

CASE STUDY

Wyndham Vacation Rentals Sees 30% Jump in Engagement After Improving User Experience With Google Analytics Premium

Wyndham Vacation Rentals wants to help families find the vacation spot of their dreams. Vacationers visiting the site can choose from more than 9,000 professionally managed rental properties in 19 different North American locations.

With such a dizzying number of properties and destination options, Wyndham faced several challenges. First, given the seasonal nature of the travel industry, the company needed to ensure that all available and relevant properties were shown to customers, otherwise the hospitality giant would be left with remnant inventory. Second, some customers were having difficulty finding the property that best met their needs. Wyndham recognized the current user experience needed improvement and wanted to quickly take action. Finally, the company needed to better understand how the industry's seasonality affected vacation search lead time so it could more closely align marketing programs and spend with peaks in consumer demand.

Solving all three challenges hinged on improving its website user experience. To do so, Wyndham needed data to understand who its customers were, what influenced their purchasing decisions, and when they planned their vacations. The company turned to Google Analytics Premium to get these in-depth insights and, ultimately, make smarter business decisions to increase results.

Getting customers to enjoy their visits online and offline

Wyndham needed to ensure its properties remained occupied throughout the year to reduce remnant inventory and increase profits. This meant all available and relevant properties needed to appear in customers' search results. Naturally, the company wanted the properties' length-of-stay restrictions to align with a customer's desired vacation length. However, its backend system was set up so that the length of stay restrictions did not align with the number of nights a customer wanted to spend



About Wyndham

- With more than 9,000 North American properties, Wyndham Vacation Rentals helps families find the ideal professionally managed vacation rental for their travel needs
- Headquarters: Parsippany, New Jersey
- www.wyndhamvacationrentals.com

Goals

- Improve website user experience and increase rental bookings
- Align length-of-stay rental restrictions with customers' rental preferences
- Understand leading property attributes, see the highest conversion combinations and provide rental options
- Maximize marketing program ROI around peak vacation times

Approach

- Implemented custom dimensions in Google Analytics Premium with Google Tag Manager
- Used custom dimensions to examine customer behavior
- Captured user search information about rental dates, lengths of stays, and property attributes and then aligned inventory to consumer demand

Results

- Improved customer satisfaction by adjusting length-of-stay rules to match demand
- Increased conversion rates by surfacing properties with most popular attributes first
- Effectively allocated marketing budget to match vacation search lead time
- Increased property search CTRs by over 30%

Google Analytics Premium

in a vacation rental. This misalignment between system settings and consumer preferences provided a poor user experience and led to a decrease in vacation rental bookings.

To solve this challenge and give users what they wanted, the company used Google Tag Manager to implement Google Analytics Premium custom dimensions (non-standard dimensions created by Wyndham that are specifically relevant to its business) to capture consumers' searched date ranges. This way, the team could learn what the typical desired length of stay was for each rental property. With Google Tag Manager, Wyndham easily collected this information without even having to change the page code.

During its analysis of the data, the company discovered powerful insights. For example, the original backend system was set so properties in the state of Delaware only appeared in search results if customers searched for seven-night stays. However, the analysis revealed customers interested in visiting Delaware were looking to stay three nights instead of seven. Thus, the backend seven-night stay restriction prevented available inventory from appearing in customers' three-night stay search results. As a result, Wyndham was showing fewer rental options and booking fewer rental properties.

Once this key insight surfaced, the company acted quickly to adjust the backend rules and satisfy demand, thereby improving customer satisfaction while fattening its bottom line.

A new search experience brings suite dreams

Wyndham also wanted to ensure that the online property search tool converted as many searchers into renters as possible. To do this, it needed to better align property search parameters so search results displayed properties that would most likely lead to bookings. With the wide array of property attributes and amenities available in the property search tools, it needed to determine which attributes customers searched for the most and what combinations produced the best conversion rates. To better understand these factors, the company implemented custom dimensions for each property attribute and amenity. This allowed Wyndham to collect the corresponding information in Google Analytics Premium for each search result and transaction. It learned that while a property with a good view was one of the top attributes customers included in their searches, the "scenic view" attribute actually had a lower conversion rate compared to other features offered inside a suite.

Testimonial

"Google Analytics Premium is helping us connect the dots. As a data-driven organization, we strive to approach each business challenge objectively and back our assumptions with data. Google Analytics Premium gives us the flexibility to customize the data we collect in a manner that makes it easy to answer our business questions. These questions even go beyond the scope of the digital channel. Premium is allowing our team to discover and create a center of excellence. With Google Analytics Premium, insights gathered about our customers' behaviors and preferences bring meaningful changes to our digital campaign and customer engagement strategies."

—Nadir Ali, Director of
eCommerce Analytics,
Wyndham Vacation Rentals

Google Analytics Premium

After analyzing the new information, Wyndham redesigned its search results page so the properties with the most profitable mix of attributes appeared on the first page. It also shared this information internally with the business development team so it knew what attributes to look for when researching new properties to add to the Wyndham family.

Determining the marketing budget without reservations

Finally, Wyndham wanted to ensure that it was making the best use of its marketing budget. It needed to understand how market demand lead time varied by property location in order to better align its marketing campaign timelines and spend. Once again, the team turned to custom dimensions in Google Analytics Premium to conduct this analysis. To determine the lead time, Wyndham used this feature to first gather the estimated check-in date from a customer's search on its website and then calculated the difference between the check-in date and the date on which the customer initially launched the search. It also used different views within Google Analytics Premium to break out the resulting information by rental location.

The company found that some properties' lead times were 36 to 42 days, while others were only 8 to 14 days. After monitoring the data on a regular basis, Wyndham distinguished patterns that allowed it to more accurately predict customer demand and forecast how to efficiently allocate the marketing budget throughout the year. For example, Wyndham used lead time information to identify search trends for holiday getaways, such as Labor Day weekend excursions, and adjusted its marketing plans accordingly.

Bookings and engagement get a boost

After using these insights from Google Analytics Premium to get the broader picture, Wyndham immediately saw a measureable improvement within the booking path, thanks to improved online customer satisfaction. With a more streamlined online experience and optimized search results pages, customers maintained interest through all stages of the funnel. As a result, Wyndham saw the property search CTR skyrocket by more than 30%.

About Google Analytics Premium

Google Analytics Premium is the enterprise-class analytics solution that offers rich insights into digital audiences and marketing effectiveness. With powerful, flexible, and easy-to-use features, companies large and small measure engagement to create more effective marketing initiatives, improve user experience, and optimize digital strategies. Sophisticated conversion attribution and experimentation tools help savvy marketers determine the best allocation of media and resources to drive results.

For more information, visit google.com/analytics