
Hotel Marketing Just Got Better!

Accommodation providers often wonder how to bring in business at quiet times of year. The pressure for a return on marketing spend is greater at this time than any other, and the success of any campaign will ultimately decide whether the business survives or not.

For that reason, hotels, guesthouses and bed and breakfasts should look at pay-per-click marketing. It's flexible and campaigns can be designed to suit budget, message, and time of year. And it means they don't have to rely on booking agents and pay out hefty commissions.

Most searches for accommodation are now done on the internet, and for many hotels, the internet is their main source of bookings. They realise the importance of driving traffic to their website.

PPC marketing allows a hotel to do that, by choosing search terms tailored to them, but they only pay when someone enters that actual term in the search.

They can spend more when they are quiet, and next to nothing when they don't need to. Some hotels spend as little as £1 per day, others spend up to £1000.

Topos Guest House in St. Austell is a family-run business with a limited marketing budget. They secured terms like 'bed and breakfast in St Austell' and 'accommodation near eden project' for an average of £2 per day.

It generates about 40 daily visits on their website, meaning their three rooms are nearly always full. When this happens, they can 'switch off' the campaign, so they never have to turn away business.

It works at the other end of the scale too. Hewenden Mill Cottages in West Yorkshire is a much bigger operation which spends £600 per month on over 300 different search phrases.

This brings in 2500 new visitors to their website each month. For any other form of marketing to bring that kind of return, they would have to spend a lot more than £600.

PPC allows hotels to target the people looking for accommodation. They can control the phrases they are found for, how much traffic they receive, and similarly the cost incurred.

They are in complete control of their advertising message, so they can instantly promote special and seasonal offers.

For instance, they can concentrate on certain keywords at the right time of year, like 'wedding venue in devon' at the start of the year, when people are starting to plan their big day.

Downhall Country House Hotel in Hertfordshire uses the service to attract nearly 500 people a month to their website, via searches for phrases such as 'wedding venue hertfordshire' and 'wedding receptions in hertfordshire'.

For an outlay of around £100 per month, they have made a massive return on their investment – approximately 10,000%! And the success means they can offer discounted venue rates for last-minute bookings (when they aren't busy).

The success and flexibility of the campaigns show PPC is an advertising medium that businesses in the hospitality industry ignore at their peril.