



Who they are



www.twiddy.com
 Duck and Corolla, North Carolina
 85 employees
 Vacation rentals and real estate sales

What they needed

- To target vacationers researching the area
- To tailor their marketing to their inventory
- To achieve an optimal cost per conversion

What they did

- Focused on online marketing efforts
- Set up a **Google AdWords** account in 2001
- Set up a **Google Analytics** account in 2003
- Used Google Analytics to design a new website and track keyword conversions
- Modified their ads depending on rental availability

What they accomplished

- **New customers:** Increased percentage of bookings made online by 50% from 2006 to 2007
- **Boosted traffic:** Increased clicks by 26% from 2006 to 2007
- **Increased awareness:** Used keyword strategies to take advantage of the Outer Banks' growing popularity
- **Improved website:** Designed a new website based on information provided by Google Analytics

Life's a Beach

Twiddy used Google AdWords and Google Analytics to transform the way it does business and boost its percentage of bookings made online by 50% in the past year.

Stuck in Duck

People said Douglas Twiddy was crazy when he started renting vacation homes in the Outer Banks community of Duck, North Carolina. "There wasn't much here when Twiddy was started in 1978," explains his son, Ross, who now serves as director of marketing for Twiddy & Company Realtors. "The joke was: are we gonna see a car come down the road today?"

Douglas went on to open a second office in nearby Corolla, an equally sleepy town back in those days. To acquire new customers, Twiddy & Company sent out thousands of rental brochures, first in black and white, and then in color. "It was a huge day when we got the color brochures," Ross remembers.

Sun, sand, and surf

Since then, the Outer Banks has become a major tourist destination, enticing visitors with its sunny weather and stretches of unspoiled beach. Meanwhile, the rise of the Internet has fundamentally altered the way people plan and book their vacations. So in 2002, Twiddy shifted its focus to driving traffic to its website, and shortly after began advertising online with Google AdWords™. "We started



with the simple question: how do people find us on the web?" Ross recalls. "If somebody's going on vacation, the first place they surf to is Google. And a lot of visitors to the Outer Banks have never been here before, so that's really where Google and Google AdWords come into play."

AdWords offered many advantages over Twiddy's original marketing activities. "With brochures, updates or changes made to the homes throughout the season couldn't be communicated to guests," says Ross. "With AdWords, we can adapt our campaign depending on our inventory. Once a house is booked, we take it off the AdWords campaign and put another available home or week in its place. And we respond to what people are looking for. If people want info on oceanfronts, we post more info on oceanfronts. That's the beauty of AdWords."

To drive targeted traffic to their website, the Twiddy team set up campaigns based on specific categories, and later separated out distinct campaigns for brand-related and high-performing keywords. "AdWords worked immediately," Ross says, "and we knew the good old days of the brochure were over. Effective marketing strategies were shifting from print to the Web. We were in the Dark Ages, but after we joined AdWords, we went right to the Renaissance."

On the right track

As they began devoting more resources to their AdWords account and their

About 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, and video ads 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>.

About Google Analytics

Google Analytics™ is a free, powerful web analytics tool. It precisely tracks visitors, referrals, search engine performance, email promotions, and even offline initiatives. Featuring visually enhanced reports, Analytics helps users focus their marketing resources, improve site navigation, and achieve a higher ROI. It measures the success of both AdWords and non-AdWords advertising campaigns, revealing which ads and keywords convert the best. For more information, visit <http://www.google.com/analytics>.



website, Ross and his team set up Google Analytics™ to gather in-depth performance and navigation data. “We use Google Analytics because it’s free and has worlds of information that we can utilize to make the right decisions,” says Evan Roberts, a consultant from Labitat Inc. who works with Twiddy on search engine marketing.

In November of 2006, the team designed a new website based on information provided by Analytics. They now run regular reports and monitor traffic to each page, using that data to fine-tune the site. “We look at how each individual page is doing and at navigational style and behavior,” Evan explains. “We’re constantly rotating the homes we display on our landing page. Google Analytics tells us what’s working. We also set up a quick search function on the site, and Analytics lets us see what people are typing in.”

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“We put a lot of emphasis on delivering traffic from Google to Twiddy.com,” Ross adds. “But once they get to Twiddy.com, what do they do? That’s where Google Analytics has helped us. The more knowledge we have about bookings and our website, the more confident we are using AdWords and increasing our budget based on what the data says.”

With Analytics, the company can also evaluate the success of its AdWords campaigns and adjust its approach on a regular basis. “We look at which words are converting and use that data to make changes to our AdWords campaigns,” says Ross. “The cost per conversion has really become the compass for Twiddy’s marketing.”

The future looks bright

The company still uses brochures and some print ads, but AdWords has become its most successful and measurable marketing channel. “Other advertising methods haven’t produced results like AdWords,” says Ross. “You can’t tell how well they’re working. AdWords is intelligent marketing. There’s nothing else out there that produces the costs per conversion we’re looking for.”

With the help of Analytics, Twiddy has seen even greater success from the AdWords program in recent months. From 2006 to 2007, the percentage of bookings made online jumped 50 percent, while individuals citing Google search as the way they found Twiddy increased by 47 percent. Clicks on Twiddy’s ads went up 26 percent, and the account’s overall clickthrough rate (CTR) increased by nine percent. Twiddy has also used AdWords to take advantage of the Outer Banks’ growing popularity: “People will hear about the Outer Banks on the radio, and then they’ll go to Google to do research and click on our ad. Our presence there helps raise our stature as a service they can trust.”

If Ross has any words of wisdom for other advertisers, it’s the importance of tailoring their campaigns to their goals and needs. “AdWords gives you the tools you need,” he says, “and it’s up to your imagination and creativity to make it work the best for your business.” His advice for their next travel destination? “The Outer Banks. How can you not wanna visit a town called Duck?”

