “Meet the Members” session. During this popular roll call, members share resort inventory availability.
and requirements amongst each other. TCG, with support from a CustomerCount® sponsorship, as well as a contribution of services from itself, offered its help. The event was a resounding success with over 25% of their membership participating. TCG’s Total Teleconference includes instant polling of attendees. The C.A.R.E. poll showed 91% would participate in another one. Linda stated, “The Contact Group facilitated the event so all C.A.R.E. had to do was have our hosts dial in. Very easy!”

TCG’s “Total Teleconference” enables a two-way conversation between a host and audience on various devices, allowing both presenters and participants to communicate with each other no matter the size of the audience. The platform is particularly engaging and effective because it dials out to every member registered for the event. These features create a stronger participation rate and accurate conveyance of information.

Brand protection
With the TCG platform, hosts are able to invite people to the table to get their controlled and moderated feedback, while delivering vital information and programming to participants. It allows a company to communicate effectively to their stakeholders, whether they are investors, employees, or owners. No matter the situation, people want to be invited to the table to hear about others’ experiences and questions. They can participate by electronically raising their hands. They then enter a queue to have their question screened and transcribed so only vital questions are taken live and answered by the client’s trusted source of subject matter experts. In addition to moderator/attendee interaction, TCG can incorporate polls to gain valuable feedback instantly. Finally, PowerPoint presentations and streaming video are integrated onto the client’s website and can be simulcast onto their Facebook page.

Not only are the meetings interactive and value driven, TCG’s services include integration of a thorough audience engagement plan. Promotions are handled in myriad ways. Drawing on years marketing expertise, TCG creates promotional materials for social media campaigns as well as embedding registration directly though the client website. Promotional materials geared to be distributed through social and digital channels are also available. Beyond that, they are also able to dial out to a pre-made list or create one using a wide array of metrics.

Special offer
During this evolving business environment, Costenbader says TCG is taking the pro-active steps of adding resources, waiving Set Up fees and offering new clients 20% off their first event. He says, “We want to be part of the solution, allowing affected businesses to weather this storm and get back up sooner than later.”

For more information and/or a demonstration reach out to David Costenbader, dc@thecontactgroupusa.com or call 703-725-8608.

Georgi Bohrod, RRP is Principal of GBG & Associates, Inc., a Marcomm company located in San Diego, California.

SPONSORED CONTENT

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**Greg Sheperd**, president, at 866.294.7120, extension 6705; GSheperd@merid.com

**Zaida Smith**, vice president, international sales, at 866.294.7120, extension 6747; ZSmith@merid.com

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- Credit Reporting
- Skiptracing
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Meridian Financial Services is a sophisticated third-party collection agency able to service whole and partial portfolios.
5 Lessons From Lockdown: The Future of Customer Care

By Wendy Poe

What can we apply that we learned from our 2020 pandemic so far? How will it drive long-term change to how we service owners and guests? Here are five takeaways from three of our industry’s top Customer Service executives: Annie Roberts, SVP Club & Owner Services, Wyndham Destinations; Travis Markel, Chief Service Delivery Officer, ICE; and Angela Blevins, SVP Customer Care for Bluegreen Vacations.

Lessons 1: Mountains Can Be Moved!
When challenged mid-March with “shelter-in-place orders,” all three executives immediately partnered with their IT counterparts to obtain the necessary equipment, tools, enhanced networking and licenses for thousands of agents in multiple countries to be able to service customers from home. While all three companies had limited “at-home” programs, an average of 75 percent of their servicing, pre-COVID, occurred in contact centers with a heavy emphasis on voice.

For ICE, this meant complex international coordination with 1000+ agents in India, Mexico, UK and Scottsdale, AZ. Wyndham’s 725-agent footprint extends between the Philippines, Orlando, FL and Springfield, MO. Bluegreen’s servicing is more domestic, but no less complicated, with operations in Orlando and Boca Raton, FL and Indianapolis, IN. Racing against the clock, all groups were proud to pivot within days and be 100 percent operational within weeks.

Lesson 2: Technology Continues to Play a Leading Role
Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Yammer, Podcasts, LMS Systems. Video Cams. These are the new tech tools today’s executives rely on to meet the necessary equipment, tools, enhanced networking and licenses for thousands of agents in multiple countries to be able to service customers from home. While all three companies had limited “at-home” programs, an average of 75 percent of their servicing, pre-COVID, occurred in contact centers with a heavy emphasis on voice.

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Lesson 3: Virtual Leadership Inspires Creativity & Deeper Connection
Learning to lead virtually is both art and science, with a heavy emphasis on being human. Here’s how our leaders have strengthened their relationships amongst staff, inspiring new levels of productivity:

Annie Roberts.
“‘One of our secrets to successful virtual management has been our Engagement Manager, a dedicated role to drive agent connection. To accomplish this, she hosted dozens of “At-Home Summits,” which helped everyone quickly adjust, along with “virtual socials” for team-building. Our managers have really dialed-up our award programs – it’s so much easier now to recognize everyone globally. I love being able to attend everyone’s meetings and personally congratulate them on their results.”

Travis Markel.
“It’s interesting in that there has been a silver lining in this when it comes to maintaining connection. While we’ve lost the in-person presence, we’ve actually increased our communication cadence globally, meeting more as a collective team now. Whether its sharing performance stats and driving friendly competition through The Big Show blog, a celebration of quarterly performance winners with virtual ceremonies or just taking the time to connect personally through “coffee talks”, we are connected. One of my favorite cultural events was Tea Time, inspired by our Mumbai team, where everyone globally brought their favorite Tea Cup and T-Shirt for a memorable team, where everyone globally brought their favorite Tea Cup and T-Shirt for a memorable bonding event. So, in many ways our culture is healthier than ever.”

Angela Blevins.
“‘Certainly, we created a lot of buzz with themed days (hats, t-shirts, food, etc.) but we really took engagement to the next level when we had agents introduce their family members (including dogs, cats, horses and a pig!) to their co-workers. Getting to know each other on a more personal level has strengthened our camaraderie and results. We have also received a lot of kudos for giving everyone more time in their week to pursue Professional Development, encouraging LinkedIn Courses, TedTalks and Webinars.”

Lesson 4: Future Staffing Models Will Be Uniquely Blended
All three leaders concur: no one is rushing back to the office. They anticipate “at-home servicing” will become the norm with anywhere between 50 and 100 percent virtual servicing.

From Bluegreen: Introduce Your New Co-Workers

“Compared to 2019 statistics, there is overwhelming evidence that “virtual servicing” significantly outperforms office-based results.” Angela Blevins, Bluegreen Vacations

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While all organizations were forced to “rightsize” their departments due to drastically reduced call volumes, the remaining associates have emerged as superstars. Keeping them safe and healthy at home, and in the office, is their company’s prime mission.

Annie Roberts. “The new floor plan is called “the checkerboard,” where literally every other workstation is being put out of service and “Not COVID Approved” signs are prominent. We launched three new teams (Crisis, Financial and Future) to help us co-create new policies and give team members an active voice in how we handle ongoing pandemic ramifications.”

