



Gills Cruises PPC Management Case Study

Client Overview:

Gills Cruises is the UK's leading cruise travel agent sending c. 60,000 people on holiday each year. They spend £5m per annum on national press & PPC advertising to drive telephone & web enquiries into their Cardiff & London call centres.

They are leading UK agents for a wide selection of cruise lines including P&O Cruises, Cunard Line, Ocean Village, Princess Cruises, Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises, MSC Cruises and Costa Cruises.

Situation:

We were recommended to Gills Cruise in late 2006. They were massively dependent on page advertising in The Daily Mail and were spending less than 1% of their ad budget online. Their PPC was managed internally by the IT team with little understanding of the growth potential that well managed PPC could deliver.

Actions:

We completely rebuilt the PPC Campaign ensuring that every relevant search for a cruise line, cruise ship & cruise destination was met by a relevant adtext and was landed on a relevant page of results. This involved expanding the campaign from c. 2.5k keywords to over 250k keywords!

We set up multi-goal tracking and integrated call centre tracking with the PPC to ensure that every online tracking source was fully measured & accountable to ROI.

We recognised early the importance of Google Analytics for conversion optimisation & brought in external expertise (Hugh Gage from Engage Digital) who we worked alongside to deliver a programme of continual website improvement.

Gills Cruises as far as possible internalise all key functions & in 2009 asked to take back control of day to day PPC management. They asked Search Star to manage the transition and to provide ongoing consultancy to ensure that the internal team continued to deliver the best possible results.

Results:

Gills Cruises now spend c. 50% of their budget online with a superb online sales process. Their website is widely acknowledged as the best in its sector with a superb online conversion process.

They have won multiple travel agency awards & business growth awards including being 16th in the 2009 FastTrack 50.

They now have 2 fully qualified search specialists working in-house with Search Star providing ongoing mentoring & consultancy.

Client Quote:

“Search Star has been a core partner over the past few years and crucially has taught us the value and potential of online marketing. They made our PPC campaigns accountable, introduced us to analytics and continually pushed us to improve our website.

When in 2009 we saw that PPC had become fundamental to our business and decided to take the day to day PPC management in-house they trained and mentored our team to ensure that the results kept on improving.”

- Steve Phillippou, Managing Director, Gills Cruises

