

BE OUR GUEST: BETTER LEADS DRIVE BIGGER REVENUE FOR COBBLESTAY VACATION RENTALS

Vacation rental agency [CobbleStay](#) is a unique company representing luxury properties in Europe and beyond. By focusing on extraordinary homes and apartments in stunning locations around the world – and providing dedicated customer service – they help travelers feel at home, wherever they are. Drew Graham, the founder and CEO, also runs sales and marketing for the company.

Because their website features lush photography of lavish accommodations in locations such as Paris and Puerto Vallarta, the site tends to get a lot of traffic that's "just looking." Sorting through large numbers of visitors to find qualified leads was a time-consuming process for the sales organization. It was bad for the team's productivity as well as the company's bottom line.

IN SEARCH OF SIMPLICITY

Once CobbleStay implemented a customer relationship management (CRM) solution, they quickly determined that they also needed marketing automation to help them take targeted action on the insights they were gathering about their customers and prospects. Drew started searching for a solution that could provide seamless integration with their CRM while also providing the flexibility and customization they needed to control the flow of data between the systems.

Ease of use was also a big enticement for the organization. "We needed a solution that was easy for the sales team to get started using right away," said Drew. "Since it's a part of our everyday operation, it needed to automate processes but also give people flexibility to test out different approaches and customize options throughout the sales cycle."

CobbleStay provides value with sophisticated concierge services to its customers to reduce the stress of traveling. So it's no surprise that the agency recognized the importance of finding a solution vendor with strong support and in-depth expertise.

CobbleStay.com™

THE ISSUE: Lack of insight into lead quality was causing wasted time and effort for the sales team, and lack of real-time marketing response was leading to missed opportunities.

THE SOLUTION: By implementing Act-On Software with their CRM solution, CobbleStay has gained visibility into how interested leads really are, and the marketing team is able to send targeted responses right away.

THE RESULTS: Using automation and lead scoring, CobbleStay has seen a 50% higher conversion rate over last year. Open rates on email campaigns are on the rise, the total number of bookings is up, revenue has increased, and the agency is enjoying a 500% return on investment.



“In working with Act-On, we’ve been extremely fortunate,” Drew said. “They have great customer success managers who really understand the challenges we’re facing. That’s been a big positive for us.”

OPEN RATES THAT OPEN DOORS

Every two weeks, CobbleStay sends an email newsletter, The Paris Journal, with travel information such as day trips, vacation advice, and other helpful tips. Open rates are currently ranging from 35% to 50%, which is excellent, especially in an industry that usually averages open rates of around 20%. Drew credits the list quality as well as Act-On’s reliable sender reputation. “It’s a testament to the deliverability we get through Act-On as well as the quality of our lists,” he said.

The sales team is also empowered to send email directly through their CRM system. If a prospect reaches out to learn more about a particular apartment or house, they quickly receive a message with available properties to suit their criteria, as well as a price quote for their stay. It’s that kind of rapid response that gets results, and that turns idle day-dreamers into active vacationers. Plus, sales reps are empowered to take targeted action based on an easy-to-navigate record of every customer interaction.

RECENCY: KNOWING THE SCORE

One of the features the sales team at CobbleStay found useful right away was Act-On’s powerful lead scoring capabilities. Because booking travel can be a complex, high-consideration sale, the CobbleStay team needed a way to address the needs of their customers, while also prioritizing leads and striking while the iron is hot with those most likely to convert.

“It’s amazing,” Drew said. “Because of its sophistication, Act-On makes it easy for us to decide how long a score is valid. Just because a prospect opened the email a month ago doesn’t mean it’s appropriate to call them this week. Activity history is not just about behavior but also the recency of that behavior.” Now, any time the team looks at an inquiry in their system, they can understand how engaged the lead is, and decide how much attention to give each one.

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— Drew Graham,
Founder and CEO
CobbleStay

Recently, more people have been spending their time looking at options without reaching out and engaging directly with CobbleStay. But those that do are much more informed and ready to buy, and the system identifies them accordingly. Using automation and lead scoring, the CobbleStay team has consistently – and significantly – improved their results. In fact, this year they’ve had a 50% increase in conversion rate over last year. “I don’t think we could have achieved any of these results had the system not been so seamless in the way it fit in with our own business process,” said Drew.

QUALIFIED LEADS, MORE SALES, AND A 500% ROI

Increased sales and higher conversion rates are great for business, and they also improve the overall morale of the sales team. And when leads have been warmed up through email marketing campaigns and other points of contact, they’re better qualified. “Every quarter over the last five quarters we’ve seen an increase in business, even in a challenging market,” Drew said. This approach has boosted the efficiency as well as the optimism of the sales team. Now they can focus on higher quality leads – and they have a better chance of making a sale.

Marketing automation also delivers a sizable return on investment for CobbleStay. According to Drew, “Between internal resources, people and the cost of the software, it’s a very small investment when you add it all up. I generally look for a return of five times the initial investment, and with Act-On, it’s been very easy to get beyond that – and do it very quickly.”

ABOUT ACT-ON SOFTWARE

Act-On Software delivers cloud-based integrated marketing automation software. Marketers can manage all their online marketing efforts from a single dashboard that can be seamlessly integrated with CRM, giving sales access into various marketing functions. Act-On’s fresh approach to marketing automation gives its users full functionality without the complexity other systems impose, and makes campaign creation and program execution easier and faster.

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