



CASE STUDY: BAINBRIDGE COMPANIES & COMMUNITY SHERPA



BACKGROUND

CommunitySherpa is a social media marketing service for the multi-family industry from Network Communications, Inc., the parent company of Apartment Finder. This monthly subscription service provides a robust solution to building and managing a social media marketing program for apartment communities, residents and prospects. CommunitySherpa aims to improve organic search rankings, increase web traffic, improve resident retention and enhance referral programs for its subscribers. The program includes the creation of a community blog, Facebook and Twitter presence for the participating apartment community that is updated regularly with unique hyper-local, community, neighborhood and regional content. Monthly reports detail traffic and leads, referral activity and member information for measuring retention among users.



**Apartment
Finder™**
ApartmentFinder.com





BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

The Bainbridge Companies (www.BainbridgeCompanies.com) is a leading owