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NEWS & UPDATES

Letter from the Editor

TEAGAN BOYLE Editor & Marketing Manager, *Vertus Group*

After the success of our first issue of *Vertical Acumen*, I am excited to present the second edition with updates from across our portfolio in Q2 and Q3 of 2024.

As a vertical market software acquirer, *Vertus Group* has spent the past six months doing exactly that, celebrating three new acquisitions. This issue dives into two of them - *Teachworks* and *B4Checkin* - highlighting their impact. Following our rebranding and transition from the Jonas Club & Hospitality portfolio to Vertus Group in December 2023, our focus on exploring new verticals while strengthening our original two verticals has been evident. *Teachworks* introduces us to the Education Tech space, while *B4Checkin* bolsters our well-established Hospitality portfolio.

In June, we joined our Hospitality brands at HITEC in Charlotte, where *Jonas Hospitality*'s newest offering, *Jonas Unify*, was on full display. Thousands got to learn more about the solution and how it is poised to bridge the gap between best-of-breed and all-in-one solutions within the Hospitality industry. It's the type of solution that could only be developed in a unique ecosystem like *Jonas Hospitality*'s and *Vertus Group*'s where multiple separate business units are contributing their expertise to a combined project (see our interview with Jim Rowe for more information on page 17).

Another highlight of the past two quarters was our first-ever education conference as *Vertus Group*, *Univertusy 2024*. The event brought together over 80 leaders from across our portfolio for a week of knowledge sharing, guest speakers, networking and, of course, some fun. Anchored by the theme of being "exceptional," the event inspired our leaders to pursue excellence in our work and find new ways to lead and grow an exceptional vertical market software business (more on page 6).

Events like *Univertusy* and innovations like *Jonas Unify* exemplify the strength of *Vertus Group's* "Buy & Hold Forever" approach to acquisitions. We don't view businesses as commodities to be traded, but as legacies to be preserved and nurtured for long-term growth. This commitment enables us to retain valuable knowledge while fostering fresh innovation, giving our companies not just a permanent home, but renewed energy.

Similar to our first issue of *Vertical Acumen*, you'll find in this issue:

- **News & Updates:** press releases, updates, and a glimpse into our portfolio's ecosystem
- **Inside Vertus Group:** M&A insights, best practices, and leadership perspectives through interviews with people in our network.
- **Around the Portfolio:** Standout articles from our portfolio companies showcasing a wide range of topics.

Thank you for continuing to join us on this journey. I hope you enjoy the second issue of Vertical Acumen, and we look forward to more exciting updates in the next quarter.

-Teagan Boyle

Vertus Group Acquires B4 Checkin

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada (Aug 26, 2024) - Vertus Group, a Division of Jonas Software, is thrilled to announce the acquisition of B4Checkin ("b4"), the provider of cloud-based tools for the hospitality industry, including a best-in-class secure payment platform and hotel booking engine.

"This acquisition represents another strong addition to our hospitality vertical, and we are excited to welcome B4Checkin to the Vertus Group portfolio," said Jim Fedigan, Group CEO of Vertus. "I look forward to seeing B4Checkin grow and excel within our ecosystem."

"Our full team here at b4 is happy, excited, and motivated by the many new growth opportunities enabled almost overnight through our acquisition by Vertus Group," said Steve Miles, COO at B4Checkin. "Vertus Group's corporate expertise, standards, and resources enable a strategic focus on long-term growth and stability that will help us grow into a brighter and faster future."

Miles continued, stating, "Positive new synergies evolve naturally when joining such a large family of like-minded software companies. Under this new partnership, we're absolutely confident we will continue to enhance our products and provide exceptional service to our family of customers."

The acquisition process was led by IJW & CO. Director of Investment Banking, Sami Kabir, stated, "IJW is pleased to have advised B4Checkin on its successful acquisitions by Vertus Group. This transaction represents a strategic alignment that will enhance B4Checkin's ability to innovate and deliver exceptional solutions to the hospitality sector."

On the acquisition process itself, Kabir continued by stating, "Working with Zach Plener [Dir. M&A], Brent Winston [Sr. Legal Counsel] and the entire Vertus team was great, they made the entire due diligence and closing process frictionless. More importantly, it left a good taste in the mouths of B4Checkin's management team, which will make the integration process that much more seamless. With a plethora of hospitality software leaders already part of the Vertus family, we thought the fit with B4Checkin was an obvious one. We look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of the combined entity."

About B4Checkin

B4Checkin provides cloud-based tools for the hospitality industry, creating exceptional online experiences for making reservations and taking online payments through two flagship products, TransForm and GettaRoom. TransForm enables secure, real-time payment processing and posting to select property management systems (PMS), reducing both fraud and chargebacks. GettaRoom is a customizable online booking engine that integrates with select PMS's to seamlessly present offers to website visitors in real-time and secure the commission-free sales that hotels are looking for.

For more information on their best-in class solutions, visit www.B4Checkin.com.



Vertus Group announces acquisition of Teachworks.



Kitchener, Ontario, Canada (July 3, 2024) - Vertus Group is pleased to announce the acquisition of Teachworks, a leading provider of Tutor Management Software. Teachworks was founded in 2014 to provide education businesses of all sizes with exceptional software that helps them simplify, automate, and grow their business.

"We are thrilled to have Teachworks join the Vertus Group portfolio," said Jim Fedigan, Group CEO of Vertus Group. "They have proved themselves to be leaders within the education software market and I look forward to seeing the business continue to thrive within our ecosystem."

Moving forward, Teachworks will continue to work closely with tutoring businesses, music schools, driving schools, and test prep centers alike to deliver them the best management software tailored to the education market.

On the acquisition, Harrison Jorritsma, Teachworks' Founder and CEO stated, "We're delighted to join Vertus Group, an organization that shares our long-term focus and dedication to excellence. This partnership marks a significant milestone for our team and our customers. As part of Vertus Group, we will benefit from their expertise and resources to improve our offerings and continue delivering innovative solutions to our clients. We look forward to growing and achieving new milestones as part of the Vertus Group family."

The acquisition of Teachworks introduces Vertus Group to its sixth vertical market: education. This aligns with the portfolio's goal of expanding to new industries since its official rebrand to Vertus Group in late 2023. It is a significant step in enhancing Vertus Group's offerings and further demonstrates the portfolio's strength in acquiring owner-operated vertical market businesses.

About Teachworks

Teachworks is a web-based software company providing tutor management software to education businesses across the globe. Their strong focus on education providers including tutoring companies, music schools, and language schools allows them to provide clients with features that have been designed specifically for their industry.

With Teachworks' platform, businesses can effortlessly manage clients, employees, scheduling, invoicing, teacher timesheets, payroll, communication, and more. Their modular design allows companies to enable only the features that they need, reducing complexity and increasing efficiency. Teachworks currently offers over 50 free integrations and add-ons, and the list keeps growing.

For more information on their modular offerings, visit **www.te**achworks.com



Vertus Group hosts their first education conference: Univertusy 2024



One of the biggest advantages of joining Vertus Group is the ability to tap into a network of leaders who constantly share what has worked and what hasn't for their software business. Whether it's finding a solution to a tough business problem or learning how to optimize operations, the companies in our portfolio benefit from the experience and insights of their peers. This collaborative ecosystem offers a real competitive edge - no one is operating in a silo, and the collective wisdom helps each business grow faster and smarter.

This spirit of learning and connection was at the heart of Vertus Group's first-ever education summit, Univertusy 2024 ("UV24"). Held near Toronto, Ontario, the event brought together over 80 leaders from more than 25 companies across our portfolio for a week of deep learning, networking, and problem-solving. It was a chance for everyone to share their knowledge, pick up new ideas, and connect with others working through the same challenges of running a successful software business.

Originally the Jonas Club & Hospitality portfolio, Vertus Group rebranded in December 2023 to encompass many new verticals. Today, Vertus Group operates businesses within verticals such as:

- Club Management
- Hospitality
- Dispute Management
- Developer Tools
- Media Solutions
- Education
- and more.

This range of industries within our portfolio makes events like UV24 more important than ever. Despite the many differences between these verticals, every leader in our portfolio shares the same drive to run exceptional software businesses, and that is what connects us. UV24 gave those leaders the perfect opportunity to exchange ideas and come away with new strategies to take back to their teams.

Speakers at UV24 shared a wealth of knowledge, both from within the Vertus Group ecosystem and beyond. Presenters like Jamal Baksh, CFO of Constellation Software, offered the perspective of our parent organization, while Bilal Mahmood, Managing Director of Contour Software, showcased the services they offer and how they can address specific business challenges. External experts, including Dr. JP Pawliw Fry (Institute for Health & Human Potential) and Jeffrey Tjiok (Simon-Kucher), brought additional insights on leadership under pressure and innovative pricing strategies. These sessions, plus the many other guest speakers and topics presented, provided attendees with new perspectives and fresh ideas to implement in their businesses.

Overall, UV24 demonstrated the strength of Vertus Group's collaborative approach. As our portfolio continues to expand, the ability to learn from each other and share best practices improves, remaining one of our key advantages. The summit left leaders energized, armed with new ideas and strong connections, which will continue to drive success across the entire Vertus ecosystem.

We look forward to new businesses joining our portfolio and giving them the opportunity to attend events like Univertusy in the future.

Our Ecosystem: Constellation, Jonas, and Vertus Group

Parent Organization: Constellation Software Inc.

Founded in 1995 in Toronto, Canada, Constellation Software (Constellation) is an international provider of market-leading software and services to a number of industries. Publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange with the ticker CSU, Constellation typically acquired 100% ownership in targets and is a "buy-and-hold" acquirer with a decentralized structure. Constellation has 6 operating groups which currently serve customers in over 100 different markets worldwide.

Operating Group: Jonas Software

1 of 6 Constellation operating groups, Jonas Software began with the acquisition of Gary Jonas Computing Ltd. in 2003. Today, Jonas Software owns 150+ software companies across 40+ vertical markets and 6 portfolios.

Portfolio: Vertus Group

1 of 6 Jonas Software portfolios comprised of 27 businesses across 5 verticals. Our portfolio employs over 800 people across these businesses and serves customers in over 100 countries.

Club Management

Security Solutions

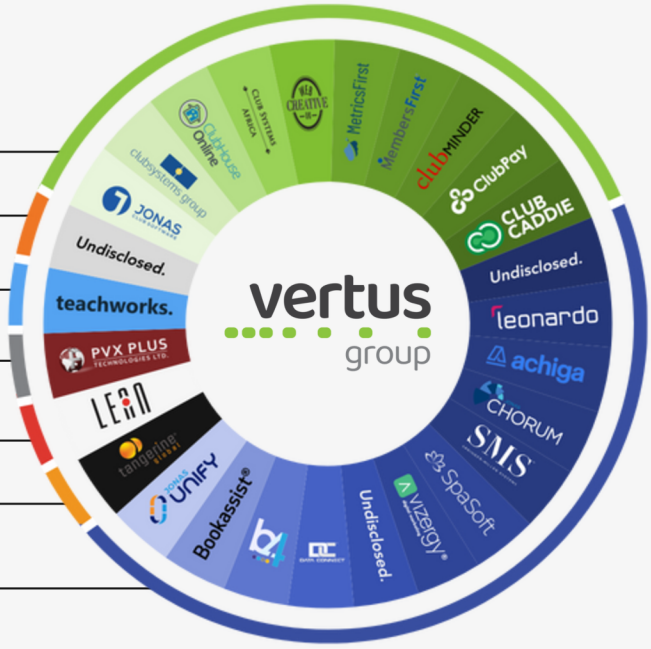
Education

Developer Tools

Dispute Management

Media Solutions

JONAS HOSPITALITY



INSIDE VERTUS GROUP

This section highlights our top articles from our Vertus Group team, covering topics ranging from M&A insights and best practices to employee journeys, leadership insights, and engaging case studies. In this issue we feature multiple employee spotlights from our M&A team and Group leaders, as well as interviews featuring an AI Business Strategist, a leader from our Jonas Hospitality vertical, and the General Manager of PVX Plus.



Starting Your AI Journey

MARIA BECERRA AI Business Strategist, *Jonas Software*



For many of us, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has only recently captured our attention, but for Maria Becerra, AI has been a passion since the beginning of her education and career. As the AI Business Strategist for our parent company, Jonas Software, Maria leverages her extensive knowledge in AI to assist businesses across Jonas Software's portfolios, including Vertus Group, with their AI strategies.

We sat down with Maria to explore her career with AI, gather tips for starting your own AI journey, and learn about common mistakes to avoid. Join us as we learn from Maria's experience and valuable insights.

Tell us about your background.

I'm originally from Colombia and that's where I studied my undergraduate in engineering. I worked there for about 5-6 years and then moved to Canada. Most of my career has been at the intersection of business and technology, so I often serve as the liaison between these two teams and translate complex terminology into business insights so that our leaders can take better action. I've worked in different industries including oil and gas, airlines, pharmaceutical, consulting, financial, and now software.

Give us an overview of the AI Business Strategist role.

This is a very, very exciting role, and it's been my favourite so far in my career. It covers two main areas with the first being all the research about what is happening in the AI industry and what competitors are doing in the space. The second area is an education component with all these insights I'm gathering and sharing with our business leaders. It is a kind of consulting where I help our business leaders who don't know how to start their AI journey and I get them ready to initiate this adventure in AI.

I know AI and am starting to learn more about our specific verticals, but it is the business leaders who really know their businesses. So, interacting with them and learning from them has been very exciting.

What is rewarding about the role?

What's rewarding is the people. It makes a huge difference when you work with passionate and smart people because you get to learn from them. As much as I am giving our leaders insights into the Artificial Intelligence field, I am also learning a lot from them, and they do it in a way that inspires me to keep learning more. It's exciting that I am learning about all of these different industries, while being in one role.

How are you involved with AI outside of your role at Jonas?

One of the reasons why I chose to work at Jonas Software in this role is because I'm very passionate about business and AI technology. Outside of work, I keep doing the same thing that I do at Jonas. On one side I volunteer as the Regional Director of LATAM for the IIBA (International Institute for Business Analysis) and this entails coaching chapters in Latin America to help promote the awareness of the Business Analysis role.

The other volunteering I do is with AI Expedition. This is an organization that looks to educate people with non-technical backgrounds about Artificial Intelligence. Every month a group of volunteers and I get together to host webinars about topics like AI, machine learning, and deep learning, but from a more critical perspective. It is not so much about

coding or development, but rather getting people into the mindset of understanding the capabilities and challenges of this field.

What advice do you have for someone interested in pursuing a career in AI?

AI is advancing very fast, but some concepts will remain the same such as, "What is AI" and, "What is machine learning and deep learning?" I would recommend to start looking at these core concepts and gaining an understanding of what is possible with AI. Not everything has to be solved with AI or machine learning, other non-AI-related actions can be done to improve processes. So, I would stress understanding where AI is an effective player and start getting hands-on experience with side-projects because that is where you'll gain an understanding of the challenges of AI. Even if you are not interested in a technical role, it is good to get hands-on experience to understand the full capabilities of AI.

There is a very good course called AI for Everyone by Andrew Ng found on the website DeepLearning.AI. It's a free course and it is great for anyone with a non-technical background.

How should our business leaders stay updated about AI?

For our business leaders, I would recommend they subscribe to our bi-weekly newsletter where I share use cases happening in the market, tailored to our different verticals. There are also more general newsletters such as TLDR AI, The Neuron, and Towards AI. I keep up with all of these to see what's happening in the market. These newsletters give us a snapshot of what is happening today. If you want to look at upcoming trends or what is going to happen in a few years, it is better to look at research papers.

Another piece of advice is to set up Google Alerts. If you are in the hospitality industry, simply put "hospitality + AI" for a Google Alert



and you will get notified every time a new company is doing something in this specific vertical and in the AI field.

What are common mistakes when implementing AI solutions?

Having extremely high expectations about what AI can do. Yes, AI is powerful, but it is not going to solve all your business problems. You need to be very mindful about the capabilities of these technologies. Sometimes leaders get results they weren't expecting, and they think, "Oh this doesn't work, we shouldn't be using this," but it is often because their expectations were not aligned with what the tool can do.

The second huge mistake is not measuring results. Sometimes teams use AI just for the sake of using it, or because the market is going in that direction, but they are not measuring if it is actually helping the business. I'm trying to reinforce in all our businesses that from the moment we are thinking of a use case in the ideation phase, we are thinking of the metrics to track. We want to make sure that what we implement is going to help the business either from cost reduction, revenue generation, or customer satisfaction. We need to measure.

What excites you most about the future of AI?

What excites me most about AI is the opportunity it presents. At some point, AI will enable us to achieve full personalization. Our companies are going to be able to really understand our customers and how to help them like never before. It is also going to help our productivity. Sometimes we find ourselves doing repetitive work, or work that is not adding real value to our company. AI can free up that time and allow us to focus our energy on the things that really add value to our company.

What excites you most about the future of Jonas Software?

Jonas Software is going to play a huge role within the software industry because we have a lot of data, and we know our customers very well. It's just a matter of our businesses implementing these use cases and I'm right here to help them. I'm very excite about what is going to happen next.

A Leader's Perspective

ALAN THREADGOLD Group Leader, *Vertus Group*



The Group Leader role at Vertus Group is the main point of contact between Vertus Group and the independently run businesses we own. Group Leaders act as a sort of business "coach" to our portfolio companies. They offer guidance, share best practices, and help give businesses fresh opportunities to grow.

Group Leader Alan Threadgold joins us to discuss his career journey, how he balances overseeing multiple businesses, and what to expect from the Vertus Group acquisition process. With over 27 years in leadership roles, Alan is a valued mentor to our businesses leaders, giving them the guidance and autonomy to flourish in their own careers.

Tell us about your background.

My background is quite varied. I started in the insurance industry and spent 19 years there working for two different companies in a variety of roles. I moved into leadership back a long time ago in 1997, so I'm coming into my 27th year in leadership roles. I left the insurance industry in 2005 and became Club Manager at a lovely Club in Ireland called Brey Golf Club. I spent 10 great years there before I got the opportunity to join Jonas (Vertus Group's parent company) in 2015. Initially, I was based out of London as General Manager for Jonas Club International. I moved to Toronto for a year as VP of Operations before the acquisition of Bookassist. When that happened, I moved back to Dublin, my hometown, and I've been based back here ever since.

People often ask me about the various sectors I've worked in and how I moved from insurance to golf, to software, and for me, leadership is the same across all industries. It's about the people, the customers, the financials, the strategy, and the vision for the business. You don't have to be the expert; you just have to create the foundation for the experts to do their business. I'm really there to make them successful.

What interested you in becoming a Group Leader?

I supposed when I joined in 2015, I didn't see that as the path for me, but I've been very fortunate with the opportunities that I've received. As you immerse yourself in the Vertus Group and what we do across all of our CSI companies, you're learning every day, and you see opportunities. If you're as ambitious as I am, you want to take those opportunities and one of those opportunities is to become a leader of multiple companies.

I've been very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a great group of people and I look forward to growing and expanding the number of companies that work under me. It certainly wasn't something if you asked me in 2015 that I thought I'd be doing, but it's been a great journey so far and it's one of the brilliant opportunities we have as part of the Vertus Group.

What was it like going from overseeing one company to two?

When you're looking after multiple companies you need to understand that it's different strategies for each business. The key job for us, whether you're running one company or two companies, is to run great companies. We are an

> **Vertus Group is about protecting the legacy of the business and providing opportunities to the employees.**

acquirer, but our first role is to make sure the businesses we run are successful.

With Bookassist my role is more of a day-to-day role because I'm CEO there as well as being Group Leader. With the Vizergy business, I have a great leadership team that is involved in the day-to-day, so I'm a little more distant from that. I'm there as a support mechanism in both businesses. I trust the leadership teams, so it allows me to step away and let them take responsibility for what they are there to do. For me, it's about oversight, being a coach, being a mentor, and ensuring the strategies that we set as a group are implemented and that we do everything to make those businesses as successful as possible. If we do that, it creates a lot of opportunities for the people in those businesses.

What does your day-to-day look like as a Group Leader?

Part of the time is metrics, another part is financial performance, and another is strategy, so it's very much about identifying opportunities in the business and looking at people who are coming through them. We acquire businesses, so we require a lot of future leaders, and a key part of my role is identifying these potential leaders.

Part of my day is learning as well and understanding our businesses, but there's no strict calendar or schedule that you do every day. Every day is different.

What is rewarding about your role?

We acquire businesses and I as the Group Leader am entrusted with the responsibilities of those businesses. These businesses bring legacy with them. We've got owners who entrust us with the future of their business that they put their blood, sweat, and tears into growing and have gotten to a successful place. I then am responsible for making sure that the business has a future and that the legacy of the founders is continued.

Another part of it is ensuring that there is a future for the people who work in the businesses. I'm very fortunate to have 160 people working for me in the two businesses I have responsibility for. Many of those people are ambitious and they want opportunities. Each year the business is successful it gives you a sense of pride because when the business is successful that means the people are successful and we've got more opportunities coming for them.

I've got to meet great people both in the businesses that I run and within Vertus Group, the Jonas operating group that we're a part of, and the wider CSI organization. We've got fabulously talented people and that's been huge in terms of my own personal development with the people I've got to spend time with and learn from.

It's one of the great things within our organization that there is so much sharing of knowledge and best practices. It has been very rewarding and a great opportunity.

What is challenging about your role?

When we're looking at acquiring businesses, we spend a lot of time doing diligence and trying to understand the business. But as much as we spend time doing that there are always things that we don't come across until we actually own the business and we get involved, so you have to be flexible and ready to roll with the punches when unexpected things happen.

We're in technology so there are always challenges in terms of roadmaps, where we are developing, and our strategy for the business, but you have to be open and transparent with your team about challenges. We have a wealth of experience and a lot of people we can reach out to discuss the challenges that are there, but sometimes it's nice to bring your team together to try to solve it your way. If it was all good stuff, anyone could do it!

What does the integration process look like for a business joining Vertus Group?

In terms of what may change, one of the main things we look to do in centralize the finance and HR functions of the business. Outside of that, a lot doesn't really change. We don't go in to drastically change what has made the business successful, what we look to do is

bring our best practices to make them even more successful.

We don't want to go in and change the culture and rip the heart out of the business. We're not there for short-term change and short-term gain, we're there for the long haul. So, for a lot of people working in the businesses, they don't see drastic change. There's always a fear factor when businesses are acquired with what is going to happen, but certainly for Vertus Group we are not there to make significant change, we're there to give the benefit of our knowledge and experience.

These businesses are already successful in their own right. They've got to a point where we wanted to acquire them and thankfully the founders wanted to sell to us, so it's not right for us to go in and make significant change. One of the key things that make those businesses successful is their culture, and we have no right to go in and rip that apart. We need to work with the people and support the culture that has made the businesses successful. It's about building on the success of the business, not changing it.

What excites you about the industries you work in?

I'm mainly focused on hospitality, which is a very significant sector in the business world. There's a huge expanse in terms of technology across the industry so there are a lot of new young players coming into the market with very innovative products. One of the challenges is how all these products come together to assist hotels that are very focused on their customer journey.

It is certainly a sector that has bounced back following COVID. There's been a lot of opportunity and growth in the past couple of years and certainly, all the signs are very strong that Hospitality will continue to grow over the next year or two. So it's an exciting industry to be involved in from the position of an acquirer because many companies are coming into the industry at the startup stage. It's wonderful for us to see how those businesses move along and it certainly keeps the current incumbents on their toes!

What are the benefits of selling your business to Vertus Group?

Vertus Group, being a part of Constellation Software, means we are a buy-and-hold forever acquirer. We're about today, we're about tomorrow, we're about the future. We're not here for short-term gain, we're a safe home for businesses because we're going to hold them forever.

Vertus Group is about protecting the legacy of the business and providing opportunities to the employees. We continually acquire businesses, look for leaders, and aim to provide them with sound futures. For me, the key is that we are buy and hold, and we provide that security to the vendor and their team.

What advice do you have for someone who is selling their business?

The vendor needs to know what they want and what their expectations are. What are the key elements for them? Is it about price? Future? Protecting the legacy of their business? They need to be very clear on that, take a step back, and look at what their expectation is as part of a sale process.
It's also a two-way process. Often when we get into these acquisition processes there's a feeling that it's about us learning about them, but it's very important for the vendor to learn about us and learn from us. In many conversations, it can become educational and a learning process where we share experiences, so I would say don't be afraid to ask questions and learn from the process itself.

What excites you about Vertus Group's future?

I think there's just endless opportunity. We're in a wonderful time from a technology perspective. There are many companies out there that potentially can be acquired. We also have some amazing young leaders who are going to be future business unit leaders and group leaders. It's just an exciting time to be part of an organization that's constantly growing.

Vertus Group has a very strong future ahead. It's going to be good times and for a lot of people, it's going to be a great place to be a part of.

"We also have some amazing young leaders who are going to be future business unit leaders and group leaders. It's just an exciting time to be part of an organization that's constantly growing."

The Strategic Advantage of Vertical Market Software.

TEAGAN BOYLE MBA, Marketing Manager, *Vertus Group*



If you are familiar with Vertus Group and the larger ecosystem of our parent company Constellation Software Inc. (CSI), you have probably heard the term "vertical market software" often. Since its founding in 1995, CSI and its subsidiaries have typically focused on acquiring vertical market software businesses over horizontal ones. Today, CSI has acquired over a thousand companies across a hundred different niche vertical markets. So why the big focus on vertical market software?

What is Vertical Market Software?

First, let's clarify what we mean by "vertical market software." Simply put, it is a solution designed to address the requirements of a specific industry or market. From product development and R&D to IT and onboarding, these businesses operate with a focus on solving the unique challenges and needs of their niche.

Take Teachworks, a recent Vertus acquisition, as an example. Teachworks provides Tutor Management Software to education businesses of all sizes, helping them simplify, automate, and grow their operations. In this case, Teachworks operates solely in the Education vertical, and they have built their intuitive product specifically for the segment.

Conversely, horizontal market software offers solutions that can be adapted broadly across many different industries. Examples include word processors or spreadsheets, which can be used by almost any industry.

At Vertus Group, we have acquired businesses in six vertical markets:

- Club Management
- Hospitality
- Dispute Management
- Developer Tools
- Media Solutions
- Education

Let's look at some of the "why" behind our focus on vertical market software and a few of the strategic advantages of these niche-focused businesses.

Market Expertise and Specialization.

While the total addressable market (TAM) for horizontal software companies is always larger, the bulk of their development efforts go into making products flexible enough to support many different industries. Instead, by focusing on a specific industry, vertical market software businesses can spend more time understanding the nuances of their industry and developing a product that meets those specific needs. While this reduces the TAM, it builds credibility within the industry and offers a better chance for deeper market penetration. This can also result in higher barriers to entry as there are no easy substitutes for years of industry experience.

Strong Customer Relationships.

Developing software that meets the specific needs of an industry allows for the development of strong, long-term customer relationships. Not only does your business have a tailored product for them, but also your employees speak their language and have a better understanding of their goals. Clients are more likely to view your business as a partner rather than just a vendor, often leading to reduced attrition and high customer loyalty.

Vertus Group's Strategy and Acquisition Partner, Samad Rajan, said in an interview earlier this year, "In horizontal spaces, you often don't see the businesses get close to the end user because they could be operating in any number of markets. With vertical market software, you get a real understanding of the end user, creating a healthy business with great customer relationships."

An additional benefit that comes as a result of these relationships is word-of-mouth marketing. While horizontal market software companies often spend large

amounts on sales and marketing to be known across the large TAM, most smaller niche vertical markets are quite well-connected. With a strong product and a focus on customers, a vertical market software's brand reputation can become well-known in their niche with relatively less marketing effort.

Regulatory Compliance and Trust.

Industries such as healthcare and finance are heavily regulated, requiring software solutions that comply with stringent standards. By specializing in a single industry, vertical market software companies are often well-versed in their industry's specific regulations, thus building credibility and trust with their clients. This trust is a significant competitive advantage, as businesses with regulated industries are particularly cautious about their software choices.

A great example from the Vertus Group portfolio is Lean Industries which operates within the Payment Disputes Management industry. Within this highly regulated industry, Lean Industries employs a team of dispute operations experts who have created a product that ensures compliance and can be tailored to the needs of their customers. This has resulted in an exceptional ability to build both trust with their clients and credibility within their respective market.

Strategic Partnerships and Ecosystems.

Running a vertical market software business opens opportunities for strategic partnerships with other companies serving the same industry. As Vertus Group acquires businesses within verticals, it continues to grow an ecosystem of complementary, but still operationally autonomous, solutions. This can help a company's market position and offers clients a more comprehensive suite of tools.

Vertus Group's hospitality vertical, Jonas Hospitality, has leveraged this with the creation of the recently launched Jonas Unify brand which seeks to connect the many hospitality solutions in the portfolio via a unified Customer Data Platform, Unify CDP. Each company within the portfolio provides market leading technology for their specific segment, and now with Unify CDP segment, and now with Unify CDP, Jonas Hospitality is able to offer an all-in-one platform consisting of best-in-breed solutions to hotels. All the while, these businesses still retain their operational autonomy and their company's brand remains untouched. This type of solution could only come to fruition within a vertical market software ecosystem, such as Vertus Group's.

At the end of the day, it comes down to businesses focusing their resources on being a solution for everybody or a tailored solution for a niche. While horizontal software companies certainly have their own advantages, here at Vertus Group we enjoy the customer-centricity and market expertise that is often found in vertical market businesses. As Vertus Group continues to grow its portfolio into new vertical markets, we look forward to learning from our businesses and expanding our knowledge in new niches.

Employee Spotlight

URVASHI KADAM MBA, FMVA, Director of Corporate Development, *Vertus Group*



As an acquirer of vertical market software businesses, Vertus Group's success begins with strong Corporate Development and much of that success is owed to Urvashi Kadam, Director of Corporate Development. When Vertus Group began decentralizing from its parent company, Jonas Software, Urvashi was tasked with maintaining an acquisition funnel in the core verticals and expanding acquisitions into new industries. Since 2021, Vertus Group has consistently acquired businesses in new verticals while nurturing its core verticals, a

testament to the hard work and dedication of Urvashi and her Corporate Development team.

We sat down with Urvashi to learn more about her experience with Vertus Group and how her Corporate Development team approaches M&A.

Tell us about your background

After I completed my MBA, I was fortunate to start my career with PwC India as part of the M&A Transaction Tax team there. As time went by, I became increasingly intrigued by what was on the other side of M&A, in particular the buy side. After I moved to Toronto in 2019, I made the decision to move to the buy side and that is when I heard of Jonas Software and Constellation Software and the whole ecosystem that we have here.

The rest is history. I've been at Jonas Software for five years and four of which have been within Vertus Group.

How has your career developed within Vertus Group?

I joined Jonas in 2019 as an M&A Corporate Development Associate, and as we acquired more businesses things at Jonas became further decentralized. That's when I got the opportunity to move into what was then called the "Jonas Club & Hospitality Portfolio", we call it Vertus Group now. At the time I was the only person on the Corporate Development team, and I was responsible not only for bringing in acquisitions in our core verticals but also for expanding our scope of operations in new industries and geographies.

Fast-forward two years and a couple of acquisitions in, I was elevated to the position of Director of Corporate Development and today we are a team of seven. We have continued to grow and expand as we bring more acquisitions in.

What is rewarding about your role? What opportunities has it given you?

It is the ability to significantly contribute to where Vertus will go tomorrow. It is what we do as part of Corporate Development today and every day that has a direct impact on the years that will follow based purely on the acquisitions that we bring in. They could be acquisitions in our core verticals that strengthen them or acquisitions in a completely new geography or industry where we can build out our presence.

Just being with a company that is highly acquisitive you see how much growth is associated with acquisitions. When we bring in acquisitions, we need people to step into leadership roles and we need to hire more whether it be in finance, legal, HR, accounting, sales and development and the list doesn't end there. But I believe all of this growth starts here with this role and this team and that is exceptionally rewarding.

> **“An acquisition for us is not just a tick-in-the-box, it's about growth and the people that come with the business... and with our Buy-and-Hold model, we'll be around forever.”**

What accomplishments are you most proud of at Vertus Group?

When I joined Vertus Group in 2020 we had only acquired businesses in two verticals [Club & Hospitality]. We remain deeply rooted in our core and continue to acquire and nurture businesses in those two industries, but we always had an aspiration of branching out and replicating the success we've had with our core. That goal of expansion coincided with the pandemic in 2020 which was a tumultuous time in the Hospitality industry in general.

We were looking to reinvent ourselves and that is what we did. We turned a challenge into an opportunity, and we acquired Lean Industries in 2021 marking our first acquisition outside of our core. Personally, for me, that is one of the acquisitions that I am most proud of. It was a pivotal moment for our group, and we have consistently acquired in new verticals every year since. Just seeing the group evolve from being a Jonas Software portfolio to its own brand and identity has been truly gratifying for me.

How does Vertus Group's culture impact the businesses it acquires?

As a group, we're a very ambitious set of people. We have big goals, big dreams, and big aspirations. But the one thing we always talk about is, "stay grounded and be humble." It is important to be successful, but you have to do it the right way.

There is a degree of autonomy that you're afforded here that empowers you to take on more. As an

individual, I look forward to taking on more but from an acquisition standpoint, the people that come along with the businesses we acquire every year get to experience the same level of autonomy. You continue to run the day-to-day of the business, but what's different is now when you run into a problem there is always somebody that you can call.

Vertus Group is built on this repository of knowledge and information that is just waiting to be shared. There is never a problem or a question that is left unanswered. There is always a solution to the problem and the chances are that someone within our ecosystem has already faced and solved that problem before. You don't have to walk alone unless you want to.

What does the mission Align, Acquire, Grow, Forever, mean to you?

It beautifully encapsulates what we do and how we do it. I speak to business owners every day. These are people who are distinguished and accomplished, they have built businesses over decades by putting their blood, sweat, tears, time and money into them. When you look at things from their perspective the thought of an acquisition can be very jarring. There is a fear of the unknown. As Vertus Group steps into the process, we try to take all of those apprehensions away. What's important for us is to align with your goals, your dreams, your aspirations, and your vision for the business with our principles.

An acquisition for us is not just a tick-in-the-box, it's about growth and the people that come with the business. We take a very long-term view of all of our businesses and with our Buy-and-Hold model, we'll be around forever. There is no clock that is ticking. So, "Align, Acquire, Grow, Forever" perfectly encapsulates the way we do acquisitions at Vertus.

Jonas Hospitality: The Home for Hospitality Software

JIM ROWE SVP of Sales & Marketing, *Jonas Hospitality, Property Systems Group*



Vertus Group's hospitality vertical is branded as Jonas Hospitality. It is a family of brands that serve every segment of the hospitality industry and one of the key driving leadership forces behind this portfolio is Jim Rowe, Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing for the Property Systems Group.

Jim is no stranger to both acquisitions and the hospitality industry. We sat down to interview him on both topics as well as the exciting launch of the group's newest innovative brand, Jonas Unify, to get a better sense of why Jonas Hospitality is a perfect home for hospitality software businesses to thrive within.

How did you join Jonas Hospitality?

I joined Jonas as part of an acquisition and that was the third acquisition I had gone through. In the previous two acquisitions prior to Jonas, I didn't feel like they were cultural fits for me, so I moved on in both times. With Jonas, right from the get-go I felt like this was going to be a great landing spot for me personally and it has proved to be that.

Describe the culture at Jonas Hospitality.

From the top down everyone is extremely humble and it is basically an open-door policy. If you have an idea and want to see some changes or improvements, everybody is willing to listen to you. Everybody knows your name as well even though it's a very large company. You don't feel like you get lost in the shuffle. It's a great place to learn, a great place to try to exceed your career goals and if you want to progress there are opportunities for you to do so.

What opportunities has our ecosystem given you?

Regardless of where you want to go in your own personal development and career, there are opportunities for you. There is encouragement and there are opportunities if that is what you strive to do. That is what I've done. I've taken opportunities as they presented themselves to me.

Right now, I'm extremely happy in the current role that I'm in, taking on more and more sales responsibilities in businesses that we acquire and I'm happy to help where I need to. Who knows, in two or three years I might have a change in mindset where I want to run a business and I know the opportunity will be there if I choose to go down that path.

What does our "culture of sharing best practices" mean?

We run our businesses separately, but because there's so much experience within each company we try to come together as often as we can to say, "Hey how did you handle this situation?" There is a strong chance that one of the other Jonas businesses has already gone through, or is currently going through, the problem that you're trying to solve.

Rather than everybody trying to reinvent the wheel, it makes natural sense to just to reach out to somebody and say, "Have you experienced this and if so, what did you do?" It doesn't matter if it's about hitting your number, keeping customers happy, or adding development, there is usually somebody you can turn to whether it's a colleague, peer or someone you report to.

What unique software challenges does the hospitality industry currently face?

The hospitality industry is both large and small. It's a very large industry, but everybody knows everybody and there are a lot of different companies so there is a lot of competition. It is difficult for hoteliers to understand who the right partner is when they are making a technology decision because there is a multitude of people they could go to.

In general, the hospitality industry has been challenged with going with either an all-in-one provider or looking for best-of-breed solutions where you're bringing in multiple different companies. Both have their own set of pros and cons, but that is a conflict or a decision that many hoteliers have had to make when buying technology or making technology decisions in the past.

"Whilst best-of-breed and all-in-one have their own pros and cons, the decision has often led to a compromise from the hotel's perspective. We're trying to remove that compromise."

How can Jonas Unify help solve these industry challenges?

Whilst best-of-breed and all-in-one have their own pros and cons, the decision has often led to a compromise from the hotel's perspective. What we're trying to do is remove the compromise.

Jonas Hospitality has always been a best-of-breed solution provider. As we acquire companies, we don't roll them up operationally but what we realized is we left a gap in the market where we weren't rolling them up from a technological perspective. We were getting more and more interest in making sure all the Jonas solutions were talking together, making sure all the data is flowing back and forth, and also having a solution where a third-party could also feed into.

That's what Jonas Unify is. It is creating this technology layer, not

operational layer, where we can roll up solutions and provide centralized guest data. So, there are very direct benefits for hotels as well as indirect benefits for all the companies that are looking to sell to hotels to be part of a larger solution that is both best-of-breed and all-in-one.

What makes us an attractive home for hospitality software companies?

With everything that we're doing with Jonas Unify, we are going to be able to solve many more problems together as a collective group and holistic solution than what many businesses would be able to do themselves. In our group, we oversee around 3,000 hotels. When a new technology solution is acquired, we could make introductions to 3,000 hotels right out of the gate that they perhaps would not have access to or relationships with.

What can business leaders expect from an acquisition?

Culturally there is nothing to be concerned about. Regardless of who you speak to, they are going to find time to answer your questions and help you work through your business metrics. You are never going to feel like you are isolated or alone and you also are never going to feel like you are just a commodity or a number to somebody. You are going to feel like you are a part of the Jonas group, but you are also going to keep your businesses identify.

We are not going to fold anything in operationally. We are not dissolving existing products or existing staff and we are not just trying to buy a customer base. We are actually buying a business that makes sense for us and we want to see that solution grow. I think that is the difference. With Jonas, we believe that the tortoise wins the race. We're not out here making quick decisions because we want to sell a company in two or three years. We're making investments and decisions based on our "Software for Life" policy and we are going to hold on to that business forever.

What excites you about the future?

I don't know where the ceiling is and I think that is the most exciting thing. Especially with all the new potential acquisitions that we'll bring in and also with everything that we're going to do from a technology perspective.
With everything that is coming out with Jonas Unify and Jonas Hospitality's Unified Platform that we're launching, that is going to create a lot of great opportunities for hotels. The ceiling is very high so who knows where we're going to be. We're going to work hard. We're going to have a lot of fun. We'll make some mistakes along the way; we'll learn from them and then we'll all be in a lot better place in three to five years.

Learn more about Jonas Unify: www.jonasunify.com



Leading a Small Business within the Vertus Ecosystem.

RYAN WATT General Manager, *PVX Plus Technologies*



In March 2023, Vertus Group acquired PVX Plus Technologies Ltd. (“PVX”), a business focused on providing developers with the tools to keep up with the ever-changing technological landscape. The following May, Ryan Watt joined PVX as General Manager with a wealth of experience running small businesses across multiple industries including Manufacturing and FinTech.

As part of Watt’s vision for PVX, the goal is to preserve and build on the many successful elements of the business – its dedicated employees, innovative technology, and loyal customers – while introducing modern updates. A key part of this modernization is the launch of PVX’s brand new website, featuring a Knowledge Center, Client Hub, and much more.

We sat down with Ryan to learn more about his passion for small business and what his experience has been running PVX within the larger Vertus Group ecosystem.

Tell us about your background.

I started of my career with a large Canadian corporation, but after about seven or eight years I realized I had a real passion for small business. I left the corporate world and went and worked for a start-up manufacturing company and ran that business for a number of years. Then I was looking for a new challenge, love technology, and so moved over and ran a FinTech company, which we grew and ultimately sold. After my transition there, I was looking for my next opportunity, and the opportunity at Jonas Software [Vertus Group’s parent organization] came up.

Where does your interest in small business come from?

You get to wear multiple hats, you get to do a lot of different interesting work, and for me, the work that you do has an immediate impact. I found that when I was working in a large corporation, if I came and gave 120% every single day, or whether I was a less valuable employee, it had very minimal effect on the bottom line. I spoke about this with a mentor of mine, and he said, “Listen, there's just two ways to look at it. Either you want to be a cog in a much larger wheel, and you want to be part of this massive growth engine of a huge corporation, or you want to be more direct, like see the work that you do have immediate value in the business.”

There's no right or wrong answer to that. It's just for me, small business was the right solution.

Why did you choose to join PVX Plus and the Vertus Group?

I have followed the Constellation Software [Vertus Group and Jonas Software’s parent company] story for my entire life. I've always been fascinated by how it's grown and how it's this group of smaller companies that all come together to be able to form this much larger organization.

After selling my last company, I was looking for kind of that next opportunity and met with the Vertus Group. The PVX business had recently been acquired, and so there was an opportunity there. I love technology and wanted to get more on the software development side of things, and it ended up just being a perfect fit.

Give us a brief overview of PVX Plus Technologies' mission.

PVX Plus is a development language and toolset. We have our own development environment where businesses can come in and build a business application using our toolset and our language.

Our customers are in a number of different verticals. We have customers in Club, Construction, Hotels, Warehouse Logistics, 3PL, and so on and so on. They are able to use our language and our toolset to be able to build out their application to solve problems for their customers.

What do you find rewarding about your role?

The thing I find the most rewarding is working with people. When Vertus acquired PVX Plus, there was an incredible team of very loyal employees. Getting to know them, learning from their experience and their knowledge has been absolutely amazing.

And then going out and meeting the customers. What is amazing about PVX Plus is it's very, very far-reaching. We have customers from all corners of the world, and so getting to know our distributor network, our reseller network, and getting down to the actual customers has just been an incredible experience of just learning how far-reaching this business is.

How has Vertus Group helped PVX overcome challenges?

I love working in small business, but one of the challenges I've always found is that it is a small business.

Where Vertus has been able to significantly help support PVX Plus and the other businesses that are within the portfolio is you now have these additional resources that when you do have a challenge, you have an incredible network of people to talk to about those challenges and come up with really good solutions.

The knowledge within Vertus is incredible, and I'm always a fan of learning from experiences, whether they're my experiences or someone else's experiences. So far what I've found is whenever I come to the group with a challenge, they have already experienced this challenge and have a way to work through it and what the results were based on the decisions they made.

What are the benefits of being acquired by Vertus Group?

Definitely sharing best practices and support. I stress on that support side again because I've been in the small business world where you don't have that additional support, and it can slow you down in some ways because you are not able to access information quick enough.

Vertus has an incredible team that is there to support all of their businesses, and so whether that be from an HR standpoint, a finance standpoint, a strategic standpoint, or a marketing standpoint, we're no longer having to deal with all of these challenges within PVX Plus We're able to leverage the resources that we have within the Vertus group to be able to move our projects forward.

What excites you about the future?

I think PVX Plus has an incredible future in front of it and it has an incredible legacy behind it. It was started nearly 40 years ago, and a gentleman named Mike King has been the technical visionary for this business for 40 years and has left the business in very good hands with Vertus.

We have an incredible customer base that we're going to continue to be able to support, we're going to be able to bring in some new technologies, some new ideas, and modernize a lot of pieces in the business to be able to support our customers and solve their pain points.

Learn more about PVX Plus: www.pvxplus.com



Discover PVX Plus Technologies' new website.

Employee Spotlight

BRENT WINSTON Senior Legal Counsel, *Vertus Group*

Meet Brent Winston, our Senior Legal Counsel, who has been a part of Vertus Group and Jonas Software for over three years. His role is not that of a typical M&A lawyer. Beyond his work during the acquisition process, Brent also acts as a key resource for our acquired businesses post-acquisition, assisting them with solving complex problems, both legal and strategic in nature.



We interviewed Brent to learn more about the unique Senior Legal Counsel role at Vertus, where he gets involved in the acquisition process, and how business owners can better prepare themselves for a sale.

Give us an overview of the Senior Legal Counsel role.

It changes on a day-to-day basis.

Some days are heavily involved with M&A work where we are either doing diligence on a business or negotiating documents in connection with a transaction to acquire that business. Other days I might be helping some of the business units that we have acquired with their commercial contracts whether that is signing up a customer or working with a vendor to get certain services into the business. There's never the same day in a row as lawyers, which is part of why I love the job.

What is rewarding about your role at Vertus Group?

oI always had an interest in business. I never wanted to be siloed off into being just a lawyer.

What I find really rewarding is I get to work with our businesses very closely on a multitude of different matters. Not everything that I touch is always strictly legal in nature, there's always a quasi-legal, quasi-business perspective to it. I enjoy the fact that I'm able to help our businesses help their customers.

I also find it incredibly rewarding that I am able to learn different skills that I would not have otherwise had the opportunity had I stayed in private practice, working directly in the businesses. You really get to understand how the business operates and works, as well as meet a whole bunch of people within the business. You get to know those people well and build strong relationships, so I think for me that is probably the most rewarding part.

What is challenging about your role at Vertus Group?

When you are providing assistance to 20 different businesses and you are continually acquiring new businesses, you have to learn and understand how each business operates and what is important to them, because each business is unique. So, you really have to get into the weeds of each business to understand how they operate, and you are also balancing a lot of different items at once. We might be working on multiple acquisitions while certain of our business units are working on the biggest contracts they have ever entered into.

You have got your time being pulled in a lot of different directions, and I think that can be challenging, but it is rewarding at the same time because you're being kept busy and you're accomplishing what you set out to do. Challenges come with their own nuances, but they're not unrewarding.

When do you get involved in the acquisition process?

If you've never gone through the acquisition process, you probably don't understand when Legal gets involved and how Legal gets involved. Any opportunity starts with our BD team reaching out to a potential target, and before any meaningful conversations can be

had, we have to have an NDA in place.

So, I start right at the very beginning when we start negotiating the non-disclosure agreement with a target to ensure that the information they share with us is protected and that we honour the protections that the target is seeking from us to ensure that their confidential information stays confidential.

From there, I'm involved with any banker-led or broker-led process where we might have to submit an indication of interest, which turns into a letter of intent, which then shapes the form of our purchase agreements. I'm involved with the diligence that we conduct all the way through to completion. I then help those businesses once we own them with all the commercial work that they need moving forward.

How can business owners better prepare their business for a sale?

There are a lot of different things you can do right from the start when you incorporate your business. A lot of people think that when they incorporate a business, they own that business. In Canada, at least, when you incorporate a business, you just have a business, but nobody owns the shares in that business. You have to pass resolutions in order for the shares to be issued to shareholders.

What you can do early on when you start your business venture is find a really good accountant and find a really good lawyer to ensure that you're able to have your business materials organized on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. When you enter into a contract, make sure you file that contract away and you get your lawyer looking at it before you enter into it. When you file your taxes, ensure that you work with your accounting team and maybe you don't do it yourself for the first couple of years.

Ensuring that you're organized, truthfully, is the most important thing because when we get looking at a target, the more organized the business is, the easier it is for us to get a good understanding of how the business has been set up and what comprises it, which makes the acquisition process that much faster and easier for everybody.

What makes Vertus Group a unique acquirer?

For starters, we will never strip a business down for parts and I think that mindset impacts how we approach acquisitions.

We're very hands-on, we're very involved, we're very accommodating, we're very understanding, and because we do everything in-house and we don't use external advisors, we're quick. When you're selling your business, you don't want it to be a lengthy or complicated process. You want it to be simple, smooth, and efficient.

It is tough to sell your business. When you have built this thing up over the last 15 to 30 years, it's your baby. I think we understand that fact a little bit differently than a private equity firm or a strategic acquirer that is going to strip you for parts. We get that it is your baby, and I think we're very sensitive to that. As a result of our understanding of the other side's mentality and because we've done it so many times, we make it a really I think that sets us apart from any other acquirer in the space.

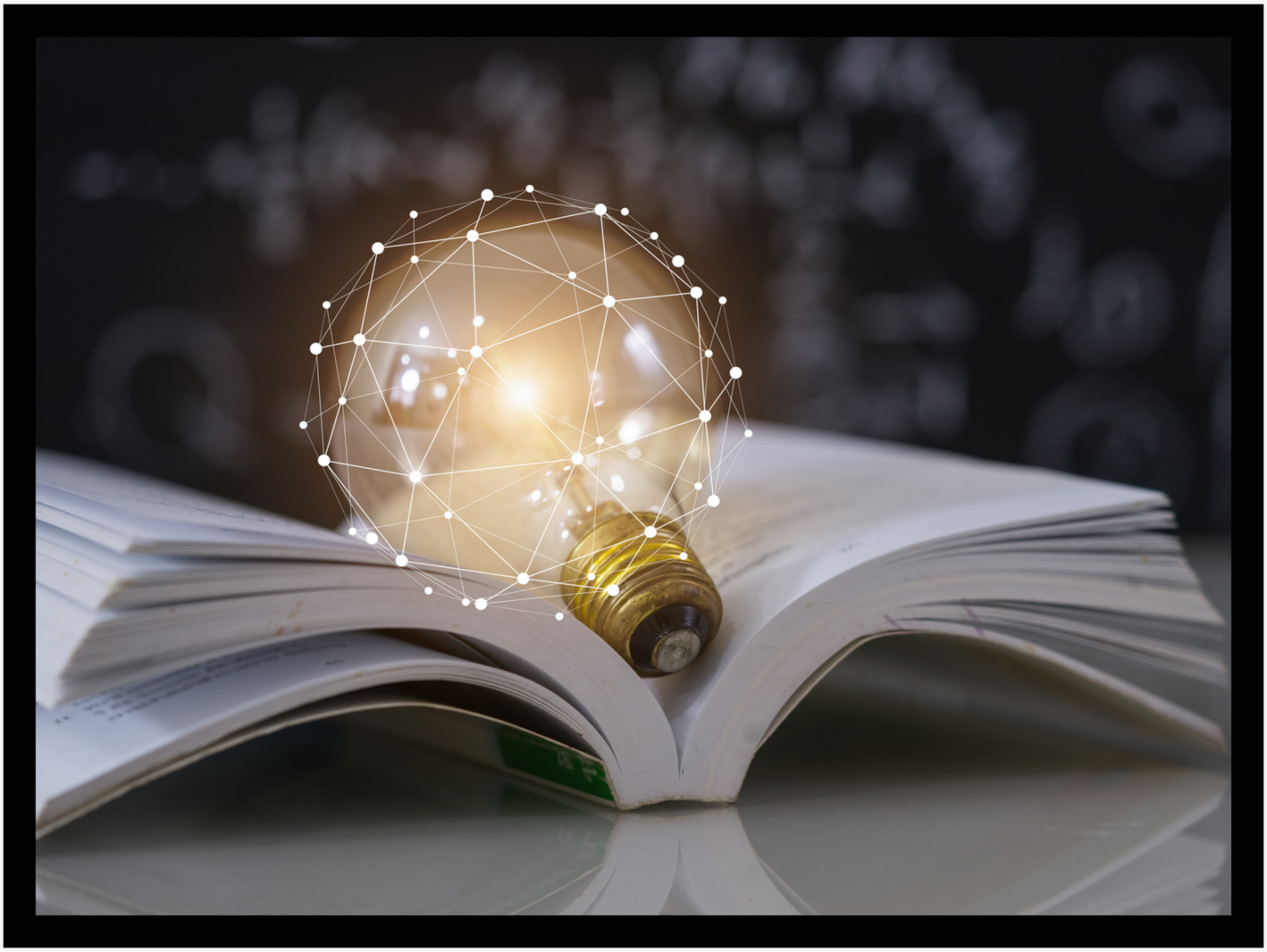
What excites you about the future?

We've got unlimited runway. Our mission as part of Constellation Software is to continue to grow. We want to find a way to acquire good businesses, no matter the vertical. I think the fact that there are so many different opportunities to acquire great companies excites me. While we are already a big company in some people's eyes, we are very small in the grand scheme of things and the idea of continuing to grow the team with the current team in place is exciting.

“For starters, we will never strip a business down for parts and I think that mindset impacts how we approach acquisitions.”

AROUND THE PORTFOLIO

Dedicated to showcasing the best articles from around the Vertus Group portfolio of companies. While our portfolio still skews heavily towards the Club & Hospitality verticals, this section embraces a broad spectrum of topics.



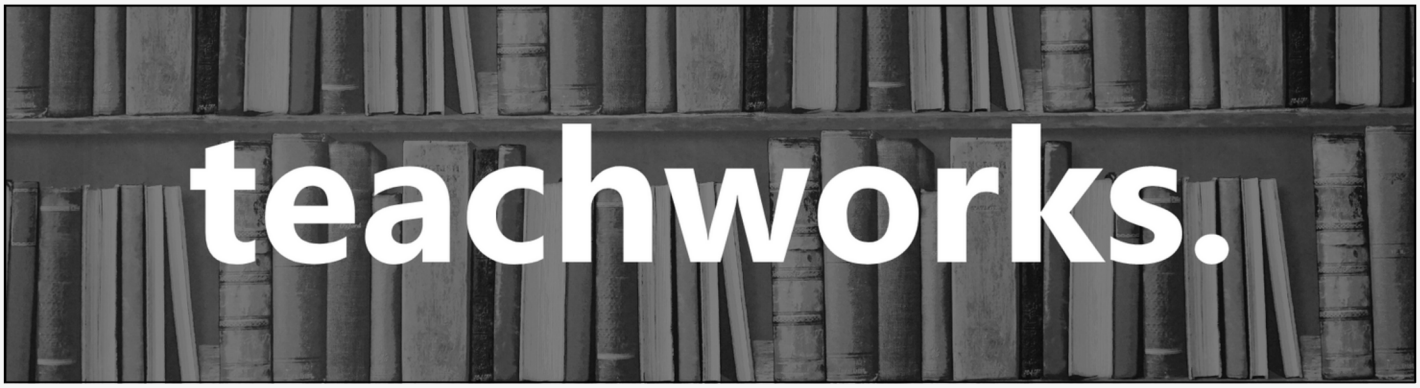
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How to Compare Different Tutoring Software Options For Your Tutoring Business

Article by *Teachworks* Vertical: Education



Choosing the right tutor management software can contribute greatly to the ongoing success and efficiency of your tutoring business. With so many options available, it might seem a little daunting to start your software search. However, knowing exactly what you need out of the software you choose will help to narrow your focus and make this process a whole lot easier.
In this article, we offer a step-by-step guide to help you compare tutoring software and choose the best fit for your business.

1. Write Down Your Requirements

Before doing anything else, make a list of your specific business requirements. Think about the now, but also think about what you may need as your business grows. Make a list of essential features as well as nice-to-have features. Having a list will make it easier to evaluate software options faster and will keep your focus on what matters most.

2. Research And Identify Options

Now that you know what you're looking for, it's time to start researching. You can do a quick Google search using keywords such as "tutor management software" or "best tutoring management software" to see the various options that are available.

Platforms such as Capterra, G2, GetApp, and Software Advice offer comprehensive lists of tutoring software options, accompanied by user reviews and ratings. These resources are valuable for compiling a quick list, but it's important to note that some platforms provide paid listings. This means companies pay for better visibility in search results, but it doesn't necessarily indicate their overall suitability. When reviewing the list, focus on user feedback and specific features provided by each company to make an informed decision.

3. Compare Features

Once you have a list of potential tutoring software options, the next step is to compare their various features. The list that you compiled in step 1 will be very useful here. Narrow down your search and create a shortlist of software options to try out for your tutoring business.

For this step, you may want to make sure that the essential features will be able to handle high volumes of records as well. You don't want to outgrow the software and have to switch down the line when your tutoring business expands.

4. Check Reviews

User reviews provide great insights into the real-world experiences of other users. Thoroughly read reviews of the software options you want to try and pay close attention to positive reviews and negative reviews. This will give you a good idea of the software's strengths, weaknesses and potential challenges you may face. For negative reviews, pay attention to how the company responds to these as this will give you a good idea of what you can expect from their customer support.

5. Consider Pricing and Scalability

Evaluate the various pricing plans offered by each of the tutoring software options on your shortlist. For this step, don't just consider your current needs, but think long term as well. If you expand your business you may need to switch to another plan, so make sure that you are happy with the pricing on higher plans.

6. Sign Up For A Trial

Most tutoring software options will include a free trial or a live demo. Take advantage of these opportunities to get a better idea of how the software works. While assessing the software ask yourself:

- Does the software include the most important features I require for my tutoring business?
- Do I have to pay extra for the features I need?
- Is the software user friendly?
- Does the company offer tutorials and other resources?
- Is the company responsive when I contact them with questions or concerns?
- Will my tutors and clients be able to use the software without a steep learning curve?

7. Ask For Recommendations

Tap into your professional network and reach out to other tutoring businesses or professionals who have experience with tutoring software. Their recommendations and insights can provide valuable perspectives and help you make an informed decision based on real-world scenarios.

Learn More About Teachworks:

www.teachworks.com

Applications of AI in Clubs

Article by *Jonas Club Software* Vertical: Club Management

Artificial Intelligence is paving its way to every industry and clubs too can leverage its power to improve their operations and services. Here are a few cases of AI for clubs that are currently available and feasible.

Event Planning

You can use AI assistants like ChatGPT to create an outline for your events and simplify your planning process. They can help you with:

- Forecasting the budget
- Identifying resources
- Organizing logistics
- Promotion plan
- Post-event analysis

Content Creation and Marketing

Utilize generative AI like Midjourney, DALL E, and Jasper to produce engaging marketing content, social media posts, and personalized communications.

Combine with AI assistants to generate ideas, create marketing plans, and become a marketing powerhouse.

Problem Solving

AI assistants like ChatGPT and Gemini are great tools for brainstorming ideas. Provide brief scenarios to generate inspiring solutions.

For example, if you are looking for new ways to improve a workflow, or thinking of how to address a member's feedback, you can seek help from AI.

Learn More About Jonas Club:

www.jonasclub.com



The Top Features to Look For In Your Golf Course Point of Sale System.

Article by *Club Caddie* Vertical: Club Management



Selecting the right point of sale (POS) system is critical for the efficient operation of any golf course. It's not just about processing transactions; it's also about enhancing the overall guest experience, streamlining operations, and increasing revenue.

Key Features:
1. Integrated Tee Time Management

A POS system that integrates seamlessly with tee time reservations can drastically improve your operation's flow. Look for features that allow for easy booking, modifications, and cancellations directly from the POS terminal.

2. Robust Inventory Management

Golf courses manage a wide range of inventory items, from golf equipment to food and beverages. The ideal POS system should offer comprehensive inventory tracking and management capabilities, helping you keep track of stock levels, reorder automatically, and analyze sales patterns.

3. Mobile Compatibility

With the increasing need for mobility, a mobile-compatible POS system allows staff to make transactions anywhere on the property—be it at the pro shop, on the course, or at the mobile refreshment carts. This flexibility enhances customer service by reducing wait times and improving overall customer satisfaction.

4. Customer Management Tools

A good golf course POS system should include a customer relationship management (CRM) component that tracks customer preferences, purchase history, and contact information. This enables personalized marketing strategies and loyalty programs, thus increasing customer retention.

5. Comprehensive Reporting and Analytics

Access to detailed reports and analytics is crucial. The system should provide real-time data on sales, inventory, customer activity, and more. This data is invaluable for making informed decisions about pricing, promotions, and stock management.

6. Seamless Integration with Other Systems

Ensure that the POS system can integrate smoothly with other software systems used by the golfcourse, such as accounting software, email marketing services, and other operational tools. This integration reduces manual data entry and potential errors.

7. User-Friendly Interface

The system should be easy to use to ensure quick adoption by your staff. A user-friendly interface reduces training time and errors, making operations more efficient.

8. Security Features

Given the sensitivity of transaction data, the POS system must have robust security measures in place to protect customer information and comply with data protection regulations.

Learn More About Club Caddie:
www.clubcaddie.com

What you need to know about ADA for hotel websites in 2024 and beyond

Article by *Laurel Clayton, Leonardo Worldwide* Vertical: Hospitality

The American Disabilities Act (or ADA) was passed in 1990, long before websites were a twinkle in most hoteliers' eyes. Most hotels know what they need to do to make their on-site premises accessible, but the digital world is not nearly as straightforward.

The small print is vague because, as written, the Act itself does not include the word websites. However, hotels are included as public facilities, Per the letter of law, all communications provided by a hotel must therefore be ADA compliant, which is where your website comes into play.
To make matters more confusing, there is no agreed-upon standard of ADA compliance for the web in general. The closest thing to accessibility "rules" is the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) created by the World Wide Web Consortium. WCAG 2.2 was finalized in 2023, with WCAG 3 still under development.

Hotel websites can meet WCAG 2.2 in three key ways:

1. The content itself
2. The technical design
3. Accessible integrations

Updating your hotel website for ADA compliance is of particular importance for US-based hotels. The current legal grey area has increased the number of attempted lawsuits against hotels not meeting WCAG standards. Per the US Justice Department in 2010, hotels are required to identify and describe their accessible features with enough detail that someone who might require them would be able to assess if they can book that hotel.

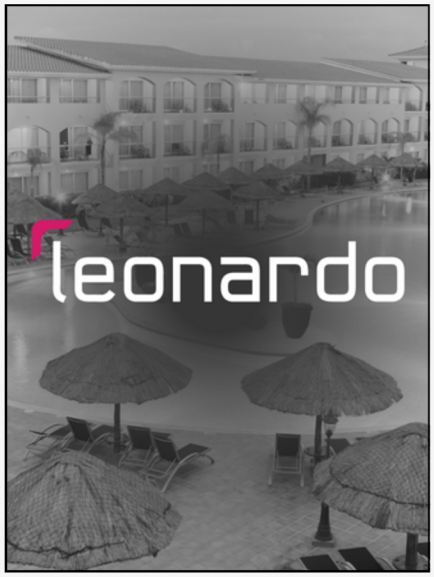
In the last decade, the specifics and legalities around this have remained a grey area. At the end of 2023, the US Supreme Court dismissed a related court case of the filer of 600+ lawsuits. The specific standings vary district by district. Regardless, it is in every hotels best interest to seriously considering the accessibility of their website. Not only to avoid potential costly lawsuits, but also to ensure that they are a welcoming environment for every guest.

Leonardo builds hotel websites that meet current best practices, from have also partnered with Userway to improve compliance on our hotel partner's sites.

ADA compliant content for hotels.

One of the easiest starting points for meeting ADA requirements on your hotel website is in the actual on-page content itself. One in four adults in the USA have some type of disability. Providing relevant information about your accommodations is a smart business move to capture this market while also meeting ADA web requirements for hotels.

Information about accessible features at your hotel needs to be



clearly and prominently featured wherever relevant. Provide relevant information about your amenities, such as pool access or elevator details. And crucially, your hotel website's Rooms page and sub-pages should make it clear exactly which accessible room types and features your hotel offers.

You may also want to consider creating a dedicated Accessibility page, which you can include in your footer and link wherever relevant on your website (see above image, right).

Your Accessibility page should gather all relevant information about your hotel. List in-room accessible features, as well as the arrival experience and accommodations for mobility around your parking, dining, and any other relevant amenities. It can also include a disclaimer around your good-faith compliance with WCAG guidelines, as well as an

Technical ADA compliance for hotels

Beyond the writing itself, the technical design of your website needs to have been built with WCAG compliance in mind. Some of the elements of accessible web design include:

- Navigable by a screen reader as well as by keyboard
- Titles for all pages, images, and PDFs
- Alt text for images
- Appropriate contrast between text and background
- Easily identifiable interactive elements
- Good use of spacing for easy scanning

Given that hotels may be legally responsible for the compliance of their website, we highly recommend you use a dedicated hotel website builder that has built website designs for hotels ADA compliance. A DIY or drag-and-drop site builder could leave your hotel open to potential litigation.

Accessible integrations

Best practices shift over time. That's why some hotel website providers, including Leonardo, rely on partners to keep their websites up to date for hotels. A third-party integration increases the accessibility and usability of your website without additional work.

Leonardo has partnered with Userway, which adds a small widget to each site. Clicking on the widget allows a user to change the website's design for improved accessibility. Userway helps ensure that hotel websites built by Leonardo are compliant with WCAG 2.2 from the moment they launch, without impacting site speed or performance.

As the #1 accessibility solution trusted by brands like Disney and eBay, working with Userway means that Leonardo's hotels have increased protection and a competitive edge against hotels that may not be accommodating this essential market.

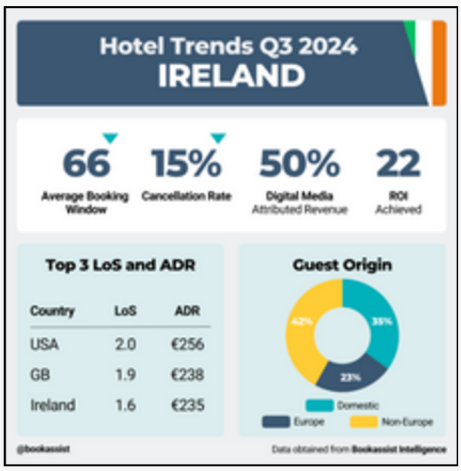
Learn More About Leonardo Worldwide:
www.leonardoworldwide.com/

Hotel Trends in Europe Q3 2024

Article by *Bookassist* Vertical: Hospitality



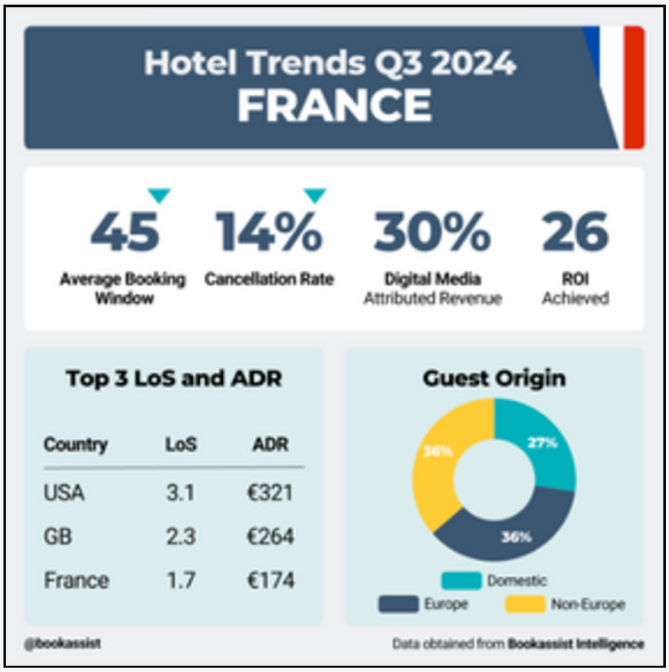
Bookassist Intelligence can assist you in receiving trends, insights, and data from key markets in Europe including direct revenue, part of ad campaign performance, ROI achieved across the European market, and more for Spain, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czech Republic, France, and Italy.















Learn more about Bookassist: https://bookassist.org/

Web Design Trends for Hospitality in 2024

Article by *Vizergy Digital Marketing* Vertical: Hospitality



With the addition of Curated Hybrid Sites added to Vizergy's website template options, we want to shed some light on useful design trends and how to utilize them to get your customers excited and convert!

Never Forget Your Story — What makes you different, more exciting, or better than your competitors? Are you showing your customers those difference makers? Does your marketing match your hotel experience? Here are some ways we have found to do that:

- Invest in great up-to-date photos
- Keep your content up to date as well. Make sure you always have content parity, and the customer never feels confused by differing information
- Use good video or don't use video at all. While video can be an amazing narrative tool, it can also cause long page load speeds and, if done incorrectly, cause more problems than it solves. If you aren't ready for a big video investment, spend that capital on new photos instead
- Find a way to ask for reviews - and often. Use these reviews in a feed on your home page to let customers sing your praises.

User-Centric, Mobile-First Design — Don't reinvent the wheel here. Vizergy uses tested and proven methods when designing frameworks that maximize user interest on sites and achieve more room bookings. They are flexible enough to fit everyone and still be user-forward and hospitality focused. Plus, this option allows for a faster turnaround time to launch, letting you focus on what's really important – your guests!

Branded Maps — With Curated (and Custom) websites, we can really push the look of a client's map. Textures, colors, and illustrations enhance a user's interaction with both static and interactive maps.

Inclusive and Accessible Designs — All our templates go through a strenuous process to meet ADA standards. Don't leave yourself open to a possible lawsuit. We are experts in ADA and hospitality web design and our templates are built to work amazingly for everyone, no matter their disability.

Parallax Scrolling — When objects in the foreground move at a different speed than the background, it gives dimension to the look and feel of a page. This feature is more dominant on curated templates. Small details like this convey a high-end feel that can blend into the property experience and make the digital-to-tactile experience cohesive.

Micro-Interactions — With examples like hover animations over buttons, micro-interactions allow for engaging animation but don't overwhelm pages. These details are useful for a user's interaction, letting them know their movements and clicks are doing what's expected.

All our advice here is timeless. Don't overdo your site to follow the fads so that it ages quickly and no longer feels genuine. Your site should feel like an extension of your property – reflecting what your guests will experience when they arrive. Strip out the confusion and tell an engaging story and you will be doing exactly what your customers want and expect.

Learn More About Vizergy Digital Marketing:
www.vizergy.com


Align.
Acquire.
Grow.
Forever.
vertus
group