**Case Study – Round the Bend Marina**

*Round the Bend Marina (RBM)* opened its doors in 1955. Jim Bennett spent time in the Merchant Marines during World War II and was trained as a sailor. He returned home, with a dream of a life filled with boats! He sold most of his family farm that bordered on the Holland River, keeping 100 acres of his riverfront property. With the proceeds of the sale, he built docks and boat slips. By the end of their first summer in operation, *RBM* had 10 clients that had leased permanent slips for the next five years. Jim and his family kept building.

In the 1970s, Jim and his wife Marlene started their boat rental business. They also renovated their docks and boat slips to offer full service slips so that their clients could hook up their boats to electricity and sewers, and use their boats as a floating cottage.

*RBM* now has 100 boat slips rented on long term leases with 30 additional slips available for occasional guests, two barns for winter storage, a full service marine workshop, boat rentals, a clubhouse with full season hot tub and pool, and a restaurant/snack bar. *RBM* is still a family run business. Jim and his wife Marlene, after living long and happy lives, are no longer with us and their children and grandchildren are continuing their legacy.

CJ is the Harbour Master. As Jim’s oldest child, CJ inherited Jim’s love of the water. Through the years, she has maintained her Lifeguarding and First Aid certification and is a member of The Royal Life Saving Society Canada, Ontario Branch and has served on its board of directors. CJ and her husband, Andrew, oversee *RBM*’s operations and are busy all year round. CJ focuses on ensuring that daily life at *RBM* runs smoothly for the family, staff and clients. Andrew, as a licensed contractor and electrician, oversees all maintenance and construction projects at *RBM.* Both work tirelessly with Lake Simcoe Watershed conservation projects supporting these projects with effort and financial donations. Two walls of their office have been painted with whiteboard paint and that’s where you’ll find their schedules. They tack expenses to the white board, from where Cathy, the accountant, periodically collects and reimburses them.

CJ and Andrew’s son, Alex, works as Assistant Harbour Master and jokes that it’s his job to keep CJ and Andrew ‘on the straight and narrow’. Alex is slowly assuming CJ and Andrew’s roles as they transition to retirement. Alex works with *RBM*’s clients, maintaining lease agreements and scheduling the rentals of the occasional slips to one-time clients. Any client that has a permanent lease agreement is allowed to run a ‘tab’ at the restaurant and workshop, so once a month, Alex and the office staff summarize outstanding transactions and invoice their clients. One-time clients are billed at the time of service.

CJ and Andrew’s daughter, Anna, is a licensed contractor and her husband, Bruce is an Electrician. Anna and Bruce with Andrew to turn Andrew’s visions into reality. Through the slow winter months, they build cost estimates for new projects. *RBM* usually takes on at least one large improvement project each year. They build operational budgets, forecasting the amount of ‘disposable items’ including fuel and grass seed that *RBM* must purchase for the busy season. Anna hires seasonal staff and schedules them to maintain the *RBM* property.

Alex’s wife, Cathy, is an accountant. Cathy and the office staff work with their clients to ensure that the clients pay their invoices. Cathy pays supplier’s bills and ensures that government taxes are paid quarterly to the Canada Revenue Agency. Once a month, Cathy gathers receipts paid by out of pocket by family members and reimburses them through payroll. Staff are paid bi-weekly and it’s Cathy’s job to calculate the payroll and then send the information to Bookkeepers Inc. for payroll processing. Payroll can be tricky, so *RBM* decided long ago to outsource that!

Christy, Jim’s second oldest daughter, was always a ‘tinkerer’. When he first opened the marina, Jim bought her an old outboard boat motor to fix – Christy enjoyed restoring it and went on to became one of Canada’s first female licensed marine mechanics. Christy and her husband, Joe (also a licensed mechanic) and their two sons, James and Jeremy, run the marine workshop. In the last five years, Jeremy’s assumed responsibility for the office side of the workshop, as Christy and Joe are also looking to retire. He manages and schedules the work orders received from clients. He orders parts, supplies, and equipment as required by the workshop and bills clients when the work is completed.

The baby of Jim and Marlene’s family, Ben, and his wife, Previa run the restaurant, look after clubhouse bookings, and manage the scheduling of *RBM’s* rental fleet. Ben’s son, Peter is a trained chef and runs the restaurant. Peter employs his cousin, Jasper, to manage the restaurant, while Peter and Previa ensures that the kitchen staff meet the demands of the restaurant’s customers. Peter regularly orders supplies from wholesalers including National Grocers and his team of sous chefs and assistants prepare tasty meals for the restaurants, breakfast, lunch and dinner crowds. The restaurant runs two shifts – the morning shift covers breakfast and lunch and the afternoon shift covers lunch and dinner.

Ben’s daughter, Marlena, manages events and *RBM’s* rental fleet. In the past, the majority of *RBM’s* rental clients were people that wanted to rent a boat and go fishing, or maybe sight seeing. There small boats were in great demand, but the larger fleet barely made enough money to keep the business going. Marlena came up with the idea of excursions and the business is booming. Clients can book up to one month long excursions and *RBM* supplies the crew to make it happen, allowing the clients to relax. Marlena works with her small staff to book and organize excursions, while still maintaining the original daily request business.

A neighbouring marina is up for sale. Purchasing the marina would allow *RBM* to expand, and Alex, James, Jeremy, Peter and Marlena are building their business plan to do so. Part of their plan includes upgrading their technology to allow them to do more work with the same amount of people.

Their existing system consists of mostly Excel spreadsheets. The workshop and restaurant have point of sale systems. *RBM* was audited by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), 5 years ago which uncovered holes in their inventory accounting and paperwork and this raised some concerns about tracking transactions.

*RBM* is interested in building a computerized system that will streamline their business. All expenditures and income must be documented as per CRA requirements. The new system must interface with the existing point of sales systems. They would like to invest properly now in a system that will work for many years and provide flexibility and reliability for the foreseeable future.