Colleagues,

Easter is nearly upon us in those countries where this represents a seasonal spike in rentals. For clients using webXML and/or webRES, remember to keep tuning your availability using Stopsells and Backouts in webXG. Your friends, as ever, are the Class Availability Report, Print Fleet Adjustments and, of course, webPLAN (for a visual of Res vs Availability).

March has seen some organisation changes at Thermeon. Most of this will be "invisible" to you but I am proud to announce Terry Pearson's appointment as Chief Client Officer, Scott Sampson as CTO, Robin Redmile Gordon as Chief of Innovation, Sharon Miller as CFO and Roland Keogh as Chief Sales Officer. All now have specialist but global responsibilities within Thermeon Worldwide. The primary driver behind these appointments is to ensure we continue to deliver the best service and best product suite to our global client base. *Andy*

Andy Thorburn
CEO, Thermeon Worldwide

Interface **now** to:

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Recently added:

CAR RENTAL REPUBLIC

Downsizing does not equal becoming lean
by Peter Lunn, Thermeon APAC

As the global financial crisis continues to impact the tourism industries of many countries, the need to closely monitor all aspects of our costs is more important than ever.

It is always tempting to simply reduce company head-count in order to save money. However if the result of your headcount reduction is fewer people working longer hours and struggling to provide the service your customers demand, then ultimately everyone loses.

Although it may be counter-intuitive in some respects, a better solution is to involve your staff (not just your management staff) in process improvement workshops aimed at reducing waste and improving productivity.

Sometimes there is a disconnect between a company's senior management (and IT management) and those that clean the vehicles or face the customers. Process improvement workshops can serve to break down any barriers, and also ensure management understands what is actually occurring at the ground-level in their business. Has 'management' invested in systems that are just not working for the people on the ground? Can the systems be made to better serve the needs of the workers?

Your workshops should have three phases:
1. A "Waste Walk". Define the scope of your study and then watch the 'current' process with no interference and no preconceived 'solutions'. Map the physical processes and time all critical metrics
2. *Discuss what you saw*. List each step in the process. Beside each step, note whether or not the step 'adds value' to the customer experience. Concentrate on eliminating all steps that do not add value (for example how many times do you need to relocate your cars between when they return dirty and when they are ready for the next renter?) before you look at the 'value-add' steps
3. *Devise and document* a new 'standard' set of steps that enable the process to be done in the most efficient manner. Ensure everyone knows and understands the new Standard

Ensure that your systems (paperwork and computer processes) support your process. Where possible do not let your processes be slaves to your systems. If you feel cars+ is hindering your optimal process-flow in any way, let us know. We can probably help you to reconfigure cars+ to suit your flow.

Recommended Reading: Learning to See (Mike Rother & John Shook), Kaizen Express (Toshiko Narusawa), The Toyota Way (Jeffrey Liker)
Peter Lunn has spent over 15 years in various roles aligning operational processes and IT systems at a major Car Rental organisation.

Industry News

Highest pre-tax profits in 100 years of business for Sixt

China: combining rental fleets with taxi services - "Shake to hail"

4 Reasons GM is Investing in Car-Sharing

Meet us at…

Annual Licensee Meeting

10-12 April, San Antonio, Tx

What's new in cars+

All Release Notices can be found at the online cars+ Manual

February Releases

- Insurance companies can now be invoiced for a percentage of the total RA charges
- The revenue splits can now be edited on a closed but unposted RA
- RAs that can not be closed via a hand held device are placed in a "Pending Close" status
- Credit Card authorization shortfall can be blocked at open but allowed when editing an open RA
- New controls between Damage Entry and charges/credits applied to the related RA

Staff Pick

Our favourite new feature this month…

Percentage Matrix

The formula for T & K discount is now user definable.
Read about how to do this in the Manual

cars+ Tips & Hints

Did you know…
…*that missed res can be linked to Walk-up rentals by using the Edit Opening Fields program?* Learn how