



# Client Spotlight: Becky Rogers, Vice President Of Operations, IDM Hospitality Management

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Contributed by **Paula Perrin**, Sr. Market Analyst, SHR

### ***Did you always know that you would work in hospitality?***

Honestly, growing up in Wisconsin Rapids, a tightly-knit small-town community in the heart of Wisconsin, I thought I'd grow up to be a teacher and stay in the area. But I had a strong mom who encouraged me to dip my toes in new waters, like doing student exchange travel opportunities in high school, and pursuing personal passions. When I applied for college scholarships, one came through for UW Stout, a great school with a good reputation. One day, I caught one of their hospitality classes and was intrigued. But the general classes seemed to focus on hospitality in sexy locations like Vegas and Miami; not really my style. It was a class called Introduction to Tourism that really got my attention, because it harkened back to the travel my mom encouraged me to pursue. So, I fully engaged to complete a Bachelor's degree in Hospitality Tourism Management.

### ***How did you break into the field?***

I'm a big believer in making your own opportunities. So, after college, I came back to Rapids. I met with the Chamber of Commerce there, and I became their first full-time Convention & Visitors Bureau Director. It was during that time that I got to know the hotels in the area very well.

### ***When did you make the switch to hotels?***

I found myself fighting for budget dollars all the time, and though I loved the job, it was just too political for me. So, when a local hotel offered me a job as a GM at a hotel in Northwoods Wisconsin, I was ready for the opportunity. I really enjoyed learning about the guests, right down to their pets' names, and who they were in a personal way. But I don't "do flannel" as they say, very well, meaning snow mobiles, etc. So, I went back to Rapids again, and used my GM experience to become a "fixer" for GM vacancies at various hotels. After a while, I realized I would have to assert myself again to go any farther. That was scary, but was the only way I could go where I wanted to go.

### ***How did you find IDM?***

I was at a hotel in Minnesota doing my GM thing, but the project there was ending soon. So, I went online looking for other properties back in Wisconsin. I found a listing for the Beloit Inn, defined as a community partnership hotel, which is how IDM got their start. They were looking for a new GM. I drove 9 hours in a snow storm to get to the interview because I had a gut feeling it was where I belonged. I immediately loved the property's focus on service to the community, and I knew I was home.

### ***How did you earn your role as VP of Ops?***

Again, you have to make your own opportunities. I became a GM for IDM, and as it grew, I suggested they hire me as a Regional Manager. Then, gradually, I asked about moving up to a bigger role as our portfolio started to expand. I got turned down. I tried again. I got turned down again. When the time was right, they extended an opportunity for me to serve as a Director of Operations with a regional focus. I took it with no pay raise, just proof that I could do what I said I could for them. I later became VP in 2016. Eleven years later, I'm proud to say I contribute to oversight of the company. We have a portfolio of nine hotels and a team of six on the operations team. I really feel that it's that kind of assertiveness that feeds into IDM's assertiveness in the market. Honestly, I can't wait to get to work every day.

### ***What do you tackle in your role at IDM?***

I get to set our corporate agenda. I execute our corporate initiatives, like new software, such as your Windsurfer® CRS. I invigorate the Associate Recognition Program. It's also my job to ensure that every system and every process for our guests and staff are working at their best levels and highest rates of satisfaction, from the right burger plates to proper electrical outlets in the rooms. I'm also responsible for the onboarding of new properties now. Whatever I'm doing, the ultimate goal is to create that perfect guest experience.

### ***What led up to you looking for a new CRS solution?***

Back when I started with IDM, we used InnLink for our booking engine. It was great, as it allowed us to compete with the big guys. Most independent boutiques were not doing this at the time, so we exploited that advantage while we could, and it was a

great partnership. But they sold out to one of the larger players in the CRS market in the summer of 2017. We thought, ok, we can't control that. Maybe it will be ok? But it was painful, and the transition lasted 6 months. Then we were faced with having to sign a new contract with these same people. It was a tough time.

### ***How did you make your final decision?***

We went with one year with them, but half way into 2018, we knew it wasn't meant to be. Lots of billing errors, non-responsiveness. So, I actively vetted out other options. I contacted our PMS, Lodgical, for their ideas, and checked out HITEC in Toronto. There, Meredith Gorecki and I discussed SHR versus all the other major CRS providers. After our last experience with a larger player, we were understandably gun shy. We knew we needed a dedicated rep within a company that reflected our values while offering software that was feature rich. We don't have RMs at IDM. So, we also need tools that can simplify what is on our collective plates to diversify our portfolio and reach our goals.

### ***Did your expectations about SHR implementations meet the reality?***

Switching to that larger player was horrible, so the idea of another migration in general became a source of dread. We wanted to make absolutely sure that we knew what was going to happen from day one this time, no surprises. So, I had Meredith and Sally Ramos, SHR's VP of Implementations and Consortia Services, sit in a room with our GMs and answer the tough questions. One of our managers said to them, "Are you telling me that we won't have problems?" Sally answered point blank, "I promise that we've got you." That convinced us. We just needed that commitment, that partnership. Everyone in implementations at SHR was there on the ground with us, not just guiding us. I said to Sally's team, I'll give you a week to bring on one property at a time. Amazingly, each property was done within 24 hours, and all were done in one week, not 6 months.

### ***What advice do you have for people in hospitality today, particularly women?***

We don't say "problem" at IDM, we say "opportunity." So, if you hear a no, think of it as a beginning, not an ending. I really believe that if we all thought that way, we could carry ourselves much farther. Like everyone else, I've been scared to death at times

in my life about what direction to go in. I was bullied as a kid, which I think is something a lot of people can relate to and recognize.

But instead of letting it run over me, I became a fighter, and developed an “I’ll show you” attitude, turning pain into a spur toward growth and advancement. Concerning leadership, I believe we all need to learn how to lead yet not dictate. I am a big believer in servant leadership as really the only true and effective leadership philosophy. At the end of the day, we are a business, so, yes, it is about ADR and RevPAR, sure. But hospitality at its core is about taking care of people. So, if leadership takes care of its people, its people will take care of the guests, and the guests will take care of the business.

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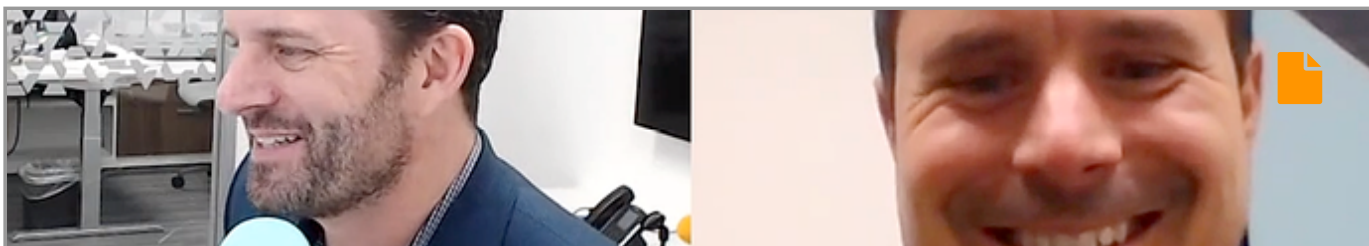
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