

CASE STUDY: A TMB Accredited Adviser could help you identify the right ICT solution to meet your business objectives



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DAVID LITTLEFAIR,
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
HIDEAWAY COUNTRY HOLIDAYS

Business Solutions:

- Enhanced customer service
- Centralised systems linking Leeds with Scotland
- Broadband
- Website development



DTI supports TMB and recognises the contribution it makes to improving business performance.

Time and again businesses set about collecting quotes for technology solutions and then realise the vastness of the selection available and the multitude of suppliers. With so much information, it can make identifying the right solution to meet their business objectives increasingly difficult.

One company that experienced just that was Hideaway Country Holidays, which runs Culcreuch Castle in Scotland. After discovering the overwhelming choice available the tour operator contacted John Page, a Technology Means Business (TMB) Accredited Adviser, to help them successfully integrate ICT (information and communications technology) within their organisation.



Primarily Hideaway needed to address the issue that their head office is based in Leeds, with Culcreuch Castle based several hundred miles away in Scotland. The location of the two sites presented staffing and communications problems that needed to be dealt with. The existing website also needed to be utilised to increase online sales.

The Business Solutions

After working closely with Hideaway Country Holidays, John Page identified and implemented the ICT solutions below.

A centralised system linking Leeds with Scotland was introduced using an Internet-based software service provider (ASP) that acts as a central repository for hotel bookings, with the telephone, food and beverage charges brought together to produce guest bills, then downloading end of day summaries to the accounting system.

Customer service was enhanced due to both locations being able to simultaneously load forward reservations during the initial set-up period, and subsequently back each other up at peak periods, enabling a better service delivered to guests with the existing number of 30+ staff.

A broadband connection was installed, which meant the Castle and the head office were permanently connected to the Internet ensuring emails could be received instantly and responded to within a quicker time period, again enhancing customer service levels.

With new development work, the website – www.culcreuch.com - now provides availability checks and shows the complete range of special rates, encouraging more reservations.

The Results:

Once all the systems have bedded down, Hideaway Country Holidays expects an occupancy increase of 10 – 15 per cent with a parallel increase in profitability. Both of which allow for plans to be made for further stages of technology development, such as extending broadband availability to guests and conference facilities.

David Littlefair, Managing Director of Hideaway Country Holidays, said: "We have to thank our TMB Accredited Adviser for knowing about these possibilities and for explaining to us how they would give us all the advantages we were seeking, and indeed allow us to consider even more integration than we had first thought possible."

Business Lessons

- Receiving the right advice: Seeking advice that is TMB accredited

For organisations considering ICT developments, David said "Seek a TMB Accredited Adviser to guide you through the technical maze and to problem solve when this inevitably occurs during the implementation phase, even after careful planning."

- Project management: Working together to stay on the right track

David added "We have been able to call our TMB Accredited Adviser, John Page, as and when required and he has personally prompted us when necessary, to keep us on the right track. He has always considered our preferences and priorities, and ensured that suppliers meet their contracted objectives, both in terms of time and quality."

- Achieving objectives: Remaining focused on the end goal

"Using a TMB Accredited Adviser in this way has enabled us to move forward to achieve our objectives, confident that we are choosing the most appropriate suppliers, products and services and without us having to divert ourselves from the main task of keeping our business running", concluded David Littlefair.

TMB Accredited Advisers are able to:

- Understand the uniqueness of your organisation and the issues you face
- Identify the most appropriate ICT solution for you, rather than just looking to make a quick sale
- Tailor advice to your individual business needs, minimising the use of jargon
- Help you plan and implement ICT projects within your organisation

What is Technology Means Business?

TMB is a professional accreditation for those providing business related ICT advice to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Backed by the Government, the objective of TMB is to help companies make better use of ICT to gain competitive advantage and ultimately become more profitable.

To achieve this, TMB has established a national register of Accredited Advisers and Approved Centres (organisations), who are dedicated to helping companies with all aspects of ICT understanding and operation.

SMEs can search by region, specialism or postcode on the TMB national register at www.tmb.org.uk to find an Accredited Adviser or Approved Centre to meet their individual business needs.

