

Case Study

How Highwoods Properties improved building operations and tenant experience with Building Engines

About Highwoods Properties, Inc.

Highwoods Properties Inc., headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina, is a publicly-traded real estate investment trust and a member of the S&P MidCap 400 Index. Highwoods owns and manages properties in the Best Business Districts of major cities throughout the Southeast. Founded in 1978, Highwoods has an annual revenue of \$741M and manages 26.8M square feet of office space.



TOP TAKEAWAYS

1. Highwoods Properties required a solution to ensure their buildings were being properly maintained.
2. Building Engines delivered an online, mobile-enabled system for preventive maintenance, inspections, and work orders with a tenant focus.
3. By using Building Engines, Highwoods simplified and centralized work order requests that happen within a building. This resulted in significant time savings from previous manual workflows and improved communications.

The Challenge

Highwoods Properties previously used an application with a limited scope to manage work orders for their properties. This system was difficult for customers to use and Highwoods Properties had no easy way to track customer service data and automate building processes beyond simple work orders.

Before using the Building Engines Platform, Highwoods had a system for, processing work orders and preventive maintenance but it was not ideal for all activities in a building. Many times, work orders were not submitted by customers due to the number of steps involved and limited ability to keep the customer digitally in the loop on work order requests. Highwoods needed an all-encompassing application for inspections, visitor management, work orders, and preventive maintenance.

They also needed to be able to communicate with customers about building maintenance and impairment issues. This was essential given the number of properties Highwoods manages across many regions. Their old solution was not able to easily send out mass emails, texts, or phone calls in the event of a building emergency or maintenance issue.



Finding a Solution

Highwoods started a search for a new work order system centered around inspections. It was important for them to make sure their buildings were maintained properly by property managers and maintenance techs. Due to their software industry knowledge and the collaborative nature of the real estate industry, they were able to get recommendations from colleagues who were already using Building Engines. From there, they decided to do a pilot test with a small segment of their office buildings to make sure it would work for them.

They launched their initial pilot of Building Engines managing 1.5 million square feet across five buildings in downtown Pittsburgh. Art McCann, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, was an integral part of the pilot program. Art explained how important that process was in making the decision to work with Building Engines long term. "It came down to the property management and our maintenance techs embracing the application and giving it the thumbs up that this could work for us. Building Engines is a step up from what we had before. We needed to be able to cover the functionality we had before and then add on extra building processes," said McCann.

The all-encompassing Building Engines platform covered everything Highwoods Properties needed to manage all 175 properties in an easy to use, mobile-enabled dashboard. McCann goes on to state, "It was that breadth of modules they had that pushed us in their direction. Building Engines covers most everything we can do in a property."

"At least 95% of our work orders are submitted online with Building Engines. The online system offers an expedient way for our customers to add the appropriate information, allowing us to better understand the issue and provide quick solutions. Feedback from our customers has been very positive. They note that the system is convenient and super easy to use."

-Art McCann | Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Highwoods Properties

Results

Since switching to the Building Engines platform, Highwoods Properties has completely automated an outdated property management system that did not extend beyond work orders and preventative maintenance. They have improved their customer experience by using the tenant portal, which allows customers to submit work orders online with ease. Customer communication has also improved, as Highwoods can leverage the platform to send out mass communications, including notifications about building closures or impairments in real time. Highwoods now has a quantifiable way to track important customer service metrics. Data for property managers and maintenance techs get collected, providing valuable insight into workforce management. The Building Engines platform also provides Highwoods the accountability system they were missing. Preventive maintenance now gets done with a click of a button in all 175 Highwoods-owned properties.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Highwoods was able to use Building Engines to plan and prepare for workers to return to work within their office buildings. According to McCann, "There are still a lot of people working from home. The big question for 2021 is when and how will return to work play out? With the Building Engines platform, we are prepared to do whatever we need to do to allow for a safe return to work."



"It's an application that runs our buildings and is the accountability mechanism to make sure we're doing what we should be doing from an asset management perspective."

-Art McCann | Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Highwoods Properties

About Building Engines

Building Engines improves net operating income across the world's most successful Commercial Real Estate portfolios. Our customers increase their revenue, deliver the best occupant experience, and reduce their operating costs using our innovative building operations software platform.

Exceptional Building Operations. Extraordinary Business Outcomes.



ADDRESS

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