

Center Parcs



Center Parcs revolutionised the holiday market in Holland over 30 years ago and did the same in the UK when it opened its first village here at Sherwood Forest in July 1987, by offering short break holidays on an all year round basis, in addition to longer stays during traditional holiday periods.



Center Parcs UK was created as a separate entity in 2001 when it was split off from Center Parcs Europe and sold by Scottish & Newcastle Breweries. Back then, IT

within Center Parcs UK was merely a support function, acting only on direction from Europe. The split therefore created a number of issues for Richard Bond, who had been newly appointed as IT Director, and was tasked with shaping a strategy and three year plan for the UK IT function.

Richard says; "I was already speaking to a number of Consultancies and CCL's call came at just the right time! I immediately liked their straightforward, direct approach. I met Mark Gridale, CCL's Commercial Director, and he came back to me with a clear plan for assisting us with an IT Options and Strategy Review, which was a perfect match to the remit I had given him. And I am pleased to say that this was exactly what they delivered."

One important area for development was the Reservations System. This bespoke system had been written in Holland over 20 years previously and whilst it met current needs it had limited potential for future developments. Richard had been discussing the possibility of a joint venture

with Center Parcs Europe to develop a replacement system, but the costs initially received were very high.

"It is a very complex system" Richard said "it not only covers Bookings, it also deals with Payments, Arrivals, Yield, and Management Reporting, and I wasn't sure if a packaged alternative could be found." CCL were retained to conduct a Feasibility Study into whether a replacement could be found for a commercially viable cost. "CCL's prior involvement in helping produce our strategy was a big help. We produced a very detailed requirements specification which CCL then turned into a very detailed and prescriptive ITT for issue to carefully selected suppliers."

This was a significant project for Center Parcs and it was taken very seriously. A steering committee of 14 was formed, from all affected areas of the business and the close working relationship that had developed in the previous two projects enabled CCL's consultants to guide the Center Parcs team through the Selection exercise with a minimum of disruption.

"Trevor Aldred and Andy Dawson developed a very good understanding of our business, they spent a lot of their own time learning about us and they definitely felt like an extension to our Team" Richard commented. "It's definitely a partnership. CCL's consultants provide additional experience when we are facing new challenges. It's all about reducing or eliminating risk from the business."



CCL (Computer Consultants) Ltd

Payton House, Packwood Court, Guild Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6RP

T: 01789 261200 F: 01789 262525 E: ccl@cclnet.co.uk

www.cclnet.co.uk



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