



ResortsandLodges.com maximizes returns for clients using the Opportunities Tab in AdWords



Who they are

- www.ResortsandLodges.com
- “The world’s most comprehensive online travel guide for resort and lodge vacations”
- Cottage Grove, Minnesota

What they needed to do

- Discover new, valuable keywords
- Use keyword ideas to drive site design and search engine optimization (SEO)
- Maximize returns from SEO and spending

What they did

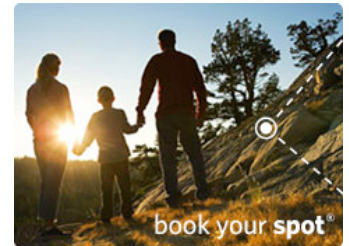
- Used the Opportunities tab to research new keywords and popular search terms to help drive site development and SEO

What they accomplished

- Saved time researching new keywords
- Created more effective site design through insights from keyword ideas
- Focused spending to maximize ROI

A Departure from the Norm

Online travel sites come in all shapes and sizes. Some allow travelers to share photos and stories, while others specialize in traveler reviews and opinions. Among travel sites, however, ResortsandLodges.com, a product of VEMGlobal.com, has carved out a new niche. It is a comprehensive online travel guide that connects travelers to the world of resort and lodge vacations through content, photos and videos – plus expert reviews and articles. But what makes ResortsandLodges.com unique is what goes on behind the scenes that travelers planning getaways don’t always see.



On the site, you can “book your spot” to save your travel information, plan your next trip, and more

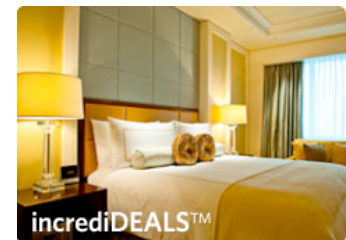
When properties sign on as clients with ResortsandLodges.com, they get more than just a directory listing. They have access to a comprehensive advertising network that syndicates their ads to other popular travel sites. They are also assigned a unique phone number and have access to tools like Phanalytics, ResortsandLodges.com’s call tracking application for tracking, measuring and analyzing the effectiveness of call activity. To close the sales loop, travelers can connect straight through from ResortsandLodges.com to the resorts’ websites to make inquiries or reservations. It’s an itinerary that has ResortsandLodges.com growing rapidly and expanding into new markets in addition to travel.

“We’re really more of a full-service agency than a travel directory,” explains Ryan Bailey, President and Co-Founder of ResortsandLodges.com. “We have a rapidly growing client base of 2,000-plus, and a business model that gives our clients turnkey marketing and advertising support.”

Prepared for Take-off

ResortsandLodges.com’s marketing staff members were early Google AdWords adopters – and AdWords is the primary tool the company uses to drive qualified traffic to clients. “With AdWords, we can create targeted, segmented campaigns that promote winter vacations in fall, or focus on certain travel regions or specific destinations at certain times of the year,” says Mollie Moore, Interactive Marketing Manager.

For campaigns to succeed, Moore and Bailey have become experts at selecting keywords for ad groups and campaigns. They look for terms that really qualify leads and guarantee the highest return. “We go for geographic location and niche terms like ‘golf resort and spa, Hawaii,’ rather than something more generic,” says Moore. “We’ll also figure out which destinations are searched for the most and develop sites and campaigns based on those terms. It’s a little bit like reverse engineering.”



IncrediDEALS are ResortsandLodges.com’s best worldwide travel deals

To select keywords, Moore and Bailey have used the Keyword tool in AdWords for years, and they note that it helps in shaping more successful AdWords campaigns, as well as for providing insights into terms that help with search engine optimization (SEO) and site development. When they discovered the Opportunities tab in AdWords, they saw the value right away.

Google AdWords

Google AdWords™ is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, video, mobile ads, and more priced on a cost-per-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers. For more information, visit <http://adwords.google.com>.

"The Opportunities tab provides high-quality keywords – and a lot of ideas we wouldn't have thought of otherwise, which is the whole point!" says Bailey. "It's great that you can easily scan through the ideas and find hidden jewels and then apply those insights for both keyword selection and site optimization."

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Ryan Bailey, President and Co-Founder, ResortsandLodges.com, a product of VEMGlobal.com

A Flying Start

Moore taps the Opportunities tab whenever she's creating new AdWords campaigns. "Sometimes you just don't know where to start in selecting keywords for a new campaign. For me, the Opportunities tab is now step one," she says. "There are limited resources on our marketing team, and the Opportunities tab saves us valuable time during the research phase when we are first setting up campaigns."

Since trying the Opportunities tab, Moore and Bailey have honed in on a few best practices. Some of the company's major sources of organic traffic come from the Top 10 features and Travel Guide pages of the site. The team uses the Opportunities tab keyword ideas to get a better handle on which destinations or categories they should focus on for these pages on ResortsandLodges.com.

Then, when the company launched its latest site re-design at the beginning of March 2010, keyword ideas from the Opportunities tab helped the company narrow down the inter-linking sections at the bottom of the homepage. "The Opportunities tab helped us determine that the most effective content sections were top destinations, popular resort types, popular trips, and so forth," says Moore. "We also used ideas from the Opportunities tab to build out our meta titles, descriptions and keywords embedded in the back-end of every page on the site. Using the Opportunities tab, we can reduce guesswork in determining the most effective content."

All of this knowledge is also written into SEO training manuals for new members of the company's marketing and content teams, so that ResortsandLodges.com can continue integrating SEO best practices into the original content created for each client. The knowledge is also used in determining where to focus SEO and paid advertising efforts. "Keyword selection, SEO, and site design combined help us maximize returns from the money we're spending with Google so we can get indexed in both paid and organic searches," says Bailey. "We think of it as the best of both worlds from a search standpoint."

It's about the Journey, not the Destination

For ResortsandLodges.com, marketing for resort and lodge properties is an exciting journey – one that is continually enabled by new innovations from Google. "Google continues to give us new options that make our jobs as marketers easier," says Moore. "New tools like the Opportunities tab in AdWords make us faster and smarter at what we do – and our clients benefit as a result."

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Mollie Moore, Interactive Marketing Manager, ResortsandLodges.com
