Lee Valley case study

How technology can support the seamless management
of a diverse leisure estate – Lee Valley shows the way

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Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) runs a diverse portfolio of leisure attractions. With approaching five million annual leisure visits, and several coveted new legacy sites which were used as part of the London 2012 Olympic Games, the Authority introduced Omnico technology to help it deliver world-class services.

To achieve its strategic objectives, LVRPA needed a coordinated and consistent corporate approach, outstanding site management and superb customer service by frontline staff equipped with the best possible tools and it needed this to translate into exceptional customer experiences in every leisure setting.

Omnico's multi-sector experience has been crucial to the ClarityLive leisure management system installed for LVRPA. ClarityLive is a vital component of the Authority's performance drive and positive results are already being seen from the implementation:

- 20,000+ white water rafting experiences booked online
- Over £1m of online sales
- 5,000 site memberships issued, with further major new sites yet to open
- New retail activities driving revenues: gift vouchers; loyalty programmes; combo deals; etc.
- Improved commercial performance of diverse facilities including campsites
- Metrics and customer insights at heart of continual service improvement
- Huge software implementation on schedule for Spring 2014 completion

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Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA)

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority runs award winning open spaces and sports venues in a 10,000 acre area taking in parts of London, Essex and Hertfordshire.

From elite competition-standard London 2012 Olympic venues to parklands, campsites, cycling, walking, white-water rafting, horse riding and nature reserves, the breadth and scale of leisure activities, sights and experiences on offer is unique. It attracts approaching 5 million visits each year to its sports venues, visitor attractions and campsites.

The Challenge

Nigel Foxall, LVRPA's Head of Performance and Information, describes the Authority's goal as "To be a world-class leisure destination."

From a management perspective, Lee Valley's diverse portfolio of leisure sites posed a significant challenge. It sought a comprehensive leisure management system (LMS) to be implemented across all sites on a phased basis.

Initial priorities included getting the brand new Lee Valley White Water Centre fully operational for its opening in April 2011, and implementing leisure management system booking facilities at the Authority's campsites.

The Authority's broader objectives included:
- Improving the customer experience both at leisure sites and online.
- Increasing leisure access, through online sales and booking facilities.
- Introducing membership card facilities to boost customer service and operational efficiency.
- Gaining customer insights and improving customer relationship management.
- Enabling the cross-selling of leisure activities between sites.
- Driving revenues and cash flow through increased online accessibility, bookings and payments.
- Providing in-house event management and ticketing services.
- Enhancing authority-wide management capabilities and efficiency.

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Omnico solution

LVRPA looked at all the major solution providers before selecting Omnico's ClarityLive for Leisure. Given that ClarityLive was to be installed in such a variety of leisure settings, there was no 'standard' site functionality requirement. Implementation was planned on a phased basis over a three year period.

In broad terms, the solution encompassed wide ranging point of sale (POS) functionality, online service access for direct customer bookings and payments, box office style management capabilities, membership management, business trend analysis and reporting and interfaces to key LVRPA enterprise systems.

Cross-sector advantages

Omnico's cross-sector experience was an important factor in the selection of ClarityLive for Leisure.

As LVRPA's Nigel Foxall says, "We're quite a challenging client, in that we want to use our leisure management system in settings such as campsites as well as in more traditional venues. Omnico's leisure attractions and retail industry experience has been helpful."

The value of learning from other sectors is underlined by Bill Moran, Senior Venues Manager at LVRPA. He advises, "Don't be confined to your own specific industry – there are plenty of clever, transferrable ideas already out there."

Implementing pioneering, real-time systems

The Lee Valley project has involved extending Omnico's leisure management technology to deliver highly specific functionality, such as campsite pitch allocation, bookings and payments. "Omnico worked closely with us to create a brand new module for this," explains Nigel Foxall.

To optimise the configuration and development of pioneering functionality in ClarityLive, Lee Valley nominated a select group of 'super-users' to assist with the specification, development, testing and training processes. "It's a very joined-up approach that integrates user needs," confirms Nigel Foxall.

Training and development

Omnico provided intensive initial training to LVRPA's expert user group. "It was good." comments Nigel Foxall. "It allowed us to be quite challenging." Each of LVRPA's leisure sites also has a nominated key user and these individuals work with the team of expert users to cascade training at site level.

Omnico's structured approach to training and development includes regular reviews of the LVRPA expert users' issue log. This ensures effective communication and works well from an audit perspective too.

Results

Enhancing the customer journey

One of the first challenges for Omnico was to implement its innovative ClarityLive online bookings software at the state-of-the-art Lee Valley White Water Centre (LVWWC). ClarityLive ensures that the customer journey begins in the best possible fashion on the website, with straightforward functionality and consistent presentation of the Lee Valley brand.

Bill Moran, Senior Venues Manager at Lee Valley Regional Park Authority says, "51% of our bookings come through online sales. We are very proud of the look, feel and functionality of the ClarityLive online booking system. It complements the centre perfectly."

Staff plaudits

When customers make enquiries face-to-face or over the phone, their experience has to be equally good. The ease of use of ClarityLive helps create an efficient and happy team. "We rely heavily on it," says LVWWC Customer Service Advisor, Nicola Simmons. "We can pull up and share information on our customers and what's scheduled each day, so everyone from our kit room to the café knows what's happening."

> " Looking up customers is really easy and fast, as is re-booking repeat customers. The payment process is self-explanatory, too. ClarityLive prompts you with everything you need to do: you can't really get it wrong! "

Nicola Simmons, LVWWC Customer Service Advisor

Membership schemes

LVRPA has initially implemented site-specific membership schemes and plans to introduce a park-wide scheme in the future. Initial subscription levels have been strong, with over 5,000 members – mainly at Lee Valley White Water Centre and Lee Valley Ice Centre.

The final phase of the ClarityLive implementation is due to be completed in Spring 2014, when the Omnico system will go live in a series of further facilities including Lee Valley VeloPark. These sites will power significant further growth of the membership base.

Automating manual processes

The ability of ClarityLive to interface with LVRPA's financial and Microsoft CRM enterprise systems has delivered important benefits.

On the financial side, integration has eliminated regular manual processes, greatly improving the audit trail while speeding data transfer and reporting, increasing accuracy, and reducing workload. Joining up the customer relationship management approach boosts the Authority's ability to gain customer insights, address complaints and, once the system is fully implemented, improve marketing effectiveness.

E-commerce and loyalty promotions

"E-commerce is big business for us and it's made a difference culturally, too," says Nigel Foxall.

High levels of online bookings result in shorter queues at site reception desks and quicker customer access. Contacting customers is easier as well and the collective advantages of ClarityLive enable customers to do more themselves online, helping free the management team to address new areas. Nigel Foxall explains, "We're developing benefits such as promotions and offers – we didn't have the scope to do this before."

The leisure team is now looking at using ClarityLive's loyalty tools at sites like Lee Valley Ice Centre, which attracts around 300,000 visits annually. By delivering targeted rewards, incentives and discount offers, it aims to drive usage of its Patch Ice sessions.

Another area that the LVRPA team is looking to develop further is cross-selling and promotions – selling combo offers such as site activities with campsite bookings, as well as activity gift vouchers: 200 rafting experience vouchers had already been sold online by April 2013.

Continuous improvement

One of the reasons LVRPA purchased Omnico's technology was to support its aspiration to be a world-class leisure destination. Monitoring and managing performance is crucial and the availability of relevant information from ClarityLive is driving progress.

The Authority now monitors progress on a weekly basis and uses balanced score cards to gauge leisure site performance against targets. "That's been a key benefit of ClarityLive," states Nigel Foxall. Site staff are now much better placed to look ahead, set appropriate targets and make optimum staffing arrangements to achieve them.

Performance visibility, combined with the operational strengths of ClarityLive, helps create efficiencies too. For example, box office arrangements at Lee Valley Ice Centre have been reviewed and a more streamlined and proactive approach is being introduced.

With ClarityLive, if a parent wants to know how their child is progressing on a course, they will be able to go online to read a staff report – taking the pressure off customer services advisors. Meanwhile, access control facilities free up reception staff and further enhance the customer experience.

Happy campers

The strengths of ClarityLive online booking facilities are particularly evident for Lee Valley's campsites. Some complex, non-standard criteria need to be applied to ensure a suitable pitch is allocated, but ClarityLive has been configured to handle this with ease.

By combining a variety of information with more powerful postcode analysis, LVRPA has gained an in-depth understanding of campsite users and their booking patterns and used this knowledge to improve results. The customer's arrival on site is better because all the usual paperwork has been dealt with in advance and the flexibility of the Omnico system enables LVRPA to optimise campsites revenues.

Conclusion

Omnico's Marketing Manager, Katy Maxwell sums-up,

> "Lee Valley Regional Park Authority is successfully intergrating and enhancing the management of its large leisure estate, with the help of our ClarityLive leisure management system."

Unprecedented in terms of the diversity of leisure operations ClarityLive is being used for, the Lee Valley project underlines the software's adaptability and benefits to customers, staff, site managers and corporate management teams.

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Omnico Group enables leading brands to strengthen their customer relationships and grow revenue by delivering an innovative, joined-up customer experience across all channels.

global reach

hardware & **software** from one vendor

400 employees

investment in **technology**

250,000
installations worldwide

uk's biggest provider of EPOS solutions

market leading technologies
software, hardware, mobile

engaged with leading global brands
retail, entertainment, hospitality and leisure

Omni-Channel Expertise

- Delivering best practise Omni-Channel integration strategies – joining up the channels to provide a single view of the customer

- Ensuring functionality and connectivity at point of need – across all channels

- Providing a seamless customer journey however and wherever brand interaction occurs

- Responding with agility and creativity in delivering innovative technologies that wrap around existing infrastructure and platforms

For further information on how we can help your organisation meet the challenges of Omni-Channel retailing, contact us:

- By email at **info@omnicogroup.com**
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