CASE STUDY:
Leading Global Luxury Hotel Brand Increases Bookings by Leveraging Search on a Global Scale

DISCLAIMER: This client was not a direct client of Mixed Digital. Employees of Mixed Digital were responsible for the setup, management, optimization and reporting of the campaign while working for their agency of record.
Case Study: Leading Global Luxury Hotel

Background
A global leader in the luxury hotel and resort industry was looking to increase their bookings using search engine marketing. Adopting an international franchise model, most properties in the hotel’s family are individually owned and operated. The corporate office wanted a solution that was not only effective for all, but scalable across many countries. *Please note that this hotel brand is not and never has been a client of Mixed Digital. This professional experience was gained by both partners while working at a former SEM agency.*

Challenge
The hotel brand was new to Search at the time and lacked a well defined strategy to not only promote the brand, but aid the properties in their growth prospects using PPC. It was necessary to develop (and test) a successful strategy that would start in North America and be replicated worldwide. This strategy had to allow the brand to market to an affluent audience, during a recession at a premium price point. Further, it had to work with multiple property owners possessing varying budgets, and across a number of cultures and languages. As a luxury brand, Four Seasons desired to maintain its high-end image, which is something that proved to be quite challenging during the recession that started in 2007.

Solutions
Develop Scalable Campaign Architecture
The Search campaign was created to market corporate initiatives and individual properties in such a manner that allowed for ease of reporting and data consolidation.

Dedicated Landing Pages
To improve conversion rates once visitors reached the site, it was necessary to create customized landing pages that highlighted significant areas of focus. Streamlining the design and focusing on bookings was the overall theme during the development of all pages.

>50% Increase in ROAS
Over 50 Properties Globally
100,000+ Keywords
Multivariate Testing

Testing individual elements of the page allows for further improvement of conversion rates. Headings, subheadings, images, call-to-action buttons, colors, etc. were all tested in various configurations to determine the best case scenarios.

Metric Creation

To measure success consistently across all properties, it was necessary to create custom KPI metrics that expressed different levels of engagement by the customer. This included online metrics base on points in the sale process as well as an offline metric that estimated phone call activity.

Non-Room Promotions

As a move toward diversification, several campaigns were created to highlight hotel events such as weddings, conferences, golf outings etc. These offered additional revenue generation opportunities within the PPC campaign.

Bid Management

A robust bid management tool was used to efficiently manage over 100k keywords. Leveraging this technology allowed for partial automation and easier access to key data.

Centralized Management for Global Partners

Campaign management for all properties, including North America, Asia-Pacific and EMEA, was handled by the same team to ensure consistency, economies of scale, brand consistency and quality control. This included rolling out foreign language campaigns in Russian, Chinese, German and Japanese.

Reporting

A customized reporting dashboard was constructed to provide stakeholders with an executive summary spanning all regions and properties as well as data at a very granular level for more thorough analysis.

Impact

The campaign quickly grew from just the corporate brand campaign to over 50 individual properties, across the globe, including long term residences. ROAS increased > 50%, year over year ('08-'09 - during a recession), over 100,000 keywords were managed across more than 6 languages and 5 search engines that included Yandex & Baidu.

Continual keyword/bid management and ad copy optimization lead to increases in Quality Score, CTR and decreases in CPA. The use of dedicated landing pages and the subsequent multivariate testing of those landing pages resulted in over a 12% lift in conversion rate and contributed to more than a 7% decrease in CPA in a very tough economic climate.

One particular non-room related campaign around weddings won an award for excellence in Search strategy. Using analytics data from both organic and paid activity, it was discovered that many customers were having destination weddings in Hawaii and those source cities were then targeted with the PPC campaign to increase bookings.

Summary

A leading luxury hotel brand sought out to leverage Search as a strategy to increase awareness and revenues for their luxury brand. Through a mix of strategy, testing and optimization, the brand was able to create a successful plan that enabled replication with their global partners. The end result being an increase in bookings, diversification of their marketing efforts and the discovery a successful digital marketing solution.