Summerstar Tourist Parks

One of Australia's most progressive multi-park groups, Summerstar, is making every post a winner with the RMS 9+ Enterprise System. Summerstar boasts a far-flung network of ten parks throughout Western Australia, from Esperance in the south to the remote outback mining town of Tom Price in the north. Managing such a large network presents significant logistical challenges but General Manager James Corbitt, who is based in Perth, says RMS Cloud technology is up to the task.

DATA ON DEMAND

"I am a data-driven person and like to keep my finger on the pulse - RMS effectively enables us to remotely manage the parks," says James. "Monday morning 7am I'll have a number of reports automatically shoot out to our emails from RMS and because it's cloud-based we can bring all of our parks into the one database. We worked closely with RMS over a period of about two years to make that happen. What we can do now is just pull reports straight out of the one database on a property by property basis or as a group to really gauge the performance of our network." James says RMS provides him with an excellent overview of the business, monitoring key performance indicators.

Horrocks, WA

INTEGRATED CHANNEL MANAGER

Using the fully integrated RMS Channel Manager has streamlined rate setting and product distribution, he says. "When I first started, we had a number of Channel Managers for each park so setting rates was an arduous process. You had to go into RMS for the over the counter aspect and into each of the different channel managers and set rates there too." This was time-consuming and sometimes frustrating with potential for data input errors. Now it's much easier. "That's the main functionality I use in RMS. It's relatively quick and easy to go in and set rates." He adds that "effective rate setting can increase bottom-line revenue by 7% to 10% on the same asset" through strategic techniques such as stretching shoulder periods.

WEBSITE AND API

Summerstar relaunched its website and connected to a new API utilising RMS technology over several months in late 2018 and early 2019. "There's been a lot of hours spent by our Search Engine Optimisation team in optimising the new website," he says. "We're pushing a lot more people to the site and we've made it easier and simpler for them to book." He adds sales have further increased since the API was connected in February. "It means we can control and track the look and feel for the customer to see what works and what doesn't. With marketing and promotions, for example, we can see the click through rates from emails, we can see where people are looking on the site and instantly change our approach if required. I think that's been the main contributing factor to the increase in online bookings as well as the growth of direct bookings."

Esperance, WA

OTAS AND DIRECT BOOKINGS

Since the site relaunch and API integration, Summerstar has been on a mission to increase its direct online bookings. For a very good reason. It's the simplest and most effective strategy to increase the bottom line through saving on expensive commissions charged by Online Travel Agents such as Booking.com and Expedia. "We want to make sure our website is the go-to place when booking online and that it's as easy and smooth as possible," he says.

> "We are seeing an increase of 100% to 200% in some parks in the online space and have doubled our split of direct bookings.

James Corbitt
General Manager Summerstar

Summerstar also wants to be the best value channel and has launched a 5% discount offer for bookings made in non-peak periods on Summerstar.com.au. "So far that's working a treat. Generally, customer behavior is that they'll check our website, they'll check the OTAs and all review sites – all before they book."

"What we're trying to do is nab the booking from the OTA. We want people to use our website, get the best price and save ourselves the 10%, 12% or 15% in the process. As a result of all the changes over the past six months we are seeing an increase of 100% to 200% in some parks in the online space and have doubled our split of direct bookings. We were around 15% across the parks for direct bookings, which isn't great, so to see that grow to 30% on average across the parks is really satisfying."

| 15% |
| 30% |

Direct Bookings

FULL STEAM AHEAD

All the indicators are looking very positive for Summerstar and RMS is proud to have helped that happen. "Visitor nights are up, occupancy is tracking up and forward bookings have also increased year on year," says James. "What we've done is increase our exposure and that's obviously paying off while all the changes we have made to the website and API has improved functionality, giving people the ability to plan their holiday and get online."

Summerstar founders, Dani and John Layman

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