REVENUE MATTERS
profit from experience

RedLeaf transforms Revenue Matters' legacy business logic into a powerful, ready-to-market, strategic Business Intelligence Platform

In an industry where branded consultants usually provide standardized, process-driven services, Revenue Matters are hospitality revenue management consultants with a twist. This Colorado-based consultancy strives to offer its client partners a more holistic, creative, and strategic approach — they focus not only on managing a property's revenue but also on addressing the distribution and digital marketing efforts that drive it.

Rather than assuming a purely advisory role, the associates at Revenue Matters work alongside their clients to help them execute identified strategies. Each client has a dedicated director of revenue supported by the company's team of in-house analysts. Serving 110 properties throughout the US, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Costa Rica, and Italy, the 24 associates at Revenue Matters offer a far more collaborative approach than their competitors where a single associate often manages 15 properties or more.

Modernizing legacy business intelligence

As part of its service, Revenue Matters has leveraged the experience of Trevor Stuart-Hill, its Founder and President, to build a remarkably complex Excel-based workbook to analyze data and drive decisions. "We created a strategy board and pace reports from disparate sources inputted into tabs in Excel — that became increasingly time-consuming and cumbersome to manage," Stuart-Hill explains. "We were pulling reports from property management systems, and cleansing and formatting the data before we could paste it into the spreadsheet."

> A progressive organization wanting to remain on the cutting edge.

Ownership and maintenance were also issues. "Inevitably, a client would require customization and if their revenue director was unavailable or on vacation, the associate filling in had to learn all the nuances of how exactly we modified the spreadsheet to put their report together," says Stuart-Hill. "We had to maintain multiple spreadsheets — each based on different information, different clients, and different data views."

RedLeaf

As the final impetus to upgrade, independent client access to the spreadsheet on a subscription basis was gaining traction. "We had the confidence to say, 'Hey, if customers are subscribing, let's put it online and develop a subscriber base and the SaaS side of the business,'" says Stuart-Hill. "Unfortunately Excel isn't very contemporary — we needed to improve the offering to continue to be a forward-looking, progressive, organization on the cutting edge of the industry."

The right fit

Revenue Matters was looking for a dynamic partnership to assist them in the creation of MAX — Stuart-Hill's vision for a powerful, web-based, interactive analytics and business intelligence platform that improves efficiency in hotel revenue management through increased transparency, rapid trend detection, enhanced coordination, and powerful forecasting and budgeting features.

> *"We wanted an in-house solution … to stand apart from our competitors."*

The company considered options that included emerging industry-specific solutions, plus some off-the-shelf tools such as Cognos, and Microsoft BI, but dismissed them. "They had strong back-end capabilities but were also very expensive and some required hiring experts we didn't have on staff. They also weren't that much of a departure from Excel and certainly didn't integrate well into our day-to-day business processes," says Stuart-Hill. "Most importantly, we didn't want a leased solution. We wanted an in-house solution that we owned — one that allowed us to stand apart from our competitors and distinguished us as a service company with a technical wrapper."

Eventually, the company turned its attention to Red Leaf Software. "I was discussing our strategic goals for the platform with Peter Stark at Red Global and he recommended I talk to RedLeaf," says Stuart-Hill. RedLeaf had previously worked with Red Global, a top international hospitality management training firm, to deliver Stark a visionary software training platform.

"I wanted a partner in crime to help develop a solution that would be even stronger than what the other contenders could deliver," says Stuart-Hill. "I went through the Red Global training platform and saw the level of detail and industry knowledge RedLeaf had acquired working with Peter. I knew Sergei understood both the business and technical sides — I felt confident that RedLeaf could take our ideas and create something viable. It turned out to be a great choice."

Breaking it down

"The Excel spreadsheet was massive. I have never seen anything larger," admits Sergei Serdyuk, Partner and Lead Developer at Red Leaf Software. "The challenge on our end was maintaining the business logic while delivering more than a simple iteration. We had the spreadsheet and industry-specific knowledge already so that was a huge timesaver, but we had to deconstruct 30

years of condensed value — to break it down into pieces and deliver something that wasn't just another spreadsheet in an application."

> "We didn't rebuild what they had, we took time to understand what they needed."

To achieve this Sergei and the RedLeaf team worked with Revenue Matters to dive deep into its processes and workflows."The client is part of the team," says Serdyuk "they are in the driver seat at every meeting. They lead the process. We work to be responsive to their needs and get them where they need to go."

In this case, RedLeaf had to understand every aspect of how Revenue Matters used their proprietary tooling to deliver a new user experience and take the business to the next level. "We had to understand how and why they did things — how their employees use the current solution, and how they interact with their clients so we could build something to support them," says Serdyuk. "We needed to take the spreadsheet from an in-house tool and turn it into a polished web application."

Service at a higher level

"With MAX™, our newly created solution, RedLeaf has helped us become much more efficient as an organization," says Stuart-Hill. "They gave the product consistent user-defined functionality that works for our clients and eliminates the need for ad-hoc customizations."

"Now, we are getting into transactional level data — it was impossible for us to work at that level in an Excel-based environment," Stuart-Hill adds. "MAX's database-driven environment allows us to form a deeper, more granular understanding of what drives and impacts our clients' revenue performance, validate their business strategies, and provide more effective guidance. We're much more strategic on our clients' behalf. I think that's our biggest takeaway."

> "Our service is much more strategic now. I think that's our biggest takeaway."

MAX has also had a major impact reducing repetitive administrative tasks at Revenue Matters. "Point MAX at a database and it sucks in the whole file and automatically takes the data and puts it in the format that we need on the back end," says Stuart-Hill. "As we implement more APIs to connect to more property management systems, it will virtually eliminate unnecessary administrative time and effort — our associates can focus on driving our client's revenue performance. It's a game-changer."

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Delivering the goods

Looking back over the two-year collaboration, Serdyuk concludes, "MAX combines operational business analytics with durational intelligence. We came up with an incredibly complex, high-value, and B2B-ready professional application that looks nothing like it used to. That's what I'm most proud of."

> "We got what we wanted at every step of the process."

Summarizing his experience, Stuart-Hill adds, "At every stage with RedLeaf we could have stopped development and the software would have given us exactly what we wanted at that time. It's not over yet — now we are asking ourselves what else can we do with RedLeaf to make MAX even better and more powerful."