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Collaboration Workspace

LAKES
Entertainment, Inc.

Customer Details:

Lakes Entertainment, Inc.
www.LakesEntertainment.com

Industry

Engineering and Construction

Challenges

- Better management and tracking of project communications across multiple geographies, internal offices and external partners
- Real-time access of key project information, regardless of project team member location
- 6 Clients enabled to have clearer visibility into project status and issues

Results

- Improved ability to rapidly access and communicate critical project information
- Increased accountability among all project participants
- Fewer breakdowns in communication
- Increased project transparency for clients
- High application acceptance among Lakes' contractors
- More accurate and thorough project data archives

Lakes Entertainment Inc

Lakes Entertainment Enables Real-Time Access to Project Communications While Increasing Project Transparency for Clients

Background

Lakes Entertainment Inc. develops, finances and manages American Indian – owned casinos across the U.S. The company currently has management contracts with five American Indian tribes in California, Oklahoma and Michigan for eight casino sites, and it recently announced plans to develop a company-owned casino resort project in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Lakes also owns approximately 61 percent of WPT Enterprises Inc. (NASDAQ: WPTE), a separate, publicly held media and entertainment company principally engaged in the development, production and marketing of gaming-themed televised programming, including the World Poker Tour television series, the licensing and sale of branded products and the sale of corporate sponsorships.

The Challenge

Inability to Efficiently Manage Communications across Geographies

As an organization that is continually engaged in large, complex capital projects across the US., Lakes Entertainment needed a better way to communicate with its geographically dispersed group of partners and project team members.

The ability to easily manage and track RFIs, submittals, directives and other project documents across multiple geographies and external organizations was becoming an essential component for project success, especially in an environment marked by tighter construction schedules and higher customer expectations.

Lakes personnel also needed a more effective way to access key project information in real time, regardless of where they happen to be located. The company's manual and fragmented approach to managing documentation prevented traveling team members from accessing and distributing important project data in a timely fashion.

Said Nightingale, "Because we're constantly traveling from project to project, it was becoming increasingly difficult to access and share project data and documents with our contractors and partners – and we recognized that this was impacting cost and schedule."

The Solution

Lakes approached one of its architectural firm partners regarding research results on collaborative content management applications. "This partner had conducted extensive research into the pros and cons of every viable content collaboration solution out there," said Nightingale, "They were actively looking for a solution for themselves, but they were kind enough to share their detailed findings with us, in which they had concluded that Collaboration Workspace was the best option."

After conducting his own evaluation, Nightingale and his team also determined that Sword CTSpace's enterprise content collaboration solution delivered via a SaaS (Software as a Service) platform — would be the best option for Lakes. The company purchased a Collaboration Workspace enterprise agreement and implemented the solution's document management functionality in three large projects in less than one week,

The Results

Real-Time Access to Project information

Since deploying Collaboration Workspace, Lakes has seen dramatic improvement in its ability to access and communicate critical project information. This has enabled its contractors and partners to get the information they need, when they need it, preventing project delays and unnecessary change orders.

"When we're asked a question or need to resolve an urgent issue, we now have a centralized repository of real-time project data and documents to use and reference," said Nightingale, "All we need is an Internet connection and we can access the information almost instantly. We can also now enforce business processes. This helps ensure that documents are routed efficiently and according to our predetermined business rules."

Improved Accountability

According to Nightingale, Collaboration Workspace has also helped Lakes save time, improve accountability and save on printing and shipping costs. Documents can be routed instantly, without having to resort to email.

"The fact that you just upload a drawing onto the site and everyone who needs to see it automatically gets notified, that's huge for us," he said. "And because the system time-stamps everything, you know who received it, who viewed it and when they responded. This has allowed us to improve accountability and avoid breakdowns in communication."

Increased Project Transparency for Clients

By providing clients with access to their projects using Collaboration Workspace, Lakes also enables them to have better visibility into the projects. The company has even gone as far as to place a webcam at one of its current project sites to allow the project owner to monitor progress.

"Clients can now get a better appreciation for the transactional activity that goes on in a project every day," explained Nightingale. "In that respect, Collaboration Workspace has become a differentiator for us. It allows our clients to feel closer to the project, stay abreast of project issues and come better prepared to discuss and address key concerns at the weekly meetings."

General Contractor Acceptance

Nightingale commented that system acceptance among its contractors and architects has been very high. Although some partners were initially reluctant to use the system for RFIs and directives, ultimately most come back to Lakes with very positive feedback. "Once they see how much time and frustration the system saves them it becomes much more than a 'forced' system — it's now a tool to help them do their work much more efficiently."

One of Lakes' partners that has benefited greatly from Collaboration Workspace is Cunningham Group, the architect of a current Lakes project, the Foothills Oaks Casino. "We have to work very closely with Lakes and about 30 additional consultants in this project," said Pete Legeros, an associate in the Cunningham Group. "As the point person for RFIs and other documentation, I have to read, receive and distribute virtually all of the project's documentation. Collaboration Workspace allows me to manage this process much faster and with half the staff I would need if we were doing this manually."

Easily Archive All Project Data at Closeout

In terms of project records, the ability to permanently archive all project data at closeout is a big benefit for Lakes. "In the past, project data would be scattered among several different people and in dozens of offices, PCs and filing cabinets," said Nightingale. "With Collaboration Workspace, we always have all project communications in one place. And once the project is closed out, we simply archive it to CD."

Seasoned and Construction-Savvy Software Partner

When asked about Sword CTSpace and its responsiveness to Lakes' needs, Nightingale commented: "Sword CTSpace has always been very responsive to our requests, questions and suggestions. Their people are very knowledgeable about our industry, our business processes and the challenges we face. Having a seasoned and construction-savvy software partner has been a big plus."

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