

Customer Success Story: Pacific Sands Beach Resort

Guestfolio CRM

Since implementing Cendyn's Guestfolio CRM platform over six years ago, Pacific Sands Beach Resort has achieved outstanding results in guest satisfaction, loyalty and revenue.

Recently, Sabrina Donovan, Operations Manager, shared insights into how her property leverages the many benefits of CRM.

An early adopter of CRM

Located on 40 acres of beachfront property in spectacular Tofino, British Columbia, Canada, Pacific Sands Beach Resort offers 122 all-suite accommodations ranging from studio suites to luxury beach houses.

As the resort's Operations Manager, Sabrina Donovan has been with the property for over eleven years, having started out on the front desk and since moving through positions as guest services manager and revenue manager.

Pacific Sands was one of the first independent properties to recognize the power of CRM, and Donovan played a key role in implementing Guestfolio way back in 2013. Today, she continues to play a leadership role in CRM at the resort, along with responsibilities for guest service and marketing.



How Pacific Sands uses CRM



"CRM is a priority for Pacific Sands Beach Resort because it helps us to build guest engagement and enhance our customer experience throughout the customer journey," Donovan said. "We use CRM to optimize our marketing strategies throughout the different seasons at the resort."

The property also uses Guestfolio to collect and utilize guest data and feedback. "We send a post-stay survey three days after the guest's departure and use it to collect data, make improvements, and adjust operations and resort initiatives," she said.

The CRM platform also helps streamline the resort's sales and marketing tasks, including distribution of an automated e-newsletter at the beginning of each month. "Overall, CRM provides a good roadmap for us in our marketing strategies year over year," Donovan said.

Engaging guests throughout the customer journey

Pacific Sands uses CRM to engage guests at each stage of the customer journey. This includes:

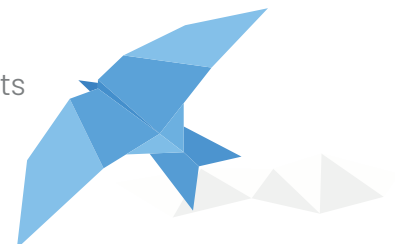
Before the guests stay

- Automated email confirmations at time of booking confirming the details of the guest's stay (sent two weeks prior to arrival)
- Automated pre-arrival emails inviting guests to start planning their stay (sent three days prior to arrival)
- Access to the mobile concierge platform, including services, amenities and food & beverage options at the resort
- Opportunities to upgrade, purchase add-ons and pre-check-in
- Notifications of events, festivals and special occasions taking place during the guest's stay



During the guest's stay

- Continued access to the mobile concierge platform
- Guests can use the platform to send inquiries and special requests such as a gift basket, surf lessons, bike rentals, etc.



After the guest's stay

- Guest surveys with an online review option (sent three days after checkout)
- Targeted marketing campaigns with special offers to return (average one or two per month)
- "Book direct" emails to guests who booked through an OTA
- Monthly e-newsletters



The property uses post-stay surveys to solicit suggestions from guests, identify issues that need to be addressed, and recognize staff for positive mentions.

Email marketing campaigns are designed to drive repeat business. “For example, if guests stayed at the resort in the summer, we’ll send them an invitation to come back and experience storm season with us,” Donovan explained. “This helps us increase our return guests as well as drive business during need periods. We also try to convert OTA bookers by inviting them to book directly with us next time.”

Aligning staff and encouraging collaboration

Donovan says that staff use a workbook to keep focused on objectives for e-newsletters and special marketing campaigns.

“I sit down monthly to review plans with our guest services manager and marketing manager, and I bring the revenue management perspective,” she explained. “We look ahead to the next few months and identify need periods. Do we want to offer a special package or highlight a specific period such as storm season or surf season? And then we work with our content writer to build the bones of the campaign.”

The team does a lot of testing of emails to ensure that the links work. “Then we make sure that the whole team is primed so that when the campaign deploys they’re ready to field any incoming calls or emails,” she said.

Building loyalty with CRM

“We have a large number of return guests at the resort, so having a loyalty program in place is very important for us,” said Donovan. “We looked at a number of options, including a reward-based or point system. We decided that Guestfolio was the best fit for us.

“With Guestfolio, we are able to filter guests into segments such as number of stays over a given period and average spend. Internally, we’ve identified what we would recognize as our gold, bronze and silver tier guests and what each tier should receive in terms of rewards or incentives for future bookings.

Generating outstanding results

"The more we use the functions of Guestfolio, the more positive results we're seeing," said Donovan. "We're proud of the number of subscribers to our e-newsletter, which is over 38,000 and growing." The average open rate is an impressive 29.1%.

"In our newsletters, we might offer a special promotion or a featured package for that month or promote an upcoming season in general," Donovan explained. "Guestfolio will capture all the revenue that's coming in within about five to seven days after the newsletter is sent out."

The open rate for email marketing campaigns is even higher. "We send out an average of one or two campaigns per month, with an average open rate of 43.35%," she said. Each campaign generates a significant amount of revenue.

"When it comes guest satisfaction, Guestfolio is a very important tool for us, too," Donovan said. "Our Net Promoter Score® from guest surveys is 83, and the average score from online reviews is 93%." The TripAdvisor review conversion rate from guest surveys is 12%, and this has helped the property maintain its No. 2 ranking.

Summary of results

- **Monthly subscriber list: +38,000**
- **Average open rate:**
 - ♦ **E-newsletters: 29.1%**
 - ♦ **Marketing campaigns: 43.35%**
- **Conversion rate – surveys to TripAdvisor reviews: 12%**
- **Guest surveys – Net Promoter Score: 83**
- **Online reviews – Average Score: 93%**
- **#2 Ranking on TripAdvisor**



Sabrina's top CRM tips

Given such enviable results, we asked Donovan to share her top three CRM tips.

1. Have a strategy that's relevant and consistent

"One thing we have seen as a huge benefit for growing our database is being very consistent with our deliverables," she said. "And having a strategy that's relevant."

Having used Guestfolio as a marketing platform for several years is a distinct advantage, she said. "We know that in the first week of every month we're going to deploy our e-newsletter and it's going to have relevant information on upcoming packages, things happening around town, festivals, events and what's new and exciting at the resort. On the days the newsletter goes out, we have to staff accordingly because the phones will light up and the emails will start coming in."

"Sometimes the calls aren't even necessarily about anything they've seen in the news. It just prompts them as a reminder to make their summer booking. I think that they've come to look forward to seeing our e-newsletters in their inbox once a month. Again, it's all about being consistent and relevant."

2. Use CRM data to personalize marketing, loyalty and guest experience initiatives

Donovan also feels that it's very important to use CRM data to personalize marketing campaigns. "We use CRM to identify our loyalty guests," she said. "We don't have a points based loyalty program at the resort, but we use Guestfolio to identify returning guests who we want to either reward with a special offer or an incentive. I think it makes them feel as though they're a part of a loyalty program."

3. Engage guests at every step of the customer journey

"CRM is about engaging guests at every step of the way, and that comes back to the consistency," Donovan said. "Target them from the get-go with a confirmation email. In the pre-arrival stage, send another message to remind them of the details of their stay. Tell them you're looking forward to welcoming them and ask if they have any questions before they arrive. And make sure that the follow-up is there."

In the post-stay stage, guest surveys are a critical way to collect feedback from guests and address comments, Donovan said. "Keep the dialogue going throughout the journey. Maybe three months after the stay, send an email saying, "We look forward to having you back again. If you haven't booked already, please contact us to make arrangements."

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To learn more about Guestfolio CRM and discover what it can do for your hotel contact us today at info@cendyn.com, or visit

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