Travis Markel. “We conducted a survey to determine how our employees prefer to work in the future. We asked about their concerns and sensitivities, as well as how can we help them feel safe in the workplace. Based on their input, we are considering a model where agents may rotate in/out periodically to have the best of both worlds. We will bring teams back to the office in waves as we implement new requirements, such as temperature checks and no public transportation.”

Angela Blevins. “In comparison to pre-COVID, owners are far more tolerant to the use of the chat feature. We’ve balanced our chat and voice, which has dramatically lowered wait times during our most critical times. Agents can handle up to five chats at a time and are generally live within 20-45 seconds. Compared to 2019 statistics, there is overwhelming evidence that “virtual servicing” significantly outperforms office-based results.

Lesson 5: Crises Have Galvanized Workforce and Changed Owner Expectations


Owner expectations are also changing. The world’s definition of “clean” and desire for “contact-free transactions” is forever changed. Wyndham Destinations put extraordinary effort into their new “Vacation-Ready” housekeeping standards and piloted a first-ever deferred maintenance fee to help owners navigate temporary financial shortfalls. Everyone is teaching guests how to make reservations for amenities such as pool-time (Wyndham uses a cool app for this) and re-educating owners on the distinct advantages of having a home-away-from-home and a dedicated service team to keep them safe and healthy.

As an industry characterized by resilience, our panel of customer experts believe we will emerge from these crises with substantially stronger operations and more authentic relationships with owners, guests and associates.

Wendy Poe is a Customer Experience executive and recognized timeshare industry expert, honored to have led some of the most celebrated Marketing, Brand Communications & Customer Care teams in America.
ARDA Announces 2020 Award Winners

This year, more than ever, ARDA is proud to celebrate the best people, places and products within the timeshare industry! They regret that due to the pandemic they were unable to issue certificates, medals or trophies this year. They look forward to celebrating with all of the awards program participants in person at the 2021 Awards Gala. Congratulations to all of the winners!

ACE Division

ACE Lifetime Achievement Award:
John and Marcia Rowley, ICE

Category 1: ACE Philanthropy & Customer Service
Victoria’s Voice
David Siegel, Westgate Resorts

Category 2: ACE Innovation
Wyndham Destinations
Journey, Customer Relationship Management Platform
Wyndham Destinations

Category 3: ACE Employee of the Year
Chris Jhang, Welk Resorts

Category 4: Employer of the Year
Diamond Resorts

Category 5: ACE Project of Excellence
The Grand Colorado on Peak 8 Breckenridge Grand Vacations

Category 6: ACE Emerging Leader
Andres Mosquera
Wyndham Destinations

Category 7: ACE Excellence in Marketing & Sales
Disney Vacation Club

Marketing & Sales Division

Category 8: Marketing Management Leader
Denise Peterson
Holiday Inn Club Vacations

Category 9: Marketing Team: Large Developer
Myrtle Beach In-House Marketing Team
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 9: Marketing Team: Small Developer
Marketing Team
VRI Americas

Category 10: Marketing Individual
Erik Short
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 11: Marketing Programs: Developer
American Idol Aulani Production
Disney Vacation Club

Category 11: Marketing Programs: Industry Partner
Travel Agency Resort BOGO ICE

Category 12: Sales Management Leader: Large Developer
Nestor Alvarez
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 12: Sales Management Leader: Small Developer
Gideon Hess
Welk Resorts

Category 13: Salesperson: In House: Large Developer
Tabrion Leverette
Wyndham Destinations

Category 13: Salesperson: In House: Small Developer
Michael Rowley
Breckenridge Grand Vacations

Category 14: Salesperson: Traditional Line: Large Developer
Ashley Mueller
Wyndham Destinations

Category 14: Salesperson: Traditional Line: Small Developer
Matt Spitalny
Breckenridge Grand Vacations

Category 15: Salesperson: Specialty Sales: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 16: Sales Team
Hilton Club NY In-House Sales Team
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 17: Sales Verification Loan Officer/Quality Assurance Officer
Christie Lee,
Wyndham Destinations

Category 18: Sales Trainer/Training Team: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 19: Sales Training Program
Diamond Marketing Mentorship Program
Diamond Resorts

Management and Administration Division

Category 20: Business Administration or Operations Team Member
Katherine Reyes
Wyndham Destinations

Category 20: Business Administration or Operations Team
Portfolio Services Team
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 21: Business Administration Manager or Team Leader
Andrea Bertuccini
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 22: Legal and Regulatory Team Member or Manager: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 23: Legal and Regulatory Team Leader: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 24: Owner/Customer Relations Team Member
Emma Nixon
Diamond Resorts

Category 25: Owner/Customer Relations Team
Owner Onboarding Specialist Program Team
Wyndham Destinations

Category 26: Inventory Revenue Management Manager
Elizabeth West
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 26: Inventory Revenue Management Team
Extra Holidays
Wyndham Destinations

Category 27: Inventory Management Program: Large Developer
Inventory Optimization
Wyndham Destinations

Category 27: Inventory Management Program: Small Developer
Inventory and Revenue Management Program
Welk Resorts

Category 28: Communications/PR Professional or Team
Brand Publicity Team
Wyndham Destinations

Category 29: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 30: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 31: Corporate Social Responsibility Program: Developer
WYND Full Circle
Wyndham Destinations

Category 31: Corporate Social Responsibility Program: Industry Partner
Corporate Social Responsibility Program ICE

Category 32: This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 33: Human Resources Professional: Developer
Katherine Ireland
Wyndham Destinations

Category 33: Human Resources Professional: Industry Partner
Sally Martinez
MasterCorp

Category 34: Human Resources Team
Academy of Learning Development (ALD) Team
Holiday Inn Club Vacations

Category 35: Human Resources Recruiting Manager
Diana Ulichny
Marriott Vacations Worldwide

Category 35: Human Resources Recruiting Team
“More Like You” Associate Referral Program Team
Wyndham Destinations

Category 36: Training and Development Manager
Elaine Plasse
Grand Pacific Resorts

Category 36: Training and Development Team
Organizational Development (OD) Team
Holiday Inn Club Vacations


The Resort Professionals’ monthly News Journal since 1987
Category 37: Call Center
Individual
Nicola Dow
Diamond Resorts

Category 37: Call Center Team
First Call Resolution Team
ICE

Category 38: Technology Project Manager
Tony Alvarez
Holiday Inn Club Vacations

Category 38: Technology Project Team
Interval International App Team
Interval International

Category 39: Technology Project at Resort or Corporate Office
Owner Account Manager Website
Westgate Resorts

Category 40: Activities Program Manager
Lisa Jenkins
Diamond Resorts

Category 41: Activities Program
Disney's Riviera Resort
Disney Vacation Club

Category 42: Safety/Security Manager
Ivan Melians
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 43: Resort General Manager: Large Developer
Carlos Brador
Westgate Resorts

Category 43: Resort General Manager: Small or Medium Developer
Lindsay Reinwand
Breckenridge Grand Vacations

Category 44: Resort Assistant Manager
Iteisha McCants
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 45: Resort Department Manager: Large Developer
Michele Barriere
Wyndham Destinations

