

Taming the growing jungle of data with Retail Zoo

Back in 2000, Boost Juice Bars relied on simplistic tools such as MS Excel® and Outlook® to manage information across its expanding store portfolio. While simple and low cost, these systems quickly proved to be insufficient when it came to meeting the increasingly complex commercial, legal and regulatory requirements faced by the business.

Since 2006, this innovative organisation, now a part of Retail Zoo, has relied on LeaseEagle to provide a highly sophisticated, centralised lease and franchise management solution for its entire business. Information for more than 300 stores in Australia and 100 internationally are managed using LeaseEagle, which gives Retail Zoo access to accurate data, business intelligence, industry insights and sophisticated, actionable reporting at their fingertips.

RETAIL ZOO

CLIENT

Retail Zoo

INDUSTRY

Food Franchise

CHALLENGES:

- Spreadsheets were unable to manage surging volumes of lease and franchise data
- Disparate management of data made business intelligence, analysis and projections virtually impossible
- Franchise Business Consultants working out on the road needed access to accurate data in real-time.

BENEFITS:

- One source of truth for all lease and franchise data ensures 100% accuracy for all reporting and analysis
- Retail Zoo's vast number of lease date and event notifications are automatically managed
- Data is stored alongside industry stats and shopping centre information, giving Retail Zoo a truly cohesive view of each store's success.

STAMPEDING TO SUCCESS

Beginning in 2000 with Boost Juice Bars, Retail Zoo has grown to include two other leading food franchise brands, Salsa's Fresh Mex Grill and Cibo Espresso. A fourth brand 'Hatch' has also recently launched in Australia. The company now operates approximately 300 stores locally and more than 100 international outlets across nine countries.

Retail Zoo has experienced significant growth in recent years and is widely respected as one of Australia's most successful retail and franchise stories. Underpinning the organisation's expansion is its commitment to getting things right, which encompasses everything from customer service through to supporting its vast franchisee network. Setting up and maintaining critical IT infrastructure, systems and procedures therefore plays an important role in daily life at Retail Zoo.

BOOST JUICE QUICKLY OUTGROWS SIMPLE TOOLS

Like many businesses, when Retail Zoo was starting out as Boost Juice Bars, it used simple and low cost tools like MS Excel® and Outlook® to manage store portfolio information and franchise data. As the partner network expanded however, more information was being created and updated on a daily basis, making it difficult to preserve uniformity when it came to formulas in spreadsheets or type of information gathered. It also meant that portfolio information was quite scattered, trapped in Outlook on desktops or held in personal files.

With disparate data and employees working across the country and overseas, Boost Juice Bars needed to establish a centralised database that would make



store portfolio management easy and transparent. The organisation undertook a comprehensive vendor review before selecting LeaseEagle. The most appealing aspects of the LeaseEagle solution was its ability to provide Boost Juice Bars with one source of truth for all property related data and 24X7 online accessibility. It also gives management teams much needed portfolio visibility, advanced analysis tools and live reporting.

RETAIL ZOO SOARS, TAKING LEASEEAGLE ALONG FOR THE RIDE

A few years later and Retail Zoo was born, with the business expanding its brand network to include Salsa's Fresh Mex Grill and Cibo Espresso. Naturally, Retail Zoo's business and information requirements from LeaseEagle increased too.

Today, Retail Zoo's domestic and international retail network continues to expand with many employees trusting LeaseEagle on a daily basis for critical lease date and event notifications, ensuring accurate rental charges from landlords, to produce accurate portfolio analysis and reports, monitor occupancy costs, store projects and numerous other functions. Employees in

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Tynan Putt,
Lease Administrator

“...We need to own, update and manage huge amounts of information – not only relating to individual stores but relevant shopping centres too. From store and centre performance data to visitor demographics, store sales, MATs, outgoing, rents, promotions, GLAs, traffic numbers and occupancy rates. It’s all being constantly accessed and amended in real time in LeaseEagle.”

