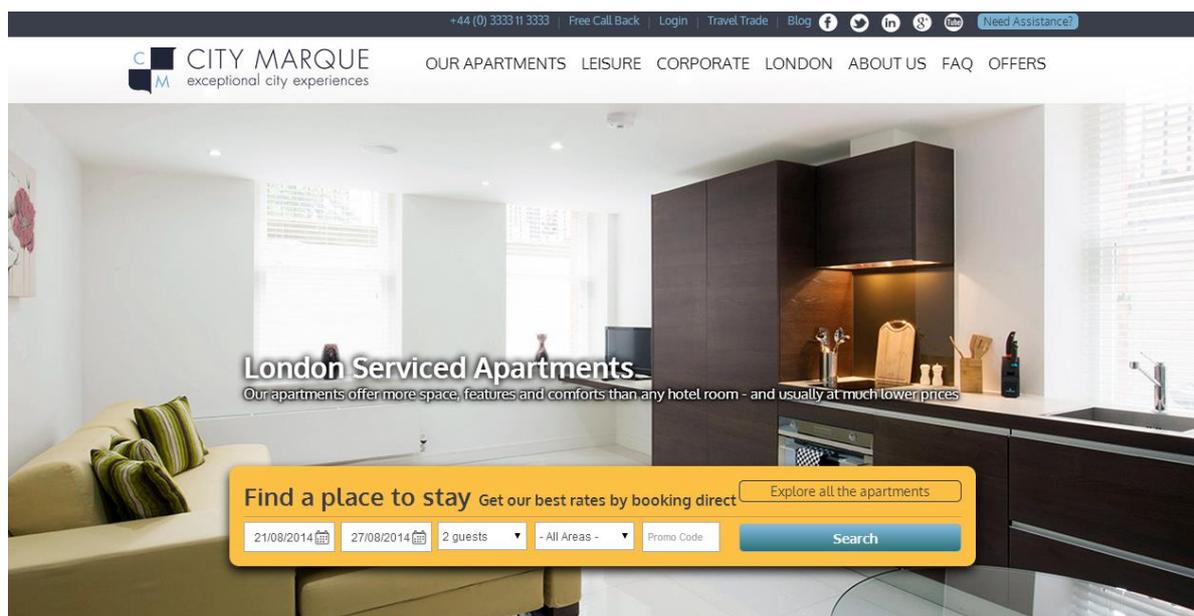


## CASE STUDY: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN VESTIBULE TAKES OVER YOUR ENTIRE ONLINE PRESENCE?

### CLIENT:

City Marque, formerly known as Boutique London Lets, is a luxury serviced apartment provider offering properties in London's most prominent locations. Founded in 2009, City Marque now runs nearly 200 different units across the capital with plans to reach 1000 apartments by 2016. All apartments are ideal for both leisure and corporate stays and can be booked for either short or long-term periods.



### BACKGROUND SITUATION:

Vestibule Marketing was providing online marketing services to Boutique London Lets from 2010 – the results can be seen in [a separate case study here](#).

In March 2013, Boutique London Lets contracted a new SEO and web design provider believing they would gain a wider exposure at lower cost. During that period Vestibule acted as an advisor to City Marque and the new SEO company by pointing out areas for improvements (although having a limited power on correcting any unsuitable activities)

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In August 2013, Boutique London Lets rebranded into City Marque and launched a new website to better reflect the new direction of the company.

## THE CHALLENGE

When starting our contract in September 2013, our main challenges were:

- Introducing a new brand to the market
  - Lack of brand awareness
  - No search engine ranking history as the rebranded website was set up on a new domain
  - Subsequent low search engine rankings and low level of online visibility
- Rebranded website that wasn't completed and market-ready
  - The site didn't convert
  - Content with spelling mistakes, duplicate pages and keyword stuffing
- PPC was not performing
  - High cost per click
  - Low conversion rate; traffic from City Marque PPC adverts was sent to Boutique London Lets pages which was confusing for the users
- Traffic driven to the website didn't convert
  - Large percentage of traffic would come from unrelated or unsuitable keywords
  - Low organic traffic due to new website with no SEO history
- Substantial focus on social media that didn't produce any sales
- Intermediaries as the main booking source
- Extremely low percentage of website bookings (4.78%) and direct bookings (8.8%) as of September 2013
- Subsequent low direct revenue and large commission cost to OTAs
- Strong need for fast results and accelerated growth to position the new brand as a market leader
- Management of City Marque wanted to focus on running the business and growing the new brand without being involved in overseeing online strategy and implementation of suitable activities

## THE SOLUTION:

We proposed to City Marque a new type of online marketing contract based on commission from direct bookings. This would be based on the fact that Vestibule would take over the entire web presence of City Marque including design, development, media spend costs for all PPC channels and marketing work. This would therefore allow:

- Making marketing decisions much faster and more independently by Vestibule based on the industry knowledge
- Subsequent acceleration when it comes to growth and results
- Allocating funds and resources where they would make the biggest impact
- City Marque management were able to take a more relaxed approach in regards to online marketing decisions and support and let Vestibule take charge

## IMPLEMENTATION:

We spent the first few months on laying the foundation for future work that included:

- Establishing a clear and succinct method of tracking booking sources by working closely with City Marque reservation staff
- Website design testing and adjustments
- Introducing a new homepage template to modernise the website and ensure that users take the correct path when navigating the website
  - Launching a trail AdWords campaign to the new City Marque website in order to review users' behaviour based on very specific keywords which they used to come to the site. Based on the results, landing pages for each specific campaign were improved to increase the overall conversion rate of the website
- Search Engine Optimisation review
  - Extensive keyword research resulting in new and more relevant keyword variations to improve website reach and visibility
  - Removal of keyword stuffing from the website pages

- Review of targeted keywords and exclusion of unsuitable keywords that generated traffic that didn't convert to correct low website conversion rate
- PPC review and corrections
- Social media review and adjustments to focus on quality content over quantity

After the initial groundwork was completed in autumn 2013, additional campaigns and on-going work were carried out including:

- Further website design and development:
  - Introducing enquiry forms on apartment pages to allow users to contact City Marque to be given a quote or ask a question
  - Rearranging the structure of the navigation menu to allow adding more properties
  - Redesigning apartment pages and apartment list page to better categorise and present a growing number of properties while maintaining the best possible user experience to encourage website bookings
  - New booking engine integration to make the booking process faster and more user-friendly
  - New corporate section was created to create a clear distinction between leisure and corporate market and cater to corporate visitors' needs
  - New media section was launched to show the press attention City Marque is receiving as well as the growth of the brand
- Search Engine Optimisation:
  - Increasing search visibility to people looking specifically for apartments in London areas where City Marque has properties
  - Growing a backlinks profile with high quality links
  - Adding new content to the website in form of regular blog posts and new pages
- Improving and growing PPC channels:
  - Bing Ads to predominantly target US market
  - Remarketing adverts to target website visitors who didn't convert
  - Further improvement of Adwords PPC campaigns
- Social media efforts:

- Social media was used as a brand-building tool with a very soft approach to selling
- Regular, high-quality blog posts were published twice a month bringing suitable traffic and backlinks to the website
- Active brand reputation management was in place to deal with negativity immediately and in professional manner
- Video advertising was launched on YouTube showing City Marque branded video to people potentially visiting London
- 'Free things to do in London' outreach campaign created a very strong piece of crowd-sourced content resulting quality backlinks, social interactions and a large amount of organic traffic coming to the website (between 750 and 1000 monthly visits)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Facebook competition was launched to source more quality fans and gained brand awareness
- Other activities also included:
  - Email newsletter redesign and campaign to past guests
  - Consultancy on Trip Advisor, Flipkey and OTAs listing
  - Regular monthly meetings with City Marque to inform management about the progress

## THE RESULTS:

After 10 months of work, the following results were reported:

- City Marque's brand is now more recognised and trusted online and is beginning to emerge as one of the market leaders in London's serviced apartment industry.
- Search visibility has improved significantly:
  - Website visits improved by 178% compared to when we started with the new site in September 2013
  - There is a wide range of landing pages attracting the traffic and therefore improving website visibility across different searches
- The website conversion rate increased from 0.05% to 1.14%

- Website traffic YoY (year over year comparing July 2013 and July 2014) stayed on the same level with the difference that now the website attracts relevant traffic which converts, compared to the same amount of traffic before that was coming from irrelevant keywords and not producing any online bookings at all
- PPC conversion increased by 69%
- Social media monitoring and engagement not only helped City Marque's online reputation and engagement but regularly contributed to assisted website conversions which produced a total revenue of £7709.22 since September 2013
- Direct booking revenue increased by 296%
- Direct booking revenue share increased from 8% to 59% which reduced the dependency on other channels and saved substantial costs in OTAs' commission
- Website bookings increased by almost 30% YoY (Year over Year)

The above results are only for the first 10 months of our marketing contract with City Marque.

... TO BE CONTINUED