



## Hoburne Limited

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### Background

Hoburne is a family-owned group founded in 1912. Its business interests span seven top quality Holiday Parks in the South and South West of England, three golf courses and leisure, residential, industrial and commercial development.

The Hoburne team prides itself on providing traditional holidays for families and couples in beautiful surroundings and won the Dorset Chamber of Commerce Award for 'Family Business Of The Year' in 2006 and has recently been awarded 'Bournemouth Tourism 2007 Best Holiday Park of the Year Award' for Hoburne Bashley and Hosomeason's 'Best Holiday Park in the South Award' for Hoburne Naish.

### The IT challenge

Traditionally, Hoburne's customers have contacted them in writing or by telephone but increasingly they are using the internet to research and book their Hoburne holiday. This rapidly changing business model made James Lapage (Managing Director) aware that while customers were becoming more PC and internet 'savvy', many in the company were not such advanced IT users. He saw that an investment in training would enable them harness the full potential of new technology to the benefit of both the company and its customers. He explains:

*"Historically like many companies we have given employees a PC fully loaded with lots of programmes and just left them to get on with it. This meant we had the full spectrum of users – from the very able, to the 'almost scared to turn on the PC'. I wanted everyone to be shown the benefits of email so they would manage their information and workloads better."*

### The solution

Mesmo Consultancy recommended a series of email best practice workshops tailored to meet Hoburne's needs and run at all the holiday parks.

Prior to the workshops, participants completed the Mesmo Consultancy Outlook IT Fitness check to ascertain whether they were a bronze, silver or gold level IT user. This meant similar ability levels could be grouped together to ensure they got the most out of their session.

Following each workshop, Monica Seeley visited participants individually at their desks. This allowed them to ask any questions they had not felt able to ask in an open forum and to get advice while their own PC was in front of them.

## The results

*"I was in a workshop with senior company managers and it made us realise that while email is a good tool, it's not always the most appropriate one. We were advised to stop and consider the possible risk of misinterpretation rather than just 'banging off' an email."*

*"Although, our IT team could have carried out much of this – all their knowledge is in-house. It was very valuable to have Mesmo's broader experience and its European and industry perspective into the types of email and IT challenges we all face as well as its insights into how they have been handled."*

"I think it's all about building people's confidence in a new way of conducting business. Most people do think email is a good medium and some of us are now much better organised in how we use and manage it. For example I have grouped all my mail into folders so my actual inbox now only has 10 emails", comments James Lapage.

Following the training, Hoburne encouraged employees to access Mesmo Consultancy's e-briefing and Lapage says that he's noticed people implementing not just what they learned in their workshops but also hints and tips that Mesmo recommend for more effective email management.

Lapage continues; "Our people are definitely more confident and many now use Mesmo's little tips i.e. one of my colleagues now colour codes all emails sent from me in red."

Lapage concludes: "One of the key things that came out of the sessions was when to use email as a method of communication. I was in a workshop with senior company managers and we identified that while email is a valuable tool, it's not always the most appropriate one. We were advised to stop and consider the possible risk of misinterpretation rather than just 'banging off' an email."

The company is planning to carry out further IT training in the future and is currently working on an Acceptable Usage Policy for IT to provide guidelines and safeguards for all employees which Mesmo is helping them put together.

## Why Mesmo Consultancy

"It was important to us that Monica Seeley had a link with the area and knew a bit about us and our people. But we chose to work with Mesmo because they offered a service that I and my management team felt was just what we needed. Monica worked well with us, handling the broad range of skills in the company", said Lapage adding that it was a particular benefit to have an external consultant implementing their training.

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