



# WRITING CASE STUDIES: How to Make a Great Living by Helping Clients Tell Their Stories

## MODULE 8

### Anatomy of a Case Study

Case Study Sample – River Entertainment



AMERICAN WRITERS & ARTISTS INC.

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## Case Study Sample – River Entertainment

### River Entertainment Enables Real-Time Access to Project Communications While Increasing Project Transparency for Clients

#### ■ CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

River Entertainment Inc. develops, finances and manages American Indian–owned casinos across the U.S. The company currently has management contracts with five American Indian tribes in California, Oklahoma and Michigan for eight casino sites, and it recently announced plans to develop a company-owned casino resort project in Vicksburg, Mississippi. River also owns approximately 61 percent of GSM Enterprises Inc., a publicly held media and entertainment company principally engaged in the development, production and marketing of gaming-themed televised programming, including the World Poker Tour television series, the licensing and sale of branded products and the sale of corporate sponsorships.

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## ■ CHALLENGES

### **Inability to Efficiently Manage Communications Across Geographies**

As an organization that is continually engaged in large, complex capital projects across the U.S., River Entertainment needed a better way to communicate with its geographically dispersed group of partners and project team members. The ability to easily manage and track RFIs, submittals, directives and other project documents across multiple geographies and external organizations was becoming an essential component for project success, especially in an environment marked by tighter construction schedules and higher customer expectations.

“When project communications are coming from different sources and via email, fax and FedEx, there’s a greater chance for miscommunication, costly errors and project delays,” said Roger Mullen, director of construction for River Entertainment.

### **Inconsistent Access to Key Project Information**

River personnel also needed a more effective way to access key project information in real time, regardless of where they happen to be located. The company’s manual and fragmented approach to managing documentation prevented traveling team members from accessing and distributing important project data in a timely fashion. This was negatively impacting project costs and schedules.

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## **Clients Asking for Clearer Visibility into Project Status**

Finally, River sought a solution that would enable it to keep its clients abreast of project status. Some clients wanted increased visibility into their projects, and assembling this information on a regular basis was labor intensive and error prone, as it entailed pulling data from dozens of paper-based and digital sources.

### ■ **THE SOLUTION**

During a project review meeting, River approached one of its architectural firm partners regarding research results on collaborative content management applications. “This partner had conducted extensive research into the pros and cons of every viable content collaboration solution out there,” said Mullen. “They were actively looking for a solution for themselves, but they were kind enough to share their detailed findings with us, in which they had concluded that CTSpace CW was the best option.”

After conducting his own evaluation, Mullen and his team also determined that CTSpace CW – an enterprise content collaboration solution delivered via a SaaS (Software as a Service) platform – would be the best option for River. The company purchased a CW enterprise agreement and implemented the solution’s document management functionality in three large projects in less than one week.

### ■ **THE RESULTS**

#### **Real-Time Access to Project Information**

Since deploying CW, River has seen dramatic improvement in its ability to access and communicate critical project information. This has enabled its contractors and partners to get the information they need, when they need it, preventing project delays and unnecessary change orders.

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“When we’re asked a question or need to resolve an urgent issue, we now have a centralized repository of real-time project data and documents to use and reference,” said Mullen. “All we need is an Internet connection and we can access the information almost instantly. We can also now enforce business processes. This helps ensure that documents are routed efficiently and according to our predetermined business rules.”

### **Improved Accountability**

According to Mullen, CW has also helped River save time, improve accountability and save on printing and shipping costs. Documents can be routed instantly, without having to resort to email.

“The fact that you just upload a drawing onto the site and everyone who needs to see it automatically gets notified, that’s huge for us,” he said. “And because the system time-stamps everything, you know who received it, who viewed it and when they responded. This has allowed us to improve accountability and avoid breakdowns in communication.”

### **Increased Project Transparency for Clients**

By providing clients with access to their projects in CW, River also enables them to have better visibility into the projects. The company has even gone as far as to place a webcam at one of its current project sites to allow the project owner to monitor progress.

According to Mullen, clients can now get a better appreciation for the transactional activity that goes on in a project every day. In that respect, CW has become a differentiator for River. It helps clients feel closer to the project, stay abreast of project issues and come better prepared to discuss and address key concerns at the weekly meetings.

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## **General Contractor Acceptance**

Mullen also commented that system acceptance among its contractors and architects has been very high. Although some partners were initially reluctant to use the system for RFIs and directives, ultimately most come back to River with very positive feedback. “Once they see how much time and frustration the system saves them, it becomes much more than a ‘forced’ system – it’s now a tool to help them do their work much more efficiently.”

One of River’s partners that has benefited greatly from CW is Cunningham Group, the architect of a current River project, the Foothills Oaks Casino. “We have to work very closely with River and about 30 additional consultants in this project,” said Pete Legeros, an associate in the Cunningham Group. “As the point person for RFIs and other documentation, I have to read, receive and distribute virtually all of the project’s documentation. CW allows me to manage this process much faster and with half the staff I would need if we were doing this manually.”

## **Easily Archive All Project Data at Closeout**

In terms of project records, the ability to permanently archive all project data at closeout is a big benefit for River. “In the past, project data would be scattered among several different people and in dozens of offices, PCs and filing cabinets,” said Mullen. “With CW, we always have all project communications in one place. And once the project is closed out, we simply archive it to a CD.”

## **Seasoned and Construction-Savvy Software Partner**

When asked about CTSpace and its responsiveness to River’s needs, Mullen commented, “CTSpace has always been very responsive to our requests, questions and suggestions. Their people are very knowledgeable about our industry, our business processes and the challenges we face. Having a seasoned and construction-savvy software partner has been a big plus.”

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## ■ SIDEBAR COPY

### **CUSTOMER DETAILS**

River Entertainment, Inc.  
[www.RiverEntertainment.com](http://www.RiverEntertainment.com)

### **INDUSTRY**

- Engineering and construction

### **CHALLENGES**

- Needed better management and tracking of project communications across multiple geographies, internal offices and external partners
- Lacked real-time access to key project information, regardless of project team member location
- Clients were demanding clearer visibility into project status and issues

### **SOLUTION**

- CW from CTSpace



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## RESULTS

- Improved ability to rapidly access and communicate critical project information
- Increased accountability among all project participants
- Fewer breakdowns in communication
- Increased project transparency for clients
- High application acceptance among River's contractors
- More accurate and thorough project-data archives