



CASE STUDY

CANADIAN SKI COUNCIL

OVERVIEW

A NEED FOR SPEED - The goal of the Canadian Ski Council (CSC) is to increase participation in recreational snowboarding, alpine and cross-country skiing in Canada. The not-for-profit organization is a central body for helping ski areas across Canada attract more visitors. As part of its mandate, the organization works with ski areas to conduct research in a cost-effective way to provide each area with valuable visitor information.

CSC has created a program called Model for Growth. The program provides research on visitor demographic and opinion data, and identifies initiatives that each resort can undertake to bolster visitor numbers, such as better rental incentives or special beginner packages.

Three years ago, CSC collected roughly 3,000 paper-based surveys from 10 ski areas. At the end of the ski season, each resort would send its quota of surveys to CSC's office for scanning and compilation of results.

"Scanning 3,000 surveys takes a lot of time and resources. We had one computer dedicated solely to the scanning and collection of the data and a full-time research manager handling the process," says Colin Chedore, President of the Canadian Ski Council (CSC). The scanning software had difficulty reading some handwriting and CSC would have to manually enter responses – further delaying the data entry process.

As part of the Model for Growth strategy, CSC needed to collect data from a wider geography of ski areas. In one season (2003/2004) the ski areas involved increased from 10 to 50 resorts. With a target of 19,000 surveys, the CSC couldn't feasibly use the paper-based system. They needed a more efficient, automated and inexpensive method for collecting the data. ViewPoint, a mobile survey automation platform, delivers on all those points.



CHALLENGE

Find an accurate and speedy process for conducting tens of thousands of surveys.

Find a data collection system that is easy to use by reps in ski areas.

Find a system that allows marketing to easily collate data and send instant reports to ski areas.

Find a cost-effective solution to maximize resources in a lean organization.

SOLUTION

ViewPoint saves CSC research time. It is simple to use for field data collectors and for CSC to collate the data. Armed with two Palm devices and ViewPoint software for customized surveys, each ski area conducts face-to-face interviews in the resort. At the end of the day, the field personnel dock the devices and the results are sent immediately to a hosted server and accessible to the CSC office – no more survey delivery delays, no more paper and no more scanning.

“The efficiencies gained with this system created new opportunities for us to be more responsive to the ski areas,” comments Natalie Laplante, Senior Manager. “Rather than waiting for the season to end, CSC can now compile and send reports to ski areas throughout the season. Further, we can check on progress in each resort and, where one ski area may not have met their quota for a specific time period, we can proactively call them to resolve any issues they may have.”

In the 2005/2006 ski season, 40 ski areas participated completing 20,000 surveys. This is one of the largest and widespread surveys in the ski and snowboard industry. Over the last three years, these survey results have led to a number of Model for Growth initiatives in ski areas across Canada. CSC’s next step is to measure the economic success of those initiatives. ViewPoint data collection platform has helped CSC to more efficiently manage the research portion of its program. ViewPoint has helped CSC scale its data collection, while freeing up resources to concentrate on program development and measurement.

“The efficiencies gained with this system created new opportunities for us to be more responsive to the ski areas.”

Natalie Laplante, Senior Manager”



BENEFITS

ViewPoint platform provides scalable survey solution that is fast and accurate.

Palm devices running ViewPoint software are easy to use for ski reps.

Mobile survey automation eliminates time and resources otherwise spent on processing forms and collating data.

Client gains instant access to survey results, and can share up-to-date results with ski areas throughout the season.