Category 45: Resort Department Manager: Small or Medium Developer
Joshua Perry
Bluegreen Vacations

Category 46: Resort Operations Team Member
Oscar Martinez
Bluegreen Vacations

Category 46: Resort Operations Team
Grand Impact Team
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 47: Maintenance Team Member
Josh Reynolds
Diamond Resorts

Category 48: Housekeeping Manager
Mark Schonau
MasterCorp

Category 49: Housekeeping Team Member
Zaida Perez-Solorzano
Holiday Inn Club Vacations

Advertising Promotion & Communication Division
Category 50: Logo Design
DASSK Logo
Brand Tango

Category 51: Newsletter
The Vacationer
Diamond Resorts

Category 52: Digital Magazine
UVC Spring/Summer Magazine
Brand Tango

Category 53: Print Magazine
Asia Pacific Club Wyndham Magazine
Wyndham Destinations

Category 54: Integrated Marketing Campaign or Program
Falladays
Holiday Inn Club Vacations

Category 55: Multimedia Asset
Moments with Diamond
Diamond Resorts

Category 56: Digital Sales Film
“This is WorldMark St. George” Vacation Inspiration Video
Wyndham Destinations

Category 57: Digital Products:
This category was not judged due to limited entries.

Category 58: Sales Technology Materials
VRI Headset Tours at Sales Centers
Diamond Resorts

Category 59: Website
UVC Website
Brand Tango

Category 60: Special Event: Owner or Guest Event
Falladays
Holiday Inn Club Vacations

Category 61: Special Event: Sales Team/Individual Incentive or Recognition Program
Champions Club
Diamond Resorts

Category 62: Special Event: Employee Recognition Program or Event (Non Sales)
Vision and Pillar Awards
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 63: Employee Engagement Campaign
“SPARK” Idea and Innovation Platform
RCI

Category 64: Owner/Guest/ Customer Engagement Campaign
Vacation Point of View Photo Contest
Wyndham Destinations

Category 65: Sales Collateral Material
BGV Printed Member Kit
Brand Tango

Category 66: Social Media Campaign
“Gift of Time” Campaign
Hilton Grand Vacations

Resort Design Division
Category 67: Resort Architecture
WorldMark Portland Waterfront Park
Wyndham Destinations

Category 68: Interior Design
The Residences
Hilton Grand Vacations

Category 69: Refurbishment: Unit
Karma Apsara
Karma Group

Category 70: Refurbishment: Common Area
Embarc Sandestin Lobby
Diamond Resorts

Category 71: Refurbishment HOA
The Lodge Alley Inn
Bluegreen Vacations

Category 72: Amenities: Traditional
The Cliffs at Long Creek Lodge
Bluegreen Vacations

Category 73: This category was not judged due to low entries.

Category 74: Sales Center
Nashville Off Site Sales Facility
Wyndham Destinations

Category 75: Construction/ Design Team or Manager
Aaron Maune & Sarah Herman
Resort Management Group
GM of La Tour Hotels & Resorts Shows How It’s Done

By Georgi Bohrod, RRP

Roger leads a beautiful 60-unit The Cabins at Green Mountain. He is an expert at providing great service and exceeding guest and owner expectations.

Roger’s genuine warmth shines through all he touches. Perhaps the most evident example of the brightness and joy he brings to owners, guests and fellow employees surrounds his love of the Christmas season.

Home for the Holidays

For the past several years, Roger has decorated the exterior and interior of his home for the Christmas holidays. Recently he created a resort ‘Journey’, for guests and owners at the Cabins at Green Mountain. Holiday visitors may board the resort van to experience the Branson Holiday Lightshow. First stop is at the resort clubhouse for hot cocoa; second stop is a drive through the Zoo - to see the Christmas lights; third stop is a drive through a light-up park with myrriad twinkling and blinking lights set to music.

The fourth and best stop aboard this holiday journey is Roger’s house. Roger’s home—which has been featured on local TV--has more than a million LED lights that are all programmed individually to holiday songs. In addition to the general manager’s lightshow, Roger and his wife Kathi collect pet item donations which appreciative folks leave at their doorstep after viewing the display.

The Bennett’s then deliver trunk full(s) weekly to the local shelter. Guests and owners at the Cabins at Green Mountain Resort, Branson, Missouri – closed late March. It opened in late May. During this closure, all LaTour resorts programmed their auto attendant to inform guests and owners to visit the resort website(s) for additional information as they were all at a reduced employee base.

Roger did not want any auto attendant on - while he and Loucinda were on-site. He insisted in answering every phone call possible to ensure his owners and in return, guests - in such trying times, felt comfort in hearing his voice - helping with their current and/or future bookings.

This is the kind of exemplary customer service recognized by the CEP Award. Good service is not a fantasy when genuine people-persons are in charge, give their best and connect with members and guests on a human level. They all deserve a heartfelt thumbs-up.

Kristin Ingram

His leadership during the Covid 19 crisis continued to shine brightly. Roger’s primary resort - Cabins at Green Mountain Resort, Branson, Missouri. As Bob Kobek, President of CustomerCount® and founder of the CEP Award reflected “the company sets the tone and foundation for good customer service people to excel.”

La Tour Resorts & Hotels is such a place

In today’s increasingly competitive hospitality industry, it’s more important than ever for vacation resorts to operate efficiently while still delivering superior service and guest experience. This is the mission of LaTour Resorts & Hotels. With properties in Canada, The Caribbean, and the USA, the company offers a wide range of vacation options encompassing mixed-use development involving hotels and resorts, condominiums, fractional and timeshares.

CEP finalist Roger Bennett is a prime example of the LaTour’s extraordinary service. As they say “We-re Ready! Anything... Anytime...Anywhere. Nothing less.”

After the judges reviewed the nominations for the 4th Annual CustomerCount® Customer Engagement Professional Resort Trades Award (CEP Award), they were faced with an enviable dilemma. So many of the candidates were not just good, but exceptional. In an effort to honor the greatness of the customer engagement professionals in the timeshare industry who are dedicated to excellence, the panel of judges named the top three candidates (1st place: William Mitchell/GM Atrium Resort by VSA Resorts; 2nd place: Veta Dimmick/Exploria Resorts and 3rd place: Kendall Dean/MarBrisa at Hilton Grand Vacations) and then recommended recognition for all those ranked in the top ten. In order to appropriately honor the others on the CEP short list, Resort Trades is profiling each one of these candidates along with their companies throughout the year.

This issue’s CEP honoree is Roger Bennett. Area General Manager of La Tour Hotels & Resorts. As Bob Kobek, President of CustomerCount® and founder of the CEP Award reflected “the company sets the tone and foundation for good customer service people to excel.”

Roger Bennett

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Georgi Bohrod, RRP is Principal of GBG & Associates, Inc., a Marcomm company located in San Diego, California.
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Bringing People Back: Part 1
Set the Stage for Success with a Great Return-to-Work Program

By Phillip M. Perry

With the easing of restrictions surrounding the Covid-19 outbreak, businesses are starting to bring employees back into the workplace. A successful re-entry program will ensure the safety of company personnel and the public, obviate charges of discrimination and invasion of privacy, and avoid actions that inadvertently violate federal, state and local employment laws. Employers should set a positive tone to motivate their personnel in a difficult environment.

