



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

Stratton Mountain Resort Tackles Steep Backlog with Preventive Maintenance and Major Cost Savings Opportunities

CLIENT

Glenn LaPlante, Manager of
Facilities and Maintenance,
Mt Stratton

GEOGRAPHY

Stratton, Vermont

VITALS

- > Eight technicians on staff
- > Average snowfall of 180 inches
- > 670 acres of skiable terrain

CHALLENGES

With peak season in wintertime, staff faced an uphill battle trying to get everything done in the off season without a proper CMMS (computerized maintenance management system) to provide visibility, work order management and planning tools. As a result, the resort had a lot of backlogged maintenance that kept facilities from being in ideal conditions for guests.

RESULTS

After bringing on Dude Solutions, Stratton Mountain not only took control of their work order process but were also able to plan ahead with preventive maintenance, provide detailed reporting for budgeting and saved thousands yearly on energy.



WORK AND ASSET



Stratton Mountain Resort first opened in 1961 with just three ski lifts and eight trails. More than 50 years later, the resort is one of New England's premier ski resorts, adding fine dining, snowshoeing, tubing and more to their winter activities. The resort also offers year-round activities with 27 holes of golf and trails for mountain biking, hiking and other warm weather hobbies (tennis/scenic gondola rides/concerts); however, their backlog of maintenance was keeping them from reaching their full potential.

“The amount of maintenance that would go into certain events became burdensome.”

A Backlog of Deferred Maintenance

With much of the focus on winter operations, the resort's eight-person maintenance team faced an uphill battle when preparing for the next season. Although the resort was using a CMMS, it wasn't intuitive or easy to use. As a result, deferred maintenance began to pile up, taking a toll on the facilities.

Glenn LaPlante, Manager of Facilities and Maintenance, identified the current work order system as a problem before he joined the team. “One of the first questions I asked was how they managed work tickets,” Glenn said. “They had an in-house program that they developed that was basically just an email system. There was no way to see who got to the work order first, no way to track and trend, and the facility was showing that.”

The backlog of maintenance had to be prevented to keep the facilities in top shape. In peak season, the resort sees as many as 10,000 skiers each weekend day, creating a lot of wear and tear. Most of their doors, for example, were at the end of their life and needed maintenance.

“The amount of maintenance that would go into certain events became burdensome,” Glenn said. “We didn't have a real way to controlling the facility or managing work requests on the preventive side.”

Revamping Their Approach Toward Maintenance

Having used Dude Solutions at his previous position, Glenn knew it would be a great fit for Stratton Mountain. As part of his agreement to take the position, he made sure that the resort implemented the platform. With Dude Solutions in place, it was time to make changes to the way the team approached maintenance.

Taking advantage of fewer guests during warm weather months, the maintenance team began to align the facilities with guests' expectations. With new visibility into their work orders, Glenn began delegating tasks and ensuring important work was addressed efficiently. First, they needed to address the backlog and get the facilities up to date with corrective maintenance.



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Steam traps were in dire need of updating and maintenance. The team worked hard on the project, and as part of the Efficiency Vermont program, their renewed attention to what had been a drain on energy resulted in major savings for the resort. In total, they saved \$50,000 on what had been a \$6,000 project. With these proven energy savings, the team was then able to justify more retrofits to the facilities, improving not only how they operated but also creating a better experience for their guests.

“Our energy bills are less than they’ve ever been,” Glenn said.

Justified by Data

With more work order data, the resort identified more areas for improvement. Glenn reduced the payroll expense allocated to seasonal roles, aligning his staff to the facilities when projects began to peak. Plus, with these savings, Glenn was also able to hire specialized technicians.

“Just by having refrigeration technicians on staff to keep things clean and running... we’re doing PMs with belts and filters, and we know it has a reverberating effect throughout our financials,” he said.

Glenn has also been able to increase visibility outside of their team. “I just had our first annual maintenance review on user reporting with Dude Intelligence (our business intelligence tool for operations). It was the first time we could show a full calendar year of having Dude Solutions at the resort, and to see people’s eyes open up and show them trends beyond work orders and explaining them was huge.”

Shifting Toward a Future Focus

Armed with data from increased visibility, Glenn has seen corrective maintenance reduce drastically and is moving into preventive maintenance. The team, in turn, has responded with a positive cultural change that reinforces their renewed focus.

“I wanted to shift the mindset of ‘It’s always been like this, no one has cared before so why should I?’” he said. “People are starting to understand that requests are seen and are completed, and there’s been an overwhelmingly positive response.”

\$50,000: Net savings from their new energy project



WORK AND ASSET

Glenn has also taken advantage of learning opportunities within Dude Solutions, attending the annual Dude University user conference, and he continually works on improving operations. With an eye toward the future, the resort is more capable of addressing problems as they arise and preventing major issues from occurring.

“Stratton Mountain is an old resort with a lot of history,” Glenn said. “Lots of folks have been here for a very long time. We provide families and skiers with an outdoor adventure, and we pride ourselves on creating memories as a place for people to come back to.”

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