

CASE STUDY: WHY CHEAP WEBSITE DESIGN AND SEO WILL COST YOU AND HOW TO TURN IT AROUND?

CLIENT:

Resava is one of the leading property management providers in Phuket offering more than 200 high-end apartments and villas all over the island. The large selection of short and long-term accommodation caters to all tastes, preferences and requirements. Their portfolio includes large apartments for groups, intimate villas for two, beach-front locations and secluded spots for peace and quiet.

The screenshot shows the Resava website interface. At the top left is the logo for Resava, 'PHUKET APARTMENT & VILLA RENTAL'. To the right are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter, and a 'Sign up Newsletter' button. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Apartments', 'Villas', 'Locations', 'Offers', 'Gallery', 'Blog', and 'Contact Us'. The main banner features a beach scene with a yellow call-to-action box: 'BOOK ON OUR WEBSITE TO RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE SPECIAL OFFERS & BENEFITS! Click here to see the benefits of booking directly with us'. Below the banner is a section titled 'RESAVA HOLIDAYS – HOLIDAY APARTMENTS & VILLAS IN PHUKET' with descriptive text. To the right is a 'Search Availability' form with fields for 'Check in:', 'Check out:', 'Persons:', 'Area:', and 'Promotional Code:', and a 'CHECK AVAILABILITY' button. Below the form are logos for Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Maestro. At the bottom right is a 'Contact Us Today!' section with an email address 'bookings@resavaholidays.com' and a phone number '+66 (0)76 22 24 28'. Two columns of property images are shown: 'SERVICED APARTMENTS' and 'VILLA RENTAL', each with a brief description.

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THE CHALLENGE:

Background situation: In 2013 Resava decided to try out their local SEO and web design provider believing they would gain wider exposure at lower cost. The new website was designed and launched along with the corresponding SEO strategy which promised better rankings instantly.

When starting our contract in spring 2014 this is what we were up against:

- Website design, optimisation and content organisation didn't convert which hindered its marketability
- Low cost and damaging SEO practises had been carried out resulting in:
 - Website in danger of being penalised by search engines due to harmful SEO practices including keyword stuffing, low quality inbound links and outbound links to competitor websites
 - Low search engine rankings and low level of online visibility
 - Lack of unbranded search visibility (for instance for 'Phuket Holidays' or 'Phuket serviced apartments')
 - Extremely low conversion rate (0.65%)
 - Website and online positioning actually left in a much worse shape than it was when the previous provider started the work
- Intermediaries as the main booking source (almost 95%)
- Subsequent low direct revenue

THE SOLUTION:

We spent the first few months correcting the website and reversing damaging SEO practises which had been done previously. This included:

- In-depth website content review and significant content updates:
 - Removing damaging content and links
 - Updating content and ridding it of keyword stuffing
 - Improving content structure and internal linking
 - Proofreading content

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- Adding new content to the website
- New search engine optimisation:
 - Extensive keyword research resulting in new and more relevant keyword variations to improve website reach and visibility
 - Focus on long-tail keywords and searches related to Phuket
 - New content optimisation
 - New technical website optimisation
- Design and work-flow adjustments
 - Calls to action
 - New URL structure
 - Site map improvements
 - Links visibility across the site
 - Booking engine improvements
- Installation of SSL certificate to increase website security and visitors' trust
- Adding website conversion value tracking

In addition we also laid out the foundation for further marketing work by:

- Starting communication on social channels to help with social backlinks and establish Resava as a go-to brand for accommodation in Phuket.
- Reviewing rates offered on the website vs. third parties and helping Resava correct this so the best rates can be found on the website, as opposed to on OTAs.
- Discussing and arranging a new booking engine integration and an incentive of booking direct with Resava

THE RESULTS:

Six months after starting the work, we can already see some fantastic achievements worth mentioning:

- The Resava website has a stable online positioning without being in danger of being penalised by search engines
- The website's negative impact on search engine rankings has been reversed and we can already see great improvement in search visibility:
 - Organic traffic increased by 90% YoY

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- Website visits improved by 40% YoY
- Unique visitors up by 40% YoY
- There is a wide range of landing pages attracting the traffic and therefore improving website visibility across different searches
- Website conversion rate almost doubled within the first 4 months from 0.65% to 1.14% as a result of general website optimisation and restructuring, calls to action and newly created content
- Social media monitoring and engagement not only helped Resava's online reputation and engagement but also increased social traffic to the website by 433 % (compared to our starting point)
- Resava's brand is now more recognised and trusted online and is beginning to emerge as a go-to brand for accommodation in Phuket

The above results are only for the first phase of our work which we carried out in the low season. During this time our focus was on correcting the SEO damage and building a foundation for solid marketing and digital campaigns as we enter high season. We are now at the stage where we can start more aggressive marketing and we can't wait to report back in 6 months' time!