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## VACATION PROPERTY OWNERS USING WEB PAGES TO INCREASE VISIBILITY.

During the last 5 years the number of vacation rental properties being advertised on the internet directly from owner has exploded to well over 50,000. The reason so many owners are taking on the task of managing their units is simple.

They can make considerably more money since they don't have to give 50% (or more) of the gross rental to a management company. Even if they offer substantial discounts to the renter they still make more money (and the renter can save a significant amount as well). Owners typically advertise their properties on vacation rental sites. Most of these sites require the owner to answer several questions about their property and then the site advertises the property in a cookie cutter style format.

This is OK but it really does not allow an owner to advertise what is unique about his or her property. However, now most ISP (Internet Service Providers) allow their customers free web space for their own home page and the fact that creating attractive web pages requires very little skill these days more and more owners are creating a web page just for their property.

When an owner has their own web page they can design it in a manner which really highlights the key features of their property or the area that the property is in. In addition, an owner can put many photos on their own web page for virtually no cost. Many vacation rental sites limit the number of photos and/or charge an extra fee (which can add up to hundreds of dollars) for extra photos. For example, if you own a condo in the Disney World area you might want to have pictures of Disney World, Epcot, and Universal Studios. The same goes for owners whose properties are in the mountains of Colorado (or any resort for that matter).

They could have photos of skiing at the resorts in the area (e.g., Vail, Steamboat, Breckenridge, Keystone, etc.). Of course, if it is summer time, you would be wise to substitute the skiing photos with photos of golf, fishing, biking, and rafting in the mountains. If you really want to do it right, you can reserve a .com name for as little as \$10 a year with the discount domain registrars that are out there.

If you decide to do this be sure to pick a name that describes the location of your condo. Some vacation rental sites allow you to have a link to your property web page from the page that is on their site that describes your property. This is very important and should be one of the criteria you use when selecting a vacation rental listing site.

In addition to allowing you to provide a link to your web page you should count how many clicks it takes to get to your listing from the vacation rental listing site. The FEWER the better. The reason this is so important is that the more links you have to your property AND the closer it is to a site home page (i.e., the fewer number of clicks required to get to it) the more likely search engines will pick it up and have it show up in search queries. Ideally you would like YOUR web page come up when people are searching. If people go directly to your web page then it is more likely they will book the unit.

However, that is just one small piece of how search engines do their job. If you are a property owner of a rental vacation property and don't have your own personal web site you might consider getting one. It is inexpensive and does not require a great deal of effort. You might want to visit some vacation rental listing sites and compare the calendars of properties who do have a dedicated web page and those who don't. You might be surprised at the results.

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