

# Directline Holidays Find Major New Revenues With AdSense



“Try it and test it. It’s unlocked the intrinsic value of our browsing visitors without impacting our sales. It’s easy to set-up and when you do, you’ll wish you’d done it sooner.”

**Matt Adams**  
Head of Marketing

**directline**holidays  
Your holiday search engine

Based in Surrey, Directline Holidays is an online travel agent and tour operator with five product specific websites for ski, flights, city breaks, cruises and beach holidays. Originally a phone-based travel agency, it moved online with the success of newly launched Directline-Holidays.co.uk in 2000. Working from a database of both big-name providers and niche specialists, Directline Holidays has seen rapid growth and is now among the top ten most visited travel agent websites in the UK. Summer 2008 saw over 2 million visitors and 10 million page views for Directline-Holidays.co.uk and its related sites.

User behaviour when booking a holiday online is complex, distinct and something all travel agents seek to understand better. It is also something that Matt Adams, Head of Marketing, saw as an opportunity for monetising Directline-Holidays.co.uk. He says “The data invariably shows that traffic will flow to and from websites with similar or exact substitute products. We saw advertising as the obvious way to take control of this situation and benefit from browsing behaviour.” With this in mind Directline Holidays began looking at different methods of monetising the inevitable browsing behaviour that went with a sizeable travel purchase. Adams says “Banner advertising, pop-ups and data collection didn’t appeal because we thought they were too distracting, took-up too much valuable space, were poorly targeted and generally offered a disappointingly low CPM”. After completing the research it was decided that Google AdSense was the best option.

Setting up AdSense was a cinch with implementation of the JavaScript only taking a matter of minutes. Using ads from the AdSense Search network targeted directly to the users’ search query was the ideal solution for monetising their search results’ pages and Directline Holidays was able to tailor the AdSense ads to their own specifications. A small number of direct competitors were blocked. Ads were customised so that their colours matched the colour palette of their host page. Adams says “The advertising is very well targeted...you can optimise based on the adverts that work best for your website.” After this Directline Holidays began monitoring the performance of their hosted ads and studying the effect on their own conversion rates. An obvious concern was that AdSense ads would prove to cannibalise their own bookings. From the outset Directline Holidays was impressed with the transparent reporting and the flexible tools that came with AdSense. Adams says “You have the same excellent reporting that you find in AdWords. The entire account interface is focused on providing you with almost any report you could want.”

## ABOUT GOOGLE ADSENSE

Google AdSense is a program enabling online businesses to earn revenue from serving ads precisely targeted to specific web content and search pages. With service levels ranging from online sign-up to dedicated support management, a broad range of sites profit from AdSense. Thousands of Google advertisers also benefit from AdSense by gaining exposure on sites across the Google Network, which includes many of the Top 100 Media Metrix sites such as AOL, About.com, Amazon, Ask.com, and Lycos.

Since signing up for AdSense, Directline Holidays has been impressed with every aspect of the programme but particularly the revenue generating potential. Adams explains “We’re very pleased with revenue this is creating for us. It doesn’t appear to have any adverse impact on our profit per visitor which means that we consider all our AdSense revenue as net profit and an entirely new revenue stream.” Money from AdSense is re-invested back into the company, allowing further development of the Directline Holiday’s websites and brand. With a prudent approach to the number of ads on its site, Directline Holidays intend trialling different ad types over the coming quarters. Overall, Google AdSense has proven itself an invaluable revenue stream. AdSense has easily enabled us to monetise the flow of browsing traffic with the control to eliminate close competitors and minimise cannibalisation.”

He concludes “Try it and test it. It’s easy to set-up and when you do you’ll wish you’d done it sooner...”

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