

InterContinental Hotels Group Chose SpreadsheetWEB to Transform Their File Generation Systems of Their Middle East Properties

The Challenge

Mowafak Gabal is the Cluster Director of Finance & Business at InterContinental Hotels Group, and was working on a project for the Middle East Region that involves about 87 hotels. InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is a British multinational hospitality company with over 5,000 properties around the world.

Mowafak's office has been looking for a solution to consolidate the document system of their Middle East properties. They have tried various tools, but soon started looking elsewhere due to severe limitations. Mowafak elaborates on their previous system as *"We have been using Microsoft Flow through gateways and hotel servers in order to standardize the formatting of our documents. Since all hotels use the same formatting, we thought about going one step further and doing it through a cloud solution. This way, we won't have to utilize the servers of the properties, as this can be a security issue."* He also adds *"We are very familiar with Excel. For the last 30 years, I've been doing most of my work and reporting in Excel, so it naturally was the platform we started with. Another benefit of this was the fact that you can convert spreadsheets into any type of document we need."* Stressing the importance of a solution that plays well with Excel, and he also adds *"Custom coding these applications was not an option - we were working with Excel and implementing this solution through Excel and on premises gateway with Microsoft in some of our properties. It was working fine until we reached a point where having our users access the servers of other properties started making no sense. Custom coding also would've costed too much and the company was not willing to invest in this type of a solution."*

The Solution

The Middle East operations of IHG went through several options. Given that Mowafak and his office consists of business people – not programmers. Therefore, a no-code solution was a must have. They tried spreadsheet conversion software and document organization software, but could not find exactly what they were looking for. Mowafak elaborates on his search as *"I am not a programmer. We tried using various spreadsheet conversion tools, but couldn't find the flexibility we were looking for. A year ago, we started working with DocuSign and Adobe E-sign. Adobe E-sign unfortunately, was a bit too expensive due to their "per document" pricing and charging extra for e-signatures. DocuSign, on the other hand, didn't have a way for integration with Microsoft Flow, so that was not an option either."* And he continues, *"We searched online for options to replace the spreadsheet converter we've been working with for years. We needed a solution with similar capabilities and that's when we found out about SpreadsheetWEB."*

In addition to capturing the property data, the requirements for this project also involved integration with OneDrive, custom PDF document generation with embedded hyperlinks. Furthermore, Mowafak was also dealing with dozens of documents that had to be converted into a web tool. The requirements and the scale of the project meant that this could be a fairly costly transformation. Mowafak went on to build some of the applications himself, and added *"SpreadsheetWEB's Designer module is very easy to use and flexible. At the beginning, I was a little concerned and I was trying to use the same concepts as in other tools we were using, where your file is moved completely to the web. We just needed to set it up at the beginning, but it's much easier to use than other similar tools we've tried in the past. Moving the business logic was seamless."*

Case Study

Mowafak describes his experience with the SpreadsheetWEB team as, *“Best of all was the knowledge of the SpreadsheetWEB team. and their ability to think outside the box. They said, “We don’t have this option, but it can be done.” You don’t find this in a lot of companies, and they usually tell you “This is the product we have and this is what we are selling.” – especially in the software field.”*

The Results

The document generation applications for a number of IHG Middle East properties were converted into web applications that can create custom PDF exports, and push these files into predetermined OneDrive folders.

“In the beginning - I must admit - I had my concerns, because I was not familiar with the SpreadsheetWEB platform. But once I understood the concept, it became second nature. My first two applications were a bit challenging, but my third one, and the ones after were a piece of cake.” Says Mowafak.

The project required some custom work for embedding hyperlinks and OneDrive integration, but this came in the form of a custom code file that can be carried over to other applications with very small modifications. *“If we were to use the software with its capabilities as is, I think we could have gone live in a couple of weeks. But because of the demanding changes we asked of the SpreadsheetWEB team, the timelines were stretched a little bit. With the customization we asked for, we were live within a month.”* explains Mowafak.

The applications can be built using a drag-and-drop-style web interface, while retaining an elegant user interface. Opting with a no-code solution, instead of custom coding the entire document generation structure helped IHG save considerable amount of time and money. Mowafak describes the outcome of this project as, *“The digital transformation is a project that has been going on for 18 months, saving us a lot of paperwork*

and manpower for creating and tracking documents. We have internal audits every year and we would have to get the documents from storage every time. When we also consider the cost of storage outside the property I think we saved not less than \$30,000 per property. What we are now trying to do is implementing this for 87 other properties in the Middle East division. Even if we saved an average of \$20,000 for each property, or even \$10,000, that adds up to quite a lot.”

No longer needing a custom coded solution, IHG can now ensure the security of property servers and data. *“We thought about creating a custom code solution, and we discussed this with our regional office and the head office. However, we’ve been pretty reluctant go with a custom solution. Accessing property servers was one of the biggest hurdles we had. With SpreadsheetWEB, we eliminated this need completely.”* Adds Mowafak.

Mowafak is an expert in hospitality finances and business. He summarizes the need for this project and its success as *“My specialty is the hospitality industry and I’ve been working on this field for the last 35 years. We use lots of various systems, but they are not talking with each other - we are lagging in the hospitality industry when it comes to integration. What we are doing now with SpreadsheetWEB will combine these operations in one place.”*

For more information please contact:



Pagos, Inc.

233 Needham Street Suite 300 -
 Newton, MA 02464 – USA
 Tel: (860) 674-9100 – Fax: (860)
 674-8430
 info@pagos.com –
 www.pagos.com
