

## Tammy Brazzoli | Touch Down Group | November 2018 Interview

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### Interview with South African based Touch Down Group's Operations Manager: November 2018 Johan Marais

Tammy Brazzoli, Touch Down Group's Operations Manager, is responsible for operations, systems, responsibilities and processes within the group.

#### Question: Who is the Touch Down Group?

Tammy explains: "Touch Down's offering focuses on providing Ownership & Membership products, Corporate Rentals, Events and Venue Hire. We book more than 300,000 booknights per year and sold R2,5 billion (US\$192M) worth of shareblock accommodation to date."

"Touch Down employs more than 600 people across South Africa & North America, providing unique vacation and hospitality experiences for both the South African and International markets, including Hungary, Croatia and Indonesia."

Furthermore, Touch Down owns and manage 6 properties throughout South Africa:

- Burgundy Luxury Apartments (Cape Town, Western Cape)
- Dunkeld Country & Equestrian Estate (Dullstroom, Mpumalanga)
- Humala River Lodge (Songimvelo Game Reserve, Mpumalanga)

- Seasons Golf Leisure & Spa (Hartbeespoort, North West)
- Shearwater on Sea (Sedgefield, Garden Route, Western Cape)
- Ocean Shores (Cape Town, Western Cape)

**Q: What criteria did you use when researching Lodging and Hospitality software solutions for the Touch Down Group?**

“Touch Down was firstly looking for a solution that allows seamless integration between our reservations, retail, restaurants, spa, internet CRO-reservations and stock management.”

“Secondly, we needed near-real-time updates between our properties and our head-office and CRO allowing our head-office to stay informed and up to date on transactions at the properties”

“The third important criteria were that our properties cannot afford to be off-line and were looking for a system that can process transactions, even when the internet is down.”

**Q: After making the decision to partner with CiMSO (INNkeeper), you and your team was trained by CiMSO and trained to roll-out the software to your properties. What advice would you give other Operations Managers when rolling out a new ERP/PMS Solution?**

“I would say, start with your most complex property, first. This would allow you to be exposed to most of the challenges early-on in the project and address them then and there.”

“Allow more time at your first property roll-out... and then some more. Things will go faster for your second roll-out, but only if you allow sufficient time during your first property roll-out.”

“The result is that the rest of the roll-out will go much “smoother”, as you have already gone through most of the possible challenges with your solutions provider and we were brought up to date on how to handle these challenges for the remainder of the roll-out.”

“Understand what you implement. Although CiMSO Business Solutions was willing to do the roll-out for us, we were able to save a lot of money by having CiMSO do their “train-the-trainer” option with us, while empowering us to learn, understand, teach and install the software solutions to our properties and their staff. We now have an excellent understanding of using the software solution to its full potential with software- and industry-experts a phone call away to support us.”

**Q: Why did Touch Down decide on CiMSO Suite of Software?**

“It wasn’t an easy decision and we did due diligence by investigating and evaluating for well over 2 years. As the Touch Down Group is growing, we needed to simplify our complex environment from a fragmented set-up into a fully integrated solution providing us control and a business partner that can grow with us and our requirements.”

“Touch Down’s unique vacation experiences includes services such as Rooms & Apartments, Restaurants, Curio Stores, Spa, Game Drives, Events and Venues, as well as Shareblock/Timeshare. CiMSO’s integrated solution allows us to manage all of these services, including stock and finance management as a single end-to-end software solution.”

“We can do this at head-office and properties alike, as CiMSO’s INNSync product synchronize all transactions throughout the company, providing control and visibility. Even when the internet is down, the properties can still continue with their transactions and as soon as the internet connection re-connect, all transactions will be synchronized.”

“All channel bookings seamlessly comes through Siteminder onto CiMSO INNkeeper’s booking grid. What we also liked was the ability to pull in accommodation from Tourplan into CiMSO INNkeeper.”

“Other values that confirms our decision for CiMSO includes reporting. We spend a lot less time to generate and to provide required reporting. I have to provide reports to three Directors at Touch Down and through the Console Reporting, I can set-up, save and customize our own reporting using database fields. Alternatively, we can access more than 200 pre-prepared “packaged” reports. If my Directors are happy... I am happy.”

**Q: Do you feel comfortable to recommend CiMSO Business Solution and their Software Suite to other companies and/or operations managers?**

Yes, definitely

**Q: Why?**

“Well, as we took more than two years to investigate, CiMSO’s Pre-Sales process and service during this time was very good, always providing what we asked, timely and we had multiple demonstrations where the product was demonstrated to show it can do what they said it can do, allowing us all the opportunity to ask questions and to evaluate. We were never pressured and was allowed to make our decision in our own time. We received what was showed and promised!

The same level of support was experienced and continued post-sales. To date we are very pleased with CiMSO’s 24 x 7 support team, always willing to help, friendly and very patient.

Great to have a single solution providing full visibility and control across our businesses.

I’m a realist and no software solution are 100%... we realize it is software, not “magicware”. We are in further discussion with CiMSO for some development we require for our Debtor specific needs, as well as a few update requests for next year. Seems CiMSO always have the next “cake in the oven” and are looking forward to discuss their integrated Yield- and Revenue Management solution.

Challenges are now addressed pro-actively, while in the past, issues would be raised when the customer stands “suitcase-in-hand” at the front desk.

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For more information on the Touch Down Group, please visit: <https://www.touchdowngroup.co.za/>

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