intellect

White Paper

Smart Enterprise Apps Empower Business Executives on the Go

Learn how Host Hotels & Resorts, a Fortune 500 company and the largest lodging Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) and one of the largest owners of luxury and upper-upscale hotels, revolutionized its strategy for managing and approving capital expenditures and associated contracts across their entire portfolio of properties. With Smart Enterprise Apps built on the Intellect BPM Platform, Business Executives now have access and insight into the status of all projects, requests for improvements, and contracts, at anytime, anywhere.

HOST
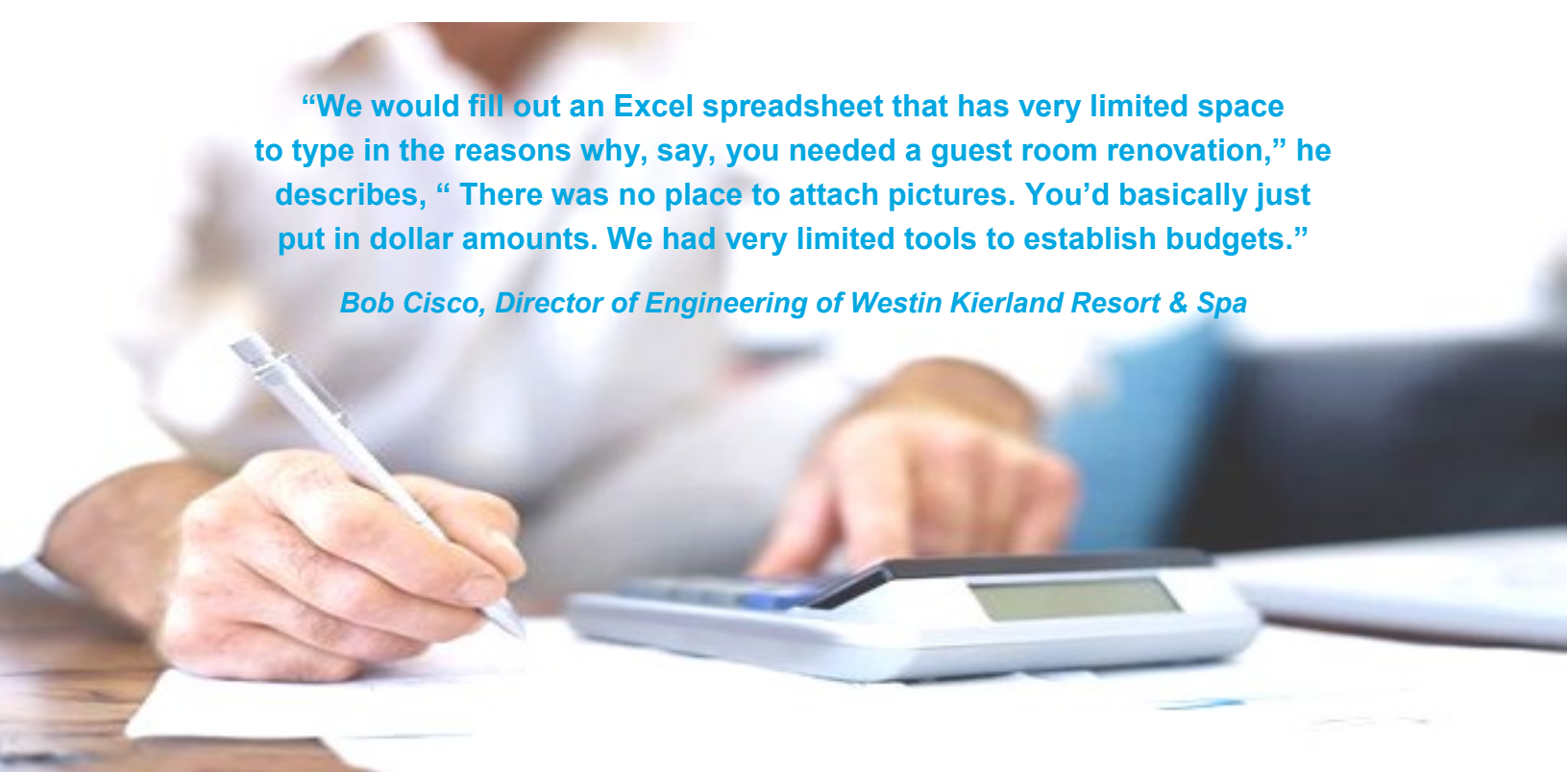HOTELS & RESORTS®

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Managing 250 Acres With Excel

Bob Cisco is a busy man.

As Director of Engineering for the Westin-Kierland in Scottsdale, Arizona, Bob is responsible for every aspect of the resort's ongoing improvements. The property sits on 250 acres. It has 732 guestrooms, 27 holes of golf, and a full spa and pool complex. Its indoor ballrooms take up 70,000 square feet, and it has 100,000 square feet of pristinely manicured outdoor space. Needless to say, it is no small task.

The Westin-Kierland is one of 115 resort properties owned by Host Hotels & Resorts, a Fortune 100 real estate investment trust (REIT). A major part of Bob's job includes justifying capital improvements to the parent company. The process is especially complex in that it requires balancing the property's current need for dollars with Host's need to cover major improvements years down the road.

Until fairly recently Bob created his proposals the old fashioned way.

> **"We would fill out an Excel spreadsheet that has very limited space to type in the reasons why, say, you needed a guest room renovation,"** he describes, **" There was no place to attach pictures. You'd basically just put in dollar amounts. We had very limited tools to establish budgets."**
>
> *Bob Cisco, Director of Engineering of Westin Kierland Resort & Spa*

Bob knew he needed a better way – a technology that would allow him to make the best presentation possible in the shortest amount of time with the least amount of headache.

Hours of Travel, Uncontrollable Delays

Then there's Larry Oleck.

Larry is one of a handful of Host program managers with the title of Vice President of Capital Expenditures. He is responsible for managing the flow of money applied to the maintenance and improvement of the company's properties. Larry is personally in charge of overseeing hundreds of millions of dollars for anywhere between 12 and 24 projects at all different stages of the completion cycle.

Larry is no stranger to dealing with the requests and challenges of on-site directors. He regularly reviews and makes decisions about a whole range of capital improvement projects, all while spending about fifty percent of his time on the road visiting Host's various properties.

One of the problems with relying on a relatively small number of highly mobile executives to approve substantial capital expenditures was that it often led to delays. And these delays were no mere inconveniences. The Westin-Kierland, for example, outsources the bulk of its property improvement work to local outside contractors. Approval hold-ups regularly influenced how quickly these contracting firms could get paid. To be more productive Larry needed an enterprise mobility solution.

The Search For a Modern Solution Begins

Enter Katie Palmer.

After working at Host for a decade and a half, Katie was promoted from a Senior Director position to Vice President of Capital Financial Services. She suddenly found herself responsible for providing support to areas ranging from budgeting to contracts to invoicing for executives and managers like Bob Cisco and Larry Oleck. At the time she assumed her new position her department was using a static database to which only she and a few members of her team had access. When any new or edited document came in, Katie had to manually update it. Outside of that, she relied on a flurry of emails, phone calls, faxes, and FedEx packages to get the signatures, pages, and information she needed. Producing accurate forecasts and providing timely assistance was nearly impossible.

Fortunately, as Vice President, Katie was in a position to spur change. And that's exactly what she did.

Within weeks of assuming her new role, Katie and a handful of executives she worked with dove into a search for a new solution.

A Flexible BPM Solution

Katie felt she needed a technology platform that she and her team could control, while still allowing Host's remote workforce to access the tool in order to keep information up to date and facilitate the smooth delivery of contracts, invoices, and paperwork. After a wide search, they finally settled on Southern California software company Intellect, as their vendor and partner.

In recalling the solution they worked on together, Intellect CEO Romeo Elias, saw a broader shift in the progression of business and technology.

"The movement of empowering the individual businessperson has been a trend. It started with the Internet—build your own website, then build your own blog, build your own social page. That's appeared across the board – except when it comes to software development."

Romeo Elias, President and CEO of Intellect

Katie Palmer saw in Intellect's quest to remedy this oversight the answer to Host's problems.

Initially, they launched a version of Intellect's BPM software product that Host rebranded internally as Champion. It was specifically designed to allow corporate personnel to automate business processes and create custom workflows by dragging and dropping, which eliminated the need for programmers. As a cloud-based solution, Champion became available anywhere, anytime, and it was easy to update as business needs changed. Resort-level directors could now input a complete project scope when budgeting and requesting funds, with photo attachments, potential vendors, and detailed explanations. The system performed automatic calculations so executives and staff could determine the amount of resources available now and forecast what would be available in the future. The entire workflow took place within the system so that employees were notified as to what steps they had to take at appropriate times rather than firing off a barrage of emails and phone calls.

While the implementation of the system led almost immediately to major improvements in speed and accuracy, there was still the outstanding problem of how to efficiently connect the Bob Ciscos and Larry Olecks who were often on the road. To solve this problem, they took advantage of Intellect's Smart Enterprise Mobile Apps and freed Host from its desktop-bound existence.

Fully Tailored Mobile Apps

Like most business people, VPs of Capital Expenditures like Larry rely heavily on their mobile devices. They regularly use their tablets and smartphones to get work done during downtime in airports and waiting areas, although they have typically been limited in terms of what they can do. Katie Palmer chose to adopt the growing trend of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). She viewed this trend as an opportunity and immediately moved to seize it. They implemented software for Host that allows corporate decision makers use the same drag-and-drop functionality of the desktop version to build sophisticated but easy to develop Smart Mobile Apps for the enterprise. Each app is designed for specific functionality that various kinds of employees can access from wherever they happen to be. People in the industry call these new solutions, Business to Employees or B2E mobile apps.

Everyone seems to agree that mobile is important, but businesses don't have many options today if they want to mobilize their workforce with a mobile app, outside of hiring a developer. Intellect has automated all the complexity a developer is typically required for, and provides Smart Mobile Apps that require no programming from design to deployment .

"Intellect offers substantial-database driven, processing, logic, workflows, rules, dashboards, reporting, access control. The concept is that Smart Mobile Apps allows them to access backend systems and data on the go in a way that makes sense to their business process. We provide all that infrastructure so you can really build something you feel is useful to your company, your employees in the field, and executives on the go."

Romeo Elias, President and CEO of Intellect

The New Smart Mobile Dynamic

Larry describes how the Smart Mobile App solution is transforming the way he and the company he works for do business.

"We are highly mobile people in our jobs," he says, "We are always traveling to our assets and reviewing the work. At the same time, we have to approve and review and do actions with the software on a daily basis. So having a mobile app platform that allows us to accomplish this from wherever we are is tremendous."

Larry Oleck, Vice President of Capital Expenditures of Host

With lower wait times and more accurate budgets come more fluid cash flow, more productive contractors, and higher quality construction. Most importantly, capital improvements aligned with what guests really want invariably results in more revenue and higher profits over both the short and long term.

"I rely on accuracy of information, and the only way I can get accurate information is to give something to somebody that's accessible. Now, wherever they are, out there doing what they do, they're constantly working inside the system. And they love it. As a result, I have the ability to paint a picture of the state of affairs across the entire organization that's as close to reality as possible so the most senior executives and everyone down the chain can make the best business decisions possible."

Katie Palmer, Vice President of Capital Financial Services of Host Hotels

About Intellect

Intellect is a leader in SaaS BPM software that empowers business people to innovate with Smart Enterprise Apps, offering the industry's most advanced capabilities for connecting apps, people and processes. Intellect's award winning Intellect's BPM platform enables non-programmers to create, use, and manage a wide variety of enterprise apps with built-in forms, data, workflow, and highly customizable reporting – all with the ability to integrate with legacy enterprise applications.

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