



Oakwood Worldwide Benefits from Enhanced Analytics and Revenue Capture

StreetSmart™ Outperforms the Competition



“It’s about having access to good data that helps us make better decisions about business. With StreetSmart, we now have easy access to the analytics we need-and that was our primary reason for selecting their solution.”

— Sara Trivison, IT Liaison Manager,
Oakwood Worldwide



Benefits

- Improved employee training, coaching, and productivity
- Improved customer service with better response times to service requests
- Captured digital information that can be used for business and productivity analytics

The Company

Oakwood Worldwide is the global leader in corporate housing and serviced apartments. With a wide array of corporate and served apartment housing options in more than 88 countries, Oakwood Worldwide provides move-in ready furnished accommodations designed to meet the needs of business travelers on short and long-term assignments. In the United States, Oakwood Worldwide is supported by a field force of more than 450 associates who handle housekeeping, maintenance, set-up and other functions to maintain the readiness and availability of its apartment inventory.

The Challenge

To manage their extensive field force, they implemented a workforce management solution several years ago. “While our current system worked, it didn’t allow us the enhanced data and analytics we needed to make better business decisions, so we began looking for another solution,” said Sara Trivison, Oakwood Worldwide’s information technology liaison manager. Additionally, the company sought a solution to help improve revenue capture and employee productivity. After a guest leaves an Oakwood Worldwide apartment, it must be quickly readied for the next resident. This preparation includes maintenance, housekeeping and the placement of housewares, furniture, linens and other items required to deliver an extraordinary guest experience. The company has its greatest cost exposure when its apartments are vacant between residents. As a result, the company strives to decrease the time it takes to resolve any issues that keep an apartment vacant.

StreetSmart

According to Travison, “When a guest vacated one of our apartments, a field associate would assess the apartment’s condition and use the mobile phone’s walkie-talkie function to communicate to the field office, enabling us to get a jump start on any needed repairs,” she says. “Recently, we switched to a smartphone platform to digitally capture information that we could use to build reports and help us improve operations.”

The Solution

Travison and company operations representatives conducted an extensive process to find an effective workforce management solution that would take advantage of the new smartphone technology. The team interviewed several providers to assess their ability to achieve the company’s long-term objectives. “StreetSmart stood out from the crowd,” said Travison. “They had two standout capabilities: their ability to configure the solution to the way we wanted to utilize it and the option to build custom reporting within the application.” In demonstrations during the selection process, StreetSmart outperformed the other solutions, according to Travison; this allowed the company to move onto a pilot phase. With strong results, the company launched StreetSmart to its entire field force.

“Support from StreetSmart was critical to this successful rollout,” Travison comments. “We generally have a number of IT initiatives underway within the organization. With the StreetSmart implementation, we did not need to dedicate any of our IT resources to the project; they provided the appropriate project support to get us up and running.”



The Results

A year after Oakwood Worldwide collected feedback from its associates to gain a better understanding of how StreetSmart was enhancing field operations. Sylvester Sanchez, Houston branch manager for Oakwood Worldwide said, “With the additional information from StreetSmart, we are better able to manage our time and improve the overall productivity of our operations. From our management team to our service coordinators to our vendors, we are now able to prioritize and better plan for upcoming arrivals and service requests, which has made it possible to maximize the productivity for us and all parties involved.”

According to the company’s Phoenix branch manager Rita Berry, one of the advantages of StreetSmart has been the rapid response to service issues identified during housekeeping,

apartment resets and new deliveries. “Once the StreetSmart alert has been received, our guest service representatives and service coordinators can react quickly, getting permission to enter the apartment from our guests and sending them a service ticket. Usually, the issue is resolved same day, whereas before we had to wait on the associate to come back to see what issues were found,” said Berry. She further explains, “If this happened at the end of the day, after the apartment’s maintenance team had gone home, issues were not addressed until the next day. Because of StreetSmart, our rapid response has resulted in several positive comments from our guests regarding our timely resolution of issues.”

Travison states that StreetSmart has decreased the length of time to resolve an issue for Oakwood: “It’s still early in our implementation, however, the results we are seeing have led us to roll out additional StreetSmart functionality, which allows field associates to complete required process forms digitally while in the field.” She believes that will create additional analytics that lead to even further improvements to business processes and response times.

As an example, the company just completed its first reporting around StreetSmart’s key performance indicators and will use that information to compare average productivity between the branches and look for best practices. “What makes certain branches better at some activities? We can use the information from StreetSmart to drive improvements in the other branches,” Travison states. “It’s about having access to good data that helps us make better decisions about our business. With StreetSmart, we now have easy access to the analytics we need—and that was our primary reason for selecting their solution.”

Oakwood Worldwide has also benefitted from the StreetSmart solution in ways they did not expect. Art Rodriguez is a senior branch manager in Los Angeles, who says, “StreetSmart gives managers the ability to hold associates accountable for their time and keep track of their whereabouts.” According to Travison, “That level of visibility is giving us a really good training tool and we can share those learnings visually with the employees and then coach them on how to be more effective and productive.”

In addition to the training and coaching benefit, Travison says Oakwood Worldwide has seen a boost to employee morale. “We’ve provided the field associates with the latest technology - smart phones with the StreetSmart application. It’s not just that we’re giving them the tools they need to do their jobs, we’re giving them cutting edge tools to do their jobs.”

Nelson Duarte, Oakwood Worldwide’s Northern Virginia assistant branch manager concludes: “StreetSmart empowers our field associates. They feel valued that they have been given effective technology tools to communicate issues back to the office. It also helps them share the challenges they encounter in the field.”