Jo Stewart,
Retail Leasing Manager

the field are also able to take full advantage of the benefits of LeaseEagle’s centralised cloud platform from their smartphones and tablets, ensuring the availability and accuracy of information they need in real time.

SUPPORTING CRITICAL BUSINESS DECISIONS

While there are many ways that LeaseEagle supports Retail Zoo employees on a daily basis across legal, finance and operations, there’s one group that extensively relies on LeaseEagle – and that’s the property team.

Jo Stewart, Retail Leasing Manager, explains, “We are involved in all aspects of our franchise leases so we need to own, update and manage huge amounts of information – not only relating to individual stores but relevant shopping centres too. From store and centre performance data to visitor demographics, store sales, MATs, outgoing, rents, promotions, GLAs, traffic numbers and occupancy rates. It’s all being constantly accessed and amended in real time in LeaseEagle.”

Retail Zoo’s property team is primarily responsible for identifying and selecting sites for new store openings. Stringent processes and procedures are ensured, with Ms. Stewart and her team relying on LeaseEagle and industry data to decide how a potential new site stacks up against Retail Zoo’s strict selection criteria.

“When someone calls us to discuss a new franchise opportunity, we can only consider it if it meets the criteria for that brand. We look at things like demographics, GLAs, how many specialty food stores already exist at that shopping centre, how many stores exist in the food court, the number of food courts in the centre, pedestrian numbers, average dollar spend at that shopping centre and more,” says Ms. Stewart.

“If the proposed new site passes this first stage of elimination, we then scrutinise it alongside a comparable centre where we already have a store. Because each of our franchise leases exists in LeaseEagle, we can quickly compare how the new site compares with existing stores.

“We also migrate all our sales data into LeaseEagle. All this information combined means that we can look at a site like Chadstone, and automatically see the current MAT, the past MAT and our occupancy rates. LeaseEagle also automatically updates itself with industry information that we used to plug in manually from purchased industry books and lists. It’s invaluable.”

SITE NEGOTIATIONS AND CRITICAL REPORTING

The reliance on LeaseEagle as a central, highly accurate information portal extends across the entire property team to include Tynan Putt, Lease Administrator at Retail Zoo. On any given day, Mr. Putt is working to negotiate a myriad of site negotiations on behalf of franchisees.

“At a high level, I use LeaseEagle to pull reports that tell me which leases are due to expire. In turn, I analyse an expiring lease’s occupancy cost, what rents they’re currently paying, the size of the store, contact details and more. This bodes well for us especially if a landlord is seeking say, a 20% occupancy but a comparative store is sitting at 12% at another Westfield site. We’ll use the data to make sure we’re being appropriately charged. It’s a powerful negotiation tool,” explains Mr. Putt.

But it’s the Area Managers or Franchise Business Consultants who make the most of LeaseEagle’s mobile accessibility. The Franchise Business Consultants cover huge ground, using their tablets and phones to regularly update and review store information in LeaseEagle as they go – from the basics such as email addresses through to lease terms and conditions, and store performance reports.

Mr. Putt explains, “I regularly conduct franchise reviews which involves pulling a report from LeaseEagle. The report data tells me what the MAT is for a particular store, any MAT changes, the occupancies and how the store’s performance compares with national or state averages. I discuss this with the Franchise Business Consultants, who in turn use it to have informed discussions with franchisees at scheduled bi-annual meetings. This process is critical to ensuring our franchisees’ success.”

ONE SOLUTION, MANY USES

Retail Zoo’s property, finance, legal and business management teams all simultaneously use LeaseEagle for their respective roles. For the Accounting team, LeaseEagle is particularly valuable at budget time when they pull reports to review costs, establish budgets and make projections. On the other hand, the legal team will use it to dive into lease agreements and review terms and conditions.

“One of the biggest advantages of the LeaseEagle system is that it ensures all our teams are working with the same data. There’s no delay between information updates, reporting is fast and accurate, and the solution has been able to scale easily to support Retail Zoo’s changing needs. It’s the ideal tool for us,” concluded Ms. Stewart.

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