

How ForRent.com gets 24 percent more traffic every week.



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Stephanie Krebs

Marketing Manager,
ForRent.com



ABOUT GOOGLE ADWORDS

Google AdWords is currently used by thousands of businesses worldwide to gain new customers in a cost-effective way. AdWords uses keywords to precisely target ad delivery to web users seeking information about a particular product or service. The program is based on cost-per-click (CPC) pricing, so advertisers only pay when an ad is clicked. Advertisers can take advantage of an extremely broad distribution network and choose the level of support and spending appropriate for their business.

For more information, go to
www.google.com/ads

A \$1 billion company, Trader Publishing Company is the largest publisher in the United States producing classified and photo-guide advertising publications. Like many other businesses that publish regional and local guides, Trader also has active websites mirroring the content, the listings, and the ads for some 30 titles. In the apartment-rental market, Trader publishes a monthly guide called *For Rent Magazine*® and a related site (www.forrent.com). *For Rent Magazine* appears in 102 metro markets around the country. On the web side, apartment seekers can browse all the listings, by city and by special area, including senior communities, corporate apartments, and military and college housing. Nearly 100 percent of *For Rent's* print advertisers have opted to run their ads on the site.

Approach

As the leading apartment rental-guide publisher, ForRent.com's online advertising goal was to grow site traffic. More visitors would lead to more advertisers, and that in turn would mean greater revenue. So in March 2003, Marketing Manager Stephanie Krebs initiated a Google advertising program. “We chose Google AdWords to raise our visibility, so our advertisers would see more traffic,” she said.

There was an even more pressing challenge, said Krebs. Trader's No. 1 competitor was seeing 450 percent more traffic. “We turned to Google to up the ante. Knowing our ads would show up on Google plus its network of sites, including AOL, was a big selling point for us,” she said. Krebs also notes that Google AdSense™, a new program that runs targeted ads on content sites, was an additional incentive. “We wanted to take advantage of the increased distribution that Google's content-targeted advertising would give us,” she said.

The conversion metric that ForRent.com tracks is lead generation through online “guest card” registrations. Krebs calculated registrations divided by page views to understand the return on investment she received.

Results

Google AdWords has proved to be the most effective form of online advertising ForRent.com uses. Overall, site traffic is up a steady 24 percent every week. And in just 10 weeks of AdWords advertising, Google's traffic referrals to ForRent.com through AOL alone jumped 110 percent. On the cost-per-click (CPC) side, Krebs said that the amount they pay for Google customer clickthroughs is exactly half what they must pay another advertising partner. “With the low CPC we have with Google, our cost is negligible,” said Krebs. “And we know that qualified leads are clicking through every time.”

Based on these kinds of results, Krebs has opted to run ForRent.com's AdWords ads on Google's network of content sites, a new feature Google recently enabled. “It's a good extension for us,” she said. “Google conversion rates for both search and content advertising are both performing very well. Though we are seeing a lower clickthrough rate on content ads, the conversion on both search and content ads is strong, and

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we are getting extremely qualified leads from both programs.” Krebs also reports that Google content ads are converting at a rate 2 to 3 percentage points higher than that generated by other ads the company runs on content sites.

In the apartment-rental business, said Krebs, all of this is good news. “In our industry, which is very competitive, keyword-based advertising on Google is turning out to be a great ad model.”

