Fighting Disruption:
A Lodging Company Finds Agility with Projility's Hammerhead Solution

hammerhead
by **Projility**

The hospitality and travel industry has been growing steadily over the past couple of years. Stability in the United States labor market and increases in disposable income have bolstered this upturn, with enhanced consumer confidence equaling more business and family travel. Hotel occupancy levels are breaking records along with global business travel, which totaled more than $2.1 trillion in 2015 alone. The outlook for the industry as a whole is positive; spending for goods like food and clothing continues to decline as spending on services continues to creep higher and higher.

Since hotels play the role of "home away from home" for weary travelers, trust is their biggest resource. Many people only visit hotels two to three times per year, so each stay is crucial to a brand's image. One bad night may turn a long-time customer away forever, especially in such a highly-competitive marketplace.

Hotels are on the move, looking for ways to offer more exclusive experiences to their clientele. Small, boutique hotels have become immensely popular. Rooms are being reimagined, and common areas are being reconsidered. To stay ahead of the competition, every detail must be carefully examined.

Everyday Threats Present Real Challenges

As with every industry, negative – and often uncontrollable – forces are in play that threaten the livelihood of even the most resilient businesses.

Hotels face daily turmoil due to:

1. Local and global economic environments:
When the economy of an entire city or nation suffers, the impact can be felt on tourism and travel for hundreds of miles. It also affects travel behavior, which can already vary from trip to trip for one person.

2. Unrest and instability around the world:
As with economic changes, things like politics, terrorism, and natural disasters also discourage travelers who may fear their safety. Hotels can do nothing when something like the Zika virus breaks out – or a hurricane devastates an entire area, as we saw in 2016 when Hurricane Matthew caused flooding that stretched from southern Florida to the Carolinas.

3. Technological innovations that alter core operations:
Companies are looking to transform the market in a variety of ways. Whether it's customizing a traveler's experience based on social media activity or providing a mobile application to make a stay more interactive, hotels are trying to walk a fine line between being cutting-edge and still maintaining that personal contact that customers demand. And with the endless options the Internet of Things (IoT) brings to the table, it seems like nothing is unattainable – or safe, for that matter, thanks to cyber attacks and threats.

4. Market disruptors that lurk behind virtual closed doors:
Airbnb radically changed the hospitality and travel industry. By flooding the market with private accommodations and unique experiences, many hotels were left scrambling to keep up. Online travel agencies also threaten to undermine profits as they draw visitors in with expensive advertising campaigns and deep discounts.

A Hotel Giant Looks to Stay Nimble with Project Online

One of the world's largest lodging providers was referred to Projility in 2014. They were an early adopter of Project Online, Microsoft's powerful Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tool. Although the company was pleased with Project Online's capabilities, management soon began to realize that they needed some very specific solutions to maximize the application's effectiveness and support their unique reporting needs.

There were no out-of-the-box applications that could handle the hospitality company's demands. In particular, they wanted to be able to gather new concepts from employees across the company within their idea hub, analyze and refine custom data sets from various sources, and then spawn projects from these ideas. Additionally, they wanted to generate multiple projects from each single idea stored in their SharePoint list; native Project Online functionality only allows for one project to be created per SharePoint list item.

Hammerhead Solves Limitations with Its Data Warehouse

Management knew immediately that Projility's Hammerhead solution was the missing link for their Project Online needs. Hammerhead's PPM data warehouse would not only resolve their reporting issues, but it would also allow the company to customize its Project Online implementation.

With Projility and Hammerhead, the lodging giant realized:

• **Project insight and visibility.** With best-in-class reporting tools and robust, role-based dashboards, management can analyze data and make timely decisions. Vital insight into project details is available within just a few clicks.

• **Dynamic project creation.** When a PPM environment requires a specific integration or functionality that is not available out-of-the-box, Projility is there to help. Hammerhead serves as the go-between for the company's idea hub in SharePoint and Project Online, enabling the team to create multiple projects from a single SharePoint list. There is no time wasted on duplicate data entry or manual workarounds, saving countless hours of productivity.

• **Invaluable training assistance.** In the security arena, Projility's experts were able to teach managers and administrators how to define roles and hierarchies for proper database access, helping to alleviate chain-of-custody and insider-threat concerns.

Threats are Countered Through Prioritization

From idea generation within SharePoint to idea implementation in Project Online, the lodging company found that it was missing idea prioritization in its PPM. Hammerhead allows the company to complete its full project management cycle with custom data sets and multiple SharePoint projects – all while aligning projects to meet enterprise goals. The data that is now at management's fingertips can be used to look at the big picture and assess issues across its entire portfolio. Projility's PPM with Hammerhead provides:

• **Rapid Realignment –** When violent protests bring a city to a standstill or a new online travel site lures customers away with special incentives, the hospitality company can swiftly change its focus. Hammerhead's algorithm allows the company to reprioritize projects based on its changing needs. This means that management can have multiple contingency plans in place at the same time, but they don't have to activate one until it's absolutely necessary.

• **Clear Accountability –** Ideas can be tracked from beginning to end. Metrics like revenue, time, and success rate can be viewed and compared between project pipelines so that any organizational transformation can be traced to its origination. When a new application changes how hotels are booked, Hammerhead makes it easy to see where similar projects have stalled and why. New projects can be initiated swiftly to negate any disruption to the business.

• **Manageable Consistency –** As boutique hotels offer new experiences – both good and bad – the lodging company must still provide its customers with the consistent level of quality that its brand represents. Hammerhead allows management to integrate quality and assurance projects across the organization, ensuring that no matter what is going outside one of their hotel's doors, the customer will know precisely what to expect once they walk inside them.

A Strategic Partnership that Works

The hospitality company knows that no matter what it's working on, Hammerhead will be there to ensure seamless functionality with Project Online. And with Projility's team of seasoned experts, they can solve any problem without impacting their decision-making capabilities.

The company currently has approximately 900 Project Online users throughout the United States and overseas. In the future, management sees Projility as a much-needed asset for their Project Management Office. Hammerhead shortens their time-to-value process, enabling easy and convenient customization that a large lodging company needs to stay agile and fend off smaller competitors. And with increased awareness and understanding, perhaps the company itself will be the next one to disrupt the industry in which it serves - changing lodging as we know it - all while maintaining the level of quality that its customers have come to trust.