Working from home is over. Partly, anyhow. And after weeks of telephone conferencing and video chatting, many workers are doubtless eager to return to their offices. In managing this reverse migration, though, businesses must coordinate a patchwork of safety procedures and work area modifications while communicating effectively with employees.

Maybe the greatest challenge is convincing everyone it’s safe to come back to work.

“Many people are still scared, and their fear is valid,” says Bill Hagaman, CEO and Managing Partner of Withum (withum.com). “The risk of the virus impacting someone at any moment continues to be very real.”

It stands to reason, then, that employers must ensure that no one gets sick by visiting their facilities. But the reasons for doing so go beyond health and morale. Work related illnesses can spark injury lawsuits, workers compensation claims, or charges the employer failed to provide a safe workplace as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). “As employers put in place their return to work programs they must address legal issues concerning the safety of employees, vendors, suppliers, clients, and customers,” says Paul Evans, a partner in the Employment and Compensation Practice Group in Baker & McKenzie’s New York office (bakermckenzie.com).

Cleaning up
Most safety programs will begin with the physical plant. “The business facility must be thoroughly cleaned,” says Richard Avdoian, an employee development consultant in Metropolitan St. Louis. (MidwestBusinessInstitute.com). “Attention must be paid especially to the common areas, restrooms, chairs and desks. Sanitizing gels should be made available throughout.”

Some employers may need to retool their entire workplace footprint. “Companies with an open model concept will have to consider whether it needs to be modified,” says Bob Gregg, Co-chair of the Employment Practice Law Group at Boardman and Clark LLC, Madison, WI (boardmanclark.com). “People will not want to sit in the open with others sneezing.” Workstations can be spread apart to the requisite six feet of separation. Plexiglass barriers can be installed where appropriate.

Businesses may need to modify long-standing work procedures. A single serve machine might replace a group coffee maker. Conference room chairs might be removed so people can sit far enough from one another. Hallways might be turned into one-way corridors. And the job of turning on the lights might be assigned to one person.

Signs posted throughout the facility can remind everyone to maintain proper social distancing, keep washing their hands and wear their masks.

“Employers should ensure their workers refrain from unnecessary touching or congregating in cafeterias and conference rooms,” says Susan Gross Sholinsky, Vice Chair of the Employment, Labor & Workforce Management practice of Epstein, Becker Green in New York (ebglaw.com).

In deciding what to do and not to do with their workplaces, businesses can obtain guidance from the government. Local and state authorities are issuing discretionary guidelines and mandatory directives. Some are very detailed, limiting the number of people permitted in a workspace, for example, to 25 percent or 50 percent of a room’s normal capacity. At the federal level, several agencies are issuing return to work advisories ranging from social distancing to the ventilation of workspaces to health screenings for employees. (For links to these agencies see the Sidebar, “Government Resources for Re-Opening.”)

Taking temperatures
Federal and state authorities are also offering advice on a popular method for reducing the risk of infection: taking the temperature of arriving employees. “The prevailing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is that any temperature above 100.4 degrees warrants sending the employee home for the day,” says Evans.

“If the temperature is above normal, but below 100.4 degrees, then the guideline is to wait 15 minutes and take the temperature again to see if it goes up above 100.4.”

Advisories are also available from local and state authorities at various levels of detail. “Temperature checks may be more important in hot spots than elsewhere,” says Evans.

Health procedures of any kind can pose legal issues. “Taking temperatures as people come into the workplace starts to raise wage and hour questions if people must stand in line,” says Gregg. “Employers need to ask, ‘How many minutes are workers standing?’ And ‘Should they be paid for those minutes?’”

Privacy issues may also arise. “What do you do if a person has a fever?” poses Gregg. “How do you respond in a way which does not single them out? You don’t want a gong to go off or to let others see you shuttle them to a holding pen. You want to handle things in a way that does not violate privacy.”

If doorway health inspections help boost morale, employers should realize they are not sure things. “An individual can be infected with Covid-19 without having a fever,” says Evans. “However, the medical community still seems to think of temperature checks as important tools for ensuring workplace safety.”
Gradual returns

No safety plan can succeed if too many people crowd into the office, placing themselves and others at risk. Many businesses are moderating the flow of arrivals by bringing back people in stages, even going so far as to require eager volunteers to obtain clearance from their supervisors before returning. Others are separating their staffs into two or more teams and allowing one group in the office at a time.

“Employers should consider the feasibility of staggering employees’ shift times or of establishing an alternating workday or workweek schedule,”

says Sholinsky. “They should be flexible and creative in developing policies that maximize productivity and ensure the highest levels of safety.”

If some employees are too eager to return, others will be fearful of doing so too quickly. Allowing those individuals to continue to work remotely may help obviate safety risks. “If your business is set up for some employees to work from home, then consider allowing them to continue to do so,” says Hagaman. “Give special thought to parents of school-aged children in states where schools have shut down for the remainder of the year. Remote working capabilities can also protect employees who take public transportation to work by limiting their exposure.”

A positive tone

Creating a safe workplace is one thing. Building the trust of employees is another. People must understand that everything possible has been done to protect their health and safety.

“Transparent communication is critical right now,” says Hagaman.

“Employers need to prevent confusion among their teams by answering their questions before they re-enter the workplace.”

Hagaman suggests addressing these questions: How will you assess the health of your employees prior to walking into the building? Where will your employees find supplies such as face masks and sanitizing wipes? What parts of their workspace will be closed? Will conference rooms and cafeterias remain open? And who will be allowed in the building, and when?

Not the least of challenges is that of communicating the panoply of new procedures to employees who may feel overwhelmed by a long list of to-dos and do-nots. Some employers are sending email broadcasts with answers to such questions. Others are posting informative signs in the workplaces. And others are packing personal protective gear into “goody bags” and handing them out to returning employees.

All such steps can calm fears. And given the negative emotions that have surrounded the Covid-19 outbreak, employers should try to present their communications in a forward-looking spirit.

“As people start re-entering the workplace employers might create a return-to-work rally with a positive tone, applauding the performance of the staff in light of everything that has happened,”

says Avdoian. “And as things move forward one way to encourage good morale is to ask for volunteers to serve on a committee that addresses staff concerns.”

The pandemic itself might present businesses with the opportunity to retool their operations, finding ways to work more productively and to utilize technology more efficiently. “We should create new policies and procedures in response to the pandemic as we do when faced with any obstacle or challenge in the business world,” says Avdoian. “We are always looking for ways to enhance our services. This is another opportunity to do so.”

Phillip M. Perry is an award-winning business journalist based in New York City. He covers management, employment law, finance and marketing for scores of business magazines.

Government Resources for Re-opening

Employers looking to create a safe and efficient back-to-work program may obtain guidance from these federal agencies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers guidance on deciding when and how to open, cleanliness and disinfection, and reducing the transmission of infection among employees. (Navigate to cdc.gov, then click on “Learn More About Covid-19” and then “Businesses and Workplaces.”).

