

Unit4 helps CBT return to growth post-pandemic



Christopherson Business Travel



This independently-owned leader in corporate travel management has standardized on a modern, connected Unit4 enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform to adapt at pace and grow in a post-pandemic world.

Christopherson Business Travel (CBT) is using the Unit4 CentralCommand travel management platform – implemented by ServeVita – to manage all aspects of its business and provide an enterprise view of integrated travel and financial data.

- Supported 12% increase in commissions revenue
- Helped manage seven-fold increase in bookings processed, up to pandemic
- Enabled the business to adapt almost overnight to pandemic-led industry change
- Fast, seamless integration with almost any system

Adapting quickly to pandemic-led change

A year ago, CBT was coming off of its third decade of consistent annual profitability and was set to grow its annual travel sales volume to a targeted \$1 billion. And then the global pandemic struck.

“When the pandemic hit, we had to be decisive, conservative, and compassionate,” says Josh Cameron, Chief Strategy Officer of CBT. “With business travel curtailed, we immediately made a pivot from our growth strategy to a protection strategy – one that protected our people, our clients, and our customer experience – while also protecting our cash.”

During this period, Unit4 was a vital asset. The Unit4 CentralCommand platform provided Josh and his team with a timely, single, and connected view of the travel and financial data – enabling crucial decisions to be made quickly and accurately.

“On March 15, 2020, Unit4 was our best friend,” he says. “We locked ourselves away for four days and analyzed live data from every corner of the business. We trusted the data we were seeing from Unit4 and used it to make strategic decisions about our future. As soon as we felt confident that we had a solid plan for long-term viability, we started investing in strategies to be leaner, smarter, and better.”

Industry
Travel Services

Location
Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A.

Size
290 team members
in 30 U.S. states

Product
Unit4 Enterprise Resource
Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Adapt the business in days to cope with a dramatic reduction in travel bookings arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key metrics

12%
Increase in commission revenue

7x
Supported seven-fold increase in revenue until 2019

“We have achieved a seven-fold increase in bookings with only a moderate increase in staffing. Unit4 has been instrumental in helping CBT achieve this scale. The platform has already paid for itself several times over.”

Josh Cameron

Chief Strategy Officer, Christopherson Business Travel

Best-in-class finance, budgeting, and reporting

This powerful use of data marks another chapter in the successful relationship between CBT, Unit4, and implementation partner ServeVita. Unit4 was originally introduced to replace an outmoded Trams travel back-office system. “We were very impressed with Unit4’s travel industry-specific functionality and the integration with third-party platforms, like Travelport, Sabre, and Domo visual analytics,” says Josh. “Best-in-class finance, budgeting, reporting and much more are all there in one unified system.”

CentralCommand improves the accuracy, reliability, and availability of travel information beyond just dealing with the pandemic fallout. Josh explains, “We can analyze data in remarkable granularity, compared with the simple aggregated view we had before. For example, we can see which travel agents generate the most revenue, income by individual client, which employees are booking particular travel, and the yield by individual hotel property. Armed with these insights, we can adapt quickly to whatever change we face.”

Unit4 CentralCommand is not only speeding decisions, but the powerful, built-in workflow automation is helping people work faster, too. Take the example of Commission Tracking. In the past, CBT manually reconciled thousands of bookings to identify and match the commission due from a hotel or other travel partner. It was slow, labor-intensive, and commission could easily be overlooked.

Now, using Unit4, commission tracking is automated and agile, and match-rate accuracy is much higher. “Our hotel and car hire commissions have risen by 12% since we introduced Commission Tracking,” says Josh. “I explained how we use it to a competitor 20 times the size of CBT, and she was astounded how effective it was compared to their commission management software.”

Supported seven-fold increase in business

The automation is also helping CBT to grow its business. Josh continues, “Before Unit4, we were processing approximately 100 million travel bookings annually. In 2019, with Unit4, it was 700 million. We have achieved a seven-fold increase in bookings with only a moderate increase in staffing. Unit4 has been instrumental in helping CBT achieve this scale. The platform has already paid for itself several times over.”

Implementation partner ServeVita has played an instrumental role in this success. “I often feel like ServeVita founder Danny Eldridge knows more about Unit4 than Unit4 themselves. Time and again, their expertise, commitment, and professionalism have helped CBT innovate new processes and create an adaptive, forward-thinking business,” says Josh.

One example of this has been the integration of data from meeting, incentives, conferences, and events (MICE) groups. CBT subsidiary Andavo

works with clients to formulate a budget for the program and books the flights, accommodations, meals, and other travel arrangements. Until recently, CBT had minimal visibility into Andavo’s group finances – financial insights were mainly managed manually.

Not anymore. “ServeVita automated all the accounting processes involved in the MICE groups. They made it much easier to navigate processes like billing the client in instalments, managing incoming vendor invoices, and conducting the close. That’s another great thing about Unit4 and ServeVita. We are building the finance system around our remodelled processes. As the industry recovers from Covid, I believe we have a great future with Unit4 and ServeVita,” says Josh.

