



Whitney Peak Hotel

CLIENT INFORMATION

As Reno’s first and only non-gaming, non-smoking, independent hotel, Whitney Peak has no fear of being different. This boldness translates into a passion for customizing their already unique guest experiences. Located just a short 45-minute drive from beautiful Lake Tahoe, this 310-room property brings a wealth of amenities. In addition to their award-winning Roundabout Grill and Cargo Concert Hall, there is the famed Basecamp Climbing Gym consisting of a 7,000 sq/ft indoor bouldering park, including the “World’s Tallest Climbing Wall” at a stunning 164 feet.

“When we first opened, people told us our approach would never fly in Reno. We knew we would need a CRS partner that shared our pioneer attitude if we were going to push things to the next level. SHR was the natural choice.”

—Niki Gross, Managing Director, Whitney Peak Hotel



SPECIFIC PRODUCT/SERVICE

Windsurfer® CRS, Booking Engine, Direct Connect, GDS

SITUATION

Whitney Peak’s market has been challenging from the beginning. Though many Reno residents said they didn’t want another traditional gambling experience, not many of those same residents thought Whitney’s approach would work. “While Vegas celebrates the party experience, Reno is driven by an outdoor, Pacific Northwest mentality,” said Niki Gross, Managing Director for Whitney. “The gambling perception still persists as the casino operating budgets for marketing far outpace that of the city’s. Add our decades-old, casino-driven destination identity and it all equals a lot of perception, local and global, to overcome when trying to market Reno as something different.”

There’s also been a huge surge in corporate headquartering in Reno. “Because of this, we’ve seen a sort of domino effect on our bookings, with originally strong transient OTA-generated bookings dropping from 50% to 8%, while corporate business has grown to 70% of our occupancy,”

Niki explained. But in the summer, it’s a different story. “We have to be nimble with our corporate negotiated business in our high seasons to capture transient demand. Windsurfer has given us a CRS flexible enough to handle customization for both markets,” she said.

OUTCOME

Interestingly, the Whitney Peak team did not have the traditional hospitality background of most hotel staff, yet this has worked to a surprising advantage. “Without that background, we tend to look at things through the eyes of a consumer,” Niki said. “So, Windsurfer and its shopping cart style of booking seemed really natural to us because it’s natural to the guest.”

They use the SHR platforms most heavily to build promotions, with the add-on feature being the clear favorite. “We have a shuttle, gym, spa, cordials, craft beer, and many other goodies for our guests to choose from, but we need them to know we offer them,” said Niki. “Windsurfer’s booking engine gives us a great opportunity to increase revenue and please our guests by putting everything out there at once, so nothing is missed.”

They have also started using the new upgrade feature to help boost their ADR. “Reno has what is known as a ‘rate resistance’ situation, meaning the traveler to casino towns expects things to be discounted or free,” Niki explained. “But almost no one does that anymore, so the upgrade feature is really helpful with easing that transition while raising conversions for those guests.”



THE FUTURE

Plans for the hotel include cultivating new ways of capturing their markets. Niki has no doubts about achieving that goal or any other. “To say that Windsurfer has been instrumental in elevating our confidence level is an understatement,” she said. “Just looking at 2015 to 2016, we’ve seen bookings grow 23% YOY, and revenue grow 28% YOY. We are very excited about what lies ahead.”

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