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) offers guidance on how Covid-19 spreads, how to assess potential hazards, and how to control the risks to workers. (Navigate to osha.gov, then click on “Coronavirus resources” then “Control and Prevention”)

State and local agencies also maintain websites with helpful materials.
The New Rules

By Sharon Scott Wilson, RRP

Let’s set the Negative aside for a moment; that would be the Coronavirus-caused pandemic. This existential threat has shaken our world and sent our industry into a tailspin. Now, more than ever before, every individual and every business is being forced to reinvent itself. We have to create some new rules to survive.

Now for the Positive: We firmly believe there is hope and we will each of us come out of this as stronger and wiser individuals. Yes, some businesses will fail. But the entrepreneurial spirit, which is the underlying chief characteristic of those involved in the vacation ownership industry, will still thrive.

To help ensure this, Resort Trades has undertaken an initiative seeking to pool all the best and brightest ideas that constitute the new rules for our future. The Learning Center will host a number of free webinars, town halls, and live events. Headquartered on the website, ResortTrades.com/LearningCenter, we invite everyone to participate. Send your ideas; volunteer as a speaker; urge your friends to get involved! Let’s get busy creating a brighter future!

The New Rules for Sales

Our first free Town Hall, sponsored by CustomerCount®, The Contact Group, and GBG & Associates, entitled “Resort Resilience” was held on May 21st. (The Contact Group is providing the Broadnet technology platform on which these town halls are being hosted.) On July 16, 2020, our second event was “Innovative Sales and Marketing,” and featured Shari Levitin and Ron Roberts addressing two very different aspects of what it will take to keep our industry cranking. (Both sessions are viewable on the Learning Center website at no charge.) Shari Levitin’s remarks during the July 16th Town Hall presented her bold new concept, “The Adaptive Seller.”

I’m sure all our readers know Shari, of Levitin Group, and the legacy she’s created and left in the timeshare industry. My guess is most of you know that she started Levitin Group in 1997 and quickly became a worldwide phenomenon as the voice of ethical sales for timeshare in over 40 countries and on five continents around the world.

You also probably know that Shari created onboarding programs that are still being used today by companies such as Wyndham, Bluegreen, Festiva, Anantara, and Welk Resorts. And you probably know she did the same for Hilton.

Levitin Group coined terms early on, such as “Third Level”, “The Five Why’s”, “Compliance versus Commitment”, and “Excuses versus Objections”. Those terms which are now nomenclature in the industry, today.

What you may not know is that in the last few years since the launching of her book, Heart and Sell, it became an instant bestseller, has been transcribed into four languages, and was just named one of the top one hundred sales books of all time. You also may not know that she was just named one of the Top 50 Keynote Speakers globally in sales, the Top 38 Women Influencers on LinkedIn, and recently starred along with 20 other sales experts in a documentary film put out by Salesforce called the Story of Sales.

Every successful resort professional is essentially a seller. And, lately, the rules have all changed! Shari gave listeners a provocative look at the new rules of sales. While she was only able to share a tip of the iceberg with us, she has promised Resort Trades Learning Center that she’ll be back. We can hardly wait! Meanwhile, buy her book, Heart and Sell. You won’t be sorry!

Showing a Way Forward for Legacy Resorts

Plunging revenues due to aging owners, maintenance fee delinquencies, and unsold HOA owned weeks? Ron Roberts, president and CEO of Sage Marketing Group and Legacy Solutions International, explained how to rescue your resort and save your HOA many thousands of dollars each month. Time would not permit Ron to share more than a few of his many, many ideas for adding value to your resort and avoiding some of the bad press that’s been heaped on the timeshare business. But, he did manage to touch on how HOAs can avoid Special Assessments, replenish sinking funds, eliminate deferred maintenance, and keep the resort on a solid financial footing.

Roberts is President and CEO of Legacy Solutions, International, a custom service company specializing in overcoming legacy issues for older, mature projects in need of solutions such as the unwanted buildup of HOA inventory, missing maintenance fees, delinquencies, and effects resulting from an ageing owner-base. He is also President & CEO Sage Marketing Group, Inc., a real estate and leisure property marketing and consulting firm with offices in Colchester, Vermont.
Coming up in August…

Ever since RCI first invented Comment Cards, resort professionals in the vacation ownership business have recognized the value of asking their customers’ opinions. The survey process has expanded ever since. Micah Solomon, a senior contributor to Forbes magazine, says “Alarming but true: If you send out a defective survey, it might be worse than not surveying your customers in the first place…”

To help sort through the do’s and don’ts when it comes to customer research, Resort Trades will host a free Town Hall in August featuring Lisa Kobek from CustomerCount®. Since 2014, Lisa has been EVP of Client Services and Operations with the company, which is an online enterprise customer feedback solution designed specifically for the hospitality industry. Her job is to oversee the client management, service delivery, and product development processes.

She will cover the benefits and importance of engaging your owners in communication. As she will show us, obtaining customer feedback can help a resort team strategize ways to make improvements, as well as helping assess areas of success that can be amplified. The process, done correctly, obviously requires a much more advanced set of skill and competence than initially meets the eye. Kobek will help you see why there’s much more to it than simply throwing out a DIY effort using SurveyMonkey.

During the live, interactive session, she will cover a general list of best practices. Other things Kobek would have listeners consider include using surveys as communication tools to engage owners, things to think about when developing questions, and compliance with government rules and regulations. Plus, there are a number of points she will cover about what to consider when choosing a delivery method.

Resort Trades has twice enjoyed working with CustomerCount to perform reader interest studies. With Kobek’s help, we were able to develop a deeper understanding of who are readers are and have been able to tailor our editorial to be more relevant to them. Kobek is a pro at what she does and hearing her explain more about it will be of great value to attendees.

Send your ideas to: Sharon@TheTrades.com
Sharon Scott Wilson, Publisher, The Trades Publishing Company.
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Presenters from the July 16th Resort Resilience Town Hall:

Ron Roberts of Sage Marketing Group and Legacy Solutions International
Shari Levitin of the Levitin Group

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It is somewhat ironic that the hospitality industry – which hinges entirely on delivering quality experiences for its customers – often fails to provide for the needs of their employees. This often contributes to high turnover of hourly staff who feel pigeonholed and unable to climb to higher levels of responsibility. To overcome this scenario, the Resort Operations Team at Bluegreen Vacations has created two unique programs that educate employees and prepare them for growth within the company.

“Our primary objective,” says Yogi Mueller, “is developing talent, creating a strong learning culture and strategically training associates at all levels. We place a high value on our employees and do everything possible to support their future success and growth.” In his position for eight years, Yogi is Sr. Director, Hospitality Talent Development for Bluegreen Vacations which has 47 resorts across the U.S. and Caribbean and over 200,000 owners.

“Sometimes the chasm between an hourly supervisor and salaried department manager can seem long and insurmountable. Our intention is to place a steppingstone in between to give supervisors an opportunity to challenge their ability and prepare themselves for new management positions.”

The Resort Emerging Leaders Program (RELP) is an 11-week program focused on identifying high-potential associates, frontline and supervisor levels which provides experiential, virtual classroom, group projects and a capstone. Participants include housekeeping supervisors, inspectors, engineers, activities, guest services and food and beverage supervisors. Classes, group interactions and program coordination are provided virtually at each participant’s resort through video conferencing.

