

CASE STUDY

# Starwood Hotels Uses RLSA to Engage High-Value Travelers With Timely Ads



Finding the perfect hotel while planning a trip can be stressful for travelers. They spend [hours researching hotels](#) to make sure they're getting a great deal, yet more than two-thirds of leisure travelers are concerned that they're not making the right decision when booking a trip.<sup>1</sup> For brands, the challenge is to break through the noise and get in front of these travelers with relevant, helpful information in those crucial ["I-want-to-go" moments](#).

[Starwood Hotels](#) noticed that many of its website visitors would browse through hotel amenities and use its booking calendar—but then leave without booking a room. To reconnect with these past site visitors as they looked for the perfect hotel, Starwood turned to [remarketing lists for search ads](#).

## Starwood boosts its visibility for engaged visitors

With the help of [DigitasLBI](#), its digital marketing agency, Starwood used RLSA to create remarketing lists of past site visitors and then bid more based on where customers left its site. The brand could then reach customers at different stages of consideration, from those simply browsing hotel locations to those ready to book.

"Using RLSA to assist with audience insights, bid adjustments, and tailored ad copy has had a significant positive impact on our campaigns' performance."

— David McDiarmid, Head of Paid Search at DigitasLBI

## About Starwood Hotels

- Starwood Hotels owns, operates, franchises, and manages hotels, resorts, spas, residences, and vacation ownership properties under its 11 owned brands.
- Headquarters: Stamford, CT
- [www.starwoodhotels.com](http://www.starwoodhotels.com)

## Goal

- Increase room bookings
- Improve return on investment (ROI)
- Help past site visitors find Starwood hotels in a crowded travel marketplace

## Approach

- Used RLSA to reach past site visitors

## Results

- 240% higher conversion rate (CVR)
- 165% higher click-through rate (CTR)
- 160% increase in return on investment (ROI)

For example, the brand built remarketing lists based on the months that customers had looked at while using the booking calendar. It then used these lists to re-engage visitors who left but didn't book, serving tailored ads that referenced the months they were interested in.

"Adding audience-based dimensions to our AdWords campaigns has become an ingrained part of our search strategy," said David McDiarmid, head of paid search at DigitasLBI. "Using RLSA to assist with audience insights, bid adjustments, and tailored ad copy has had a significant positive impact on our campaigns' performance."

### Starwood gets a top-floor ROI upgrade

Since integrating RLSA as part of its paid search strategy, Starwood has seen improvements in all its KPIs. Compared to non-RLSA search traffic, RLSA traffic showed a 240% higher CVR, a 165% higher CTR, and an ROI increase of 160%. Furthermore, RLSA now accounts for 15% of Starwood's total paid search conversions and revenue.



240%  
increase in CVR



165%  
increase in CTR



160%  
increase in ROI

RLSA helped drive performance for the brand's paid search efforts, and its role in offering Starwood customers a more relevant ad experience was paramount. Jessica Svensson, Starwood's director of digital marketing EAME, said that using RLSA "has led to significant improvements in performance. Our customers are greeted with a message that's personalized and relevant to their needs, which is critical for our offering—and ultimately a win for both the customer and Starwood."

#### Source

1 Google/Phocuswright, "Leisure Traveler Study," U.S., Oct 2015, n=930 leisure travelers.