Lightbox customer success story: Michel Glower of GREAC explains why she relies on Report Writer

GREAC (Global Real Estate Advising and Consulting, Inc.) specializes in multi-family apartment buildings and congregate housing such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers. When I started in the appraisal business, I was looking for a platform to help me write reports. We tried several different products in an attempt to automate the process so we wouldn’t have to write reports from scratch.

Most of the solutions we came across were clunky – some don’t have good templates or allow the kind of customization we needed. A few appraisers were creating databases and trying to combine them with Microsoft Word and Excel, but the results weren’t easy to use or customize. We needed something better.

**Report Writer streamlines the appraisal process, helps us customize reports, and comes with great customer support**

Report Writer was the best solution we found, adaptable to any situation. You can make the final report look like anything you want and customize the Excel sheets. We were able to create specific templates for properties such as drug and alcohol rehab centers, where we’re valuing the business as well as the real estate. Report Writer’s high levels of customization let you take it as far as you want. No other package out there lets us automate and streamline the report-writing process like this.

Once you set up a template, Report Writer easily organizes the report. Everything you need is there, so you can work your way through tab by tab, then do the merge and you’ve got a complete report without having to worry about whether you missed something. With a strong template, it’s easy to be concise, efficient, and comprehensive.

**PROBLEM**
GREAC wanted to automate report writing but couldn’t find a solution that was easy or customizable.

**SOLUTION**
Report Writer from LightBox was the streamlined, easy-to-use answer.

**BENEFITS**
- Adaptable
- Customizable
- Easily organizes the reports
- Expert customer service

Appraisers can modify Report Writer’s templates by writing their own text into the Word document while plugging in the numbers from Excel. Other solutions auto-generate the text, which can be garbled or not make sense. Report Writer allows you to write a thorough, well-reasoned appraisal. It will move the numbers in so if you’re working on a property similar to one you’ve previously worked on, you can deploy some of the same text and reasoning. I want to write thoughtful appraisals, not simply fill out forms to get the job done.
Being faster and more efficient is great, but it’s only part of the puzzle. Report Writer helps organize the thought process as you’re working through the appraisal. You don’t have to do any side calculations. You just work your way through step by step, and you end up where you need to be.

We’re a small shop and we have to balance taking on more work to generate revenue with the need to deliver quality reports on deadline. Using Report Writer’s templates helps me stay organized and avoid repeating work. Once you’re completed a tab you can easily pick it up again the next day. I save time, and that means I’m saving money.

I’ve relied on LightBox customer support for many years. Anytime I’ve had a problem, somebody was there to answer questions or offer a solution, whether on the phone, via email, or through a web chat. I always feel comfortable knowing that support is there if I need it, and I won’t have to wait long to get it.

Switching to Report Writer makes sense for today’s appraisers

I’ve tried to convince colleagues who use other solutions or do things the old-fashioned way to switch to Report Writer. I have no idea why all appraisers aren’t using it. If you want to create a thoughtful appraisal with a narrative and readable prose, you can’t use a system that automatically writes the report, yet many appraisers seem content with that approach.

Change is difficult, and when you’ve been doing things one way or using one product for years, it can be difficult to switch to another. Some appraisers probably feel it’s easier to stay the course and do their best to work with what they have. But if you want full control over your reports and the ability to tailor them to your clients’ needs and write them as you see fit, there’s no better solution than Report Writer.

Michel Glower, Commercial Appraiser, MAI, Ph.D. is president of GREAC.

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– Michel Glower, GREAC

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