The selection process is highly competitive. “We are looking for people who have the hunger to do more and be more,” said Yogi. “Associates know that their selection can lead to a bright future.” In 2019, there were 45 program candidates – nominated by resort leadership or associates themselves – with 30 final participants selected after an intensive interview process.

RELP begins the day after Labor Day each year. Since the first class was held in 2012, they have graduated over 120 future leaders. While there is no guarantee of promotion, because of their work exposure, there is a 60% chance of promotion within a year after graduation.

RELP’s learning and career-path objective is to ensure that participants smoothly transition from their former front-line mentality to understand how solid leadership and strong operational acumen work together to run a resort. The program provides in-depth leadership development as well as hands-on operational experience in all areas of resort operations. Participants, or RELPers as they are called, are provided a mentor during the program and are given these developmental opportunities during their regular 40-hour shift. They may spend up to three days a week out of their normal department to do so.

“When an hourly associate is promoted to a supervisory position,” adds Yogi, “it is often challenging to envision the big picture and adjust to the change to a leadership mentality. Resolving this is a key part of the program. Sometimes the chasm between an hourly supervisor and salaried department manager can seem long and insurmountable. Our intention is to place a steppingstone in between to give supervisors an opportunity to challenge their ability and prepare themselves for new management positions.”

Corynne Holder, CPLP, is Director of Leadership Development and guides this program. For RELP to run smoothly, she must have support of the associate’s site leadership since participants are taken away from their primary role for 11 weeks. Corynne coordinates a team of operational sponsors, resort managers and mentors, who work closely together to support each RELP participant’s educational journey.

RELP Class of 2019 graduate Oscar Martinez was recently named a finalist in ARDA’s annual awards program in the Management & Administration Division, Resort Operations Team Member category. Oscar serves as the F&B Supervisor at Bluegreen’s 842-unit Fountains Resort in Orlando, overseeing a team of 33 culinary professionals at three F&B outlets. He started with Bluegreen as a Lead Cook but was promoted supervisor after completing the RELP program. Oscar says his participation in RELP added immense value to his understanding of the inter-actions between company departments and provided a pathway for the leadership role that followed.

Bluegreen’s iAdvance Program was created exclusively for Department Managers who want to become Resort Managers. The selection...
process is highly spirited, due to intense competition. Participation in the 9-month resort leadership training program requires a relocation to a Teaching Resort, where they are housed in a resort unit and paid during the process. If they pass the stringent pre-requirements, candidates then face a series of video interviews, essay questions and panel interviews to fill up to two positions per year.

Since the program was launched in 2015, Bluegreen has graduated five leaders, with two currently in the program. Completion in iAdvance can shave up to four years off a standard career path by cramming as much as five years of operational experience into nine months.

Participants are trained in every line of the business, with deep dives into financials, association governance, construction and development. When successful, their new leadership skills will qualify them to become an Assistant Resort Manager in smaller tier or Department Manager in a larger and more complex resort.

Shares Yogi, “At the conclusion of the program, graduates are relocated to another resort, basically uprooting their lives again, so this kind of disruption requires someone who is truly dedicated to their professional future. During their course, we look after them professionally, socially – a holistic approach – recognizing that they have put their trust in us to uproot their lives.

David Turdibekov is currently an iAdvance Manager, at Christmas Mountain Village in the Wisconsin Dells. He started his Bluegreen career as a part-time bartender, but had a thirst to learn more. His Resort Manager suggested him for the program.

Ben Holzhueter Is an iAdvance Manager at the Fountains in Orlando. Previously, he worked as a Night Manager at Christmas Mountain Village.

“We have made a huge investment into these programs and the employees who learned from them,” says Yogi. This is evidenced by reduced turnover, improved internal promotions rates and most importantly, the excitement and desire in our high potential future leaders wanting to participate in RELP to learn more.

“It has been a true joy watching our young associates gain maturity in their roles after successfully graduating and enjoy the close relationships they have enjoyed with their mentors. Our graduates often tell us who they were before our programs and how different they are now after graduation. They are all wonderful stories of positive transitions and growth. We believe our unique programs have played a significant role in helping make this happen.”

www.bluegreenvacations.com

Author’s bio.
Marge Lennon has been writing about the timeshare industry and its people since 1978, almost as long as Ed McMullen has been involved in this very special industry.
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David Stroeve is the owner of ADS Consulting Service with over 30 years of industry experience. For 19 years, he was the president of sales for Breckenridge Grand Vacations. Under his leadership the company experienced exponential growth and became an industry leader. Since 2017, he became an independent consulting offering his experience and vast expertise to help others achieve unthinkable results. He helps companies think different and align their process and system to create cultural congruency. If you are looking to take your company and revenue performance to the next level, we can deliver results.

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Selecting the Right ERP System for Your Business

By: Walter Merkas, Senior Manager and Lena Combs, CPA, CGMA, RRP, Partner WithumSmith+Brown, PC

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems are designed to automate and add efficiency to repetitive business processes in order to connect processes in real-time. The hospitality industry often has multiple applications to serve its customers and ERP systems can aid in integrating data into a single database with a single interface, resulting in time savings for operators. ERP systems come in all sizes and serve hospitality companies of all shapes and sizes.

Although an ERP system can lead to increased savings and profits, it can be quite an investment. The procurement of business software is not something a company does frequently, and because of that, one can be ill-prepared. For most companies, the ERP selection process seems overwhelming. Many organizations find that the time required to research each option is too much and that they are constrained to having to do their ERP research during their normally busy day.

There are a plethora of different ERP systems on the market and some are better suited than others to accommodate the demands of the hospitality industry. To help organizations navigate the choices, here is a short how-to guide on selecting the right ERP system.

Dig into the Motives Behind Selecting a New ERP System

When considering an ERP implementation, the most important question to ask is: Why has the decision been made to change the current ERP software, or implement one for the first time?

Whatever the motive is, the ERP solution selected must ultimately satisfy the needs of the organization. Here’s a high-level list of things to consider during an ERP evaluation process:

- Does the company prefer to use a local server environment or cloud-hosted technology?
- Does the company have internal IT support?
- Does the company need integration between solutions, or will data be copied manually from one system to another?

Best in Breed vs Best in Class

Establishing the right mix of “Best in Breed” vs. “Best in Class” software can be daunting for companies to balance. Best in Breed products are designed to address a specific niche or functional area. These types of applications perform specialized functions and are typically better than those in an integrated system. The Best in Breed solution usually requires multiple solutions that are then connected through integration services to provide all of the necessary processes an organization will need from their technology. This solution is often the best choice if a company’s business requirements are so specific that a single ERP cannot address their unique set of business conditions.

Conversely, the Best in Class ERP solution combines the core functions of an organization into a single, integrated, enterprise-wide software suite. There is tight integration between functions, linking finance, sales, reservations, POS, maintenance, and other functions in a single universe.

What to Look for in an ERP Solution Provider

Marketing language tends to blur the lines between ERP solution providers and makes it harder to distinguish actual capabilities. Everyone claims to have rapid and agile implementation methodologies, but not all do. Some things to look for include:

- Average actual implementation times say a lot about a solution provider and their approach. Data from an independent source on this can be more reliable.
- Frequency and duration of business disruptions after implementation.
- Guidance given by the solution provider during the evaluation period – does the provider truly understand the business and industry? Are they acting as a strategic partner?
- Industry-specific blueprint approach – if the provider claims to have a pre-configured industry-specific blueprint, ask to see it and explore what effort will be required to make it work.
- Agile approach during the sales cycle – does the provider quickly turn around a demo of what the implemented solution will look like? Ask them what work will need to be done upon go-live to achieve what is shown in the demo.

Employee Skill Level

Are the employees tech-savvy? Are they able and willing to adjust to a new system, or do they require a straightforward user interface? What level of training will they need? If the employees are used to and enjoy using a previous system or program and do not wish to adapt to too many changes, look for an ERP system that’s structured similarly to what is already in place.

Cost Calculation

The budget is a crucial factor in the selection process. Selecting and implementing a new ERP solution can be a heavy investment, however there are often other expenses in addition to the initial costs. Add-ons and the ability to connect with other applications/programs to the ERP can cost money and time. Before making a final decision, make sure the cost being evaluated is the total cost.

Automatic Updates

The marketplace and society are changing quickly, and the company and its software need to be able to adapt. It is important to ensure that the ERP solution selected updates with a reasonable amount of frequency to avoid being left with an old and outdated system in a few years.

Vendor Services

Find out if a potential ERP vendor offers a guaranteed response time for any issues or any support plans. Make note of the quality of service provided by the vendor so the company knows what to expect, which can save frustration down the road.

Key Considerations for ERP Selection

In addition to the bullets listed above, when selecting an ERP system, there are four important areas of consideration to be aware of.

- Does the company only need core functionalities or are there special needs?
- Does the company need a highly customizable solution or is it okay to modify some of the current business processes?
- Can the company draft high-level requirements for each business unit?

With these answers, the search for ERP vendors that meet an organization’s unique needs can begin.

The Business Environment

Why It’s Beneficial to Outsource the ERP Selection Process

Drafting a high-level ERP requirements document can take a significant amount of time. Company resources are likely already overburdened and may not have sufficient time...
to devote to ensure success. One way to ensure this is done right the first time is to engage an experienced ERP selection consultant to act as your facilitator.

An ERP selection consultant can outline the limitations and capabilities of available ERP solutions and find the best fit for the organization’s needs and budget. Do not leave key strategic decisions completely in the hands of overburdened staff. Below are three reasons why outsourcing the ERP selection process will make the process more successful and your organization more profitable.

Consultants provide a fresh perspective
Organizations involved in ERP selection, or any business application, know their own business and processes and recognize they have a need that’s not being met. Outside consultants may not know the specific business as well, but they do know the specifics of ERP products and the industries they support. The ‘outsider’ has seen alternate ways to meet organization needs in a more efficient software deployment. This fresh perspective allows consultants to continually ask the ‘why’ question. Why is this process done? Why is this report needed? What information and insights is this specific data providing? Not being involved in the internal politics of an organization also makes it easier for an outsider to potentially identify any gaps and/or bottlenecks and unearth inefficient and/or broken processes.

Consultants understand how to navigate the cloud-first approach
Most ERP needs can be completely met through cloud technology. In the mid-2000s, many organizations balked at cloud ERP solutions for fear that business continuity was at risk, or that their data was unsecure. As we now know, business continuity is far more secure when software is hosted by a solid vendor. A ‘solid vendor’ is defined as an organization that makes its financial results public. This is important since you do not want the selected ERP cloud provider to go out of business without warning. Public reporting gives a company fair time to change providers if necessary. The security risk has been demonstrated not only to be a red herring, but the contrary is true. In most cases, an individual company cannot compete with the security levels of ERP cloud vendors.

ERP provider organizations cannot tolerate any security breaches, as it would immediately drain their customer base. Most individual organizations cannot match cloud vendors’ security spending. Typically, a “cloud-first” approach delivers more value for ERP spending: less expensive to procure, quicker to deploy, faster recoup of investment and better ROI.

Consultants have specific product and industry expertise
ERP selection consultants are experts in their domain and provide the following value to the process:

- They understand the role of the Sales Reps.
- They have intimate knowledge of vendors’ various strengths and weaknesses by industry.
- They understand the software licensing contracts and know-how and when to buy.

The decision to implement a (new) ERP system is a critical one. It is a significant investment of company capital and team member time. Proper planning, evaluation and budgeting is crucial in the success of the implementation.

About Withumsmith+Brown (Withum)
Withum is a forward-thinking, technology-driven advisory and accounting firm, committed to helping clients in the hospitality industry be more profitable, efficient and productive in the modern business landscape. For further information about Withum and the Digital Advisory Team, contact Lena Combs (LCombs@Withum.com) at (407) 849-1569, or visit www.withum.com.
At Royal®, we take great pride in producing quality products on a short timeline. Our goal is to provide solutions for collecting, sorting, storage and transport that will improve your process and efficiencies. Organizing becomes easy when you have mobile storage solutions.

Royal Basket Trucks® believes that carts should be made to fit into your environment to improve your workflow and efficiencies. For this reason, they build every cart to order and ship on a short timeline of seven business days. Organizing becomes easy when you have mobile storage solutions. Although a natural fit in laundry operations, Royal’s® products aid in efficiency with general sorting, collecting, cleaning, organizing, and recycling. Royal Basket carts help you organize and move a variety of materials in your environment.

Royal Basket Trucks® is a unique manufacturing company located in Wisconsin. All products are manufactured in the USA and made to order. The company has been manufacturing carts since 1982, and the company has grown and evolved over the years. Canvas carts for mail rooms and laundries got the company started, but continual product development and enhancements has made Royal® a recognized brand of material handling solutions for many markets and are available through distributors throughout North America.

Royal® manufactures durable carts designed for years of service. From standard vinyl or plastic carts to specialty storage and collection carts, Royal® has solutions that will assist in organizing and improving efficiencies in your environment. Use color to distinguish sorting and collecting functions. Or select a divided cart. From slight modifications to full custom design and manufacturing, modifications and customization capabilities continue to set Royal® apart. Printing or labeling of your brand, team message or specific application of use is easy when you work with the Royal® Team.

Check out Royal’s® full product line at www.royal-basket.com or contact our customer service team at sales@royal-basket.com or via telephone at 1-800-426-6447 to request a pdf of our current catalog.

**DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE with cart solutions from Royal Basket®**

**Designer Towel Station by Royal®**

Elevate the guest experience with the Designer Towel Station by Royal Basket Trucks®.

Don’t compromise any longer…..

Style can be functional, for your guests and your staff. This Royal® solution provides a stylish bronze and brown shelved unit to offer fresh towels to guests while incorporating a functional collection cart that will please your staff and maintain process efficiencies.

An oversized opening in the bottom shelf section, allows for gently tossed towels to drop into the collection cart below. The collection cart is included and features a basket-weave pattern, bronze powder coated frame, base and locking casters. Additional collection carts available.

The bronze powder coated steel frame and base are easily moved into place on heavy duty polyurethane locking casters. The indoor/ outdoor fabric cover provides a finished look and functionality to protect shelved contents.

The Royal® Designer Towel Station is Made in America, as are all of Royal’s® products. This solution requires some partial assembly.

Royal Basket Trucks® believes that carts should be made to fit into your environment to improve your workflow and efficiencies. For this reason, we build every cart to order and ship on a short timeline. Organizing becomes easy when you have mobile storage solutions. Sorting, collecting, cleaning, organizing, transporting, recycling…..the list is endless. Royal® Basket’s carts help you organize and move a variety of materials throughout your property and operations.

Located in Darien, Wisconsin, Royal® has been manufacturing carts since 1982 and has become a recognized brand providing material handling solutions to customers in many markets. Modifications and customization capabilities continue to set Royal® apart.

Check out the full Royal® product line at www.royal-basket.com.

**Bulk Transport Solutions by Royal®**

Efficiency and function are the two most important goals with bulk transportation of linens and goods. The function of the cart, ease of use at the front and back end of the process leads to an efficient process. The Royal Basket® line of Bulk Transport Carts offers bulk poly and turnaround trucks along with various standard and custom covers.

This line of carts is standard with non-marking, quiet polyurethane casters that are mounted in such a way to make maintenance easy.

Need different casters? No problem - just ask. The sloped design of the bottom inside of these carts provides four 4” drain slots – not holes on a flat surface. The goal is faster water drainage after cleaning and sanitizing, which helps to put the cart back in service faster.

Identifying carts with content lists, property locations, etc. is easy with Royal Basket® solutions. Request large clear pockets for identification or paperwork. Royal® will mount clear pockets to the outside of the cart. Or maybe you need numbering, branding, or location ID’s. Royal® offers labeling and numbering to provide the most efficient use of carts in your environment and process. Add Sorting and Collecting Solutions from Royal® and watch your efficiencies improve.

Check out the full Royal® product line at www.royal-basket.com.
Meet Elaina Jones, August Donor

As a natural born giver I am always involved and trying to find ways to giving back. I partnered with my community in raising breast cancer awareness through the Auto Nation Cure Bowl, the Orlando Sports Foundation, and Give Kids The World. Little did I know that on March 2nd of 2018 that I would be diagnosed with the very same illness I’d had so strongly advocated. It was a shock to myself and my family. I had just helped my husband recover from open heart surgery while taking care of my 8 and 10 year old. I must say that on the day we were given the news my heart stopped, my body went numb, and all I can remember is my husband holding me in utter disbelief with no words. Immediately the first thing that came to mind were my children and my faith in God. I took a stand that day and my husband joined me in agreement. I said, “I will see my children graduate and walk down the isle one day. I will get to see my grandchildren”. My breast cancer was triggered by hormones and had spread with a vengeance. Immediately I was placed on chemotherapy. I had dramatically changed the way I was eating by incorporating organic foods that helped fight cancer. I took my exercising up a notch and made sure my sleeping patterns were consistent. I knew that stress was not going to help my healing process so I had to stop working for a long time and by the grace of God we made ends meet. My surgeries seem to have been a success and I must continue my hormone therapy for years to come but all I know is that everyday I fight to live the life I deserve and so far I am winning!

Eliane

Send Me on Vacation’s mission is "To Provide a much needed vacation to under served women with breast cancer who need a place to rejuvenate and heal their body, mind and spirit." The adverse effects of fighting cancer can leave women, their families and friends in shambles. We believe that an essential first step in surviving the effects of breast cancer is to provide survivors with a healing vacation to "take a break" from the fight. If interested in becoming a recipient, donor or sponsor please contact us at backuscathy@gmail.com www.sendmeonvacation.org

As the world returns to travel, we’re ready. Get access to a full travel network with all-new benefits for members. A place where they can plan, book, and save in one spot. All-new benefits. All-new tools. All for RCI members.

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Email: info@aspennational.com
Website: http://aspennational.com/collections/Specialty: For more than 20 years, we have specialized in consumer debt collections for companies involved in timeshare or vacation ownership resorts. Our well-trained professionals will respectfully remind your owners/members of the value of their vacation purchase. We depend solely on the successful recovery of delinquent debt and will customize a program to fit your resort’s needs.

BLACKWELL

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FAIRSHARE SOLUTIONS

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Website: www.Fairshare.Solutions
Contact: Dennis P Rogers
Specialty: Sometimes there is more than one reason for a delinquency or default. At Fairshare we have the sophistication, experience, sales, and customer service skills needed to solve them all. Diligent contact is key. We go far beyond the ‘Agency’ model of just ‘dialing for dollars’. We also bring empathy, data mining, customer care, and an understanding of your bottom line. We don’t just collect accounts; we collect customers. So as we succeed in recovering more of your delinquent and written-off portfolios, you will succeed in retaining valuable customers!

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RNS Timeshare Management Software
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Website: www.TimeshareManagementSoftware.com
Contact: Bob Ackerman
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Website: www.TheTrades.com
Contact: Sharon Scott Wilson, RRP
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SPECIALTY: Capital Vacations is a vacation ownership and hospitality organization which provides quality, customized management services for the timeshare industry. Capital Vacations is composed of three proven management organizations (SPM Resort, Defender Resorts and Capital Resorts Group). Combined they have more than 70 years of experience managing resorts and offering services from human resources, accounting, operations, marketing and sales.

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Motto: “From NEW to LEGACY Resort Management”
SPECIALTY: Dennis DiTinno, a 38 year Resort and Timeshare Management Professional. Speaker and author to the Timeshare resort industry, ARDA, TBMA, FTGIO, NTOA, FVRMA, Condo Alliance. Consulting, Mentoring and designing Timeshare Community Managers and Boards to over 34 Resorts since 2000 using Hands on management techniques, teaching, re-sales, rentals and much more. Concerned for the future and Legacy status of your resort? Contact us today at CEO@LiberteManagement.com for an open and direct discussion on your resort.

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Website: www.hammerheadvac.com
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Contact: Georgi Bohrod
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Specialty: ADS Consulting is the predominant vacation ownership sales and leadership development firm. We specialize in 3 primary specialties. We increase sales PRODUCTIVITY by delivering the number 1 two-day seminar workshops. We enhance leadership PERFORMANCE and effectiveness by elevating their wisdom, expertise, and motivation. Lastly, we increase bottom-line PROFITS by providing the most comprehensive revenue and profit report by delivering our DS Analysis. We are experts at helping companies improve their sales and marketing systems and processes. We are the right solution.

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RETAILS
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Phone: 800-647-4130
Email: DMilbrath@BayTreeSolutions.com
Website: www.BayTreeSolutions.com
Contact: Doug Milbrath
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Specialty: Shari Levitin is the author of the bestseller, Heart and Sell, a frequent contributor to Forbes, CEO Magazine, Huffington Post, and guest lecturer at Harvard. Shari started in the timeshare industry in 1997, and her team has increased revenues for companies like Wyndham, Hilton, and RCI in over 40 countries.

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