

## **DIGITAL MAPPING KEEPS HOTELS IN TOUCH WITH BUSINESS DATA**

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Ask Peter Johnson why he set up Intouch Data, his marketing analysis and consulting firm for the hospitality and tourism industry and the answer that he “saw an opportunity” would be a cliché, were it not for the fact that the opportunity was a map.

Mr Johnson recognised that the geographic origins and socio-economic profiles of hotel guests could be mapped so that individual properties or hotel chains in Australian and New Zealand could target their promotional activities with near rifle-shot precision.

From a focus just three years ago of turning guest history data into targeted promotions to generate repeat business for individual properties, Intouch Data is now introducing services to enable airline and travel agent accounts managers for specific hotel chains to track room nights and revenues at a regional level.

Armed with a suite of digital mapping tools and data from MapData Sciences, Mr Johnson receives an open-armed reception from hotel industry marketing executives who testify to the adage that a picture is worth 1000 words, at least.

“Our rapid growth is largely due to our ability to cost-effectively do for the hospitality industry what telcos and insurance companies have been doing for years – present data in the visual form, as maps,” Peter Johnson said.

“We knew from our first dealings with major hotel chains that a visual representation worked far better than tables of data.”

The reaction of clients to the simple mapping of data to postcode areas was excitement - but as Intouch Data soon discovered, the excitement was somewhat limited. One post code can encompass suburbs and localities which includes diverse socio-economic groups. There is lots of wastage marketing to a postcode so Intouch went a stage further, deciding to present clients with demographic data.

Intouch uses several major software tools supplied by MapData Sciences. The first of these is MDS QuickLocate geocoder which helps confirm the exact geographic address of each particular guest in either Australia or New Zealand. The second tool, the ABS C-Data2001 package comprises socio-economic data by census collection district (CCD). Each district includes 225 households as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which administers the Census. MapData Sciences developed a similar demographic package called MDSCens NZ01, which Intouch has acquired for the New Zealand market.

By overlaying a correct address with data concerning income and lifestyle, Intouch produces maps showing 48 different levels or profiles.

“We can break the population of a given area into socio-economic profiles which are key indicators of whether people are likely to take up the promotional offers of a particular hotel or chain,” Mr Johnson explains.

The mapped profiles, represented by colours and shading, show for example areas of high, medium and low socio-economic status, further sub-divided to indicate the strength of family association.

Mapping is all about helping hotels to achieve adequate penetration of their marketing messages and promotional offers in high socio-economic neighbourhoods says Mr Johnson..

Any direct mail marketing activity which uses the hotel's database of guest information can then be analysed to determine its return on investment. Such a ROI analysis can show who responded to particular offers and how much they actually spent.

Peter Johnson cites a recent case in which 80 percent of income in a given period was directly the result of a marketing campaign. It is essential therefore to be able to plot an individual guest to a point on a map says Mr Johnson.

Digital maps are also used to illustrate data supplied by MapData Sciences which relates to Points of Interest such as retail outlets. With this MDS Points of Interest dataset, Peter Johnson has identified a further means of expanding the opportunities for marketing hotels and resorts.

“For example, we can show a client with a resort the location of the ‘hot spots’ from which they attract the majority of their customers. The socio-economic profiles of such customers are also likely to make them customers of certain types of retail outlets in the neighbourhood in which they live. This allows the hotel or resort to propose marketing promotions in conjunction with a retail food or fashion outlet or chain, for example,” Mr Johnson says.

Intouch is about to launch its own web-based product, enabling marketing departments to research up to 1.5 million customer records on an individual hotel level or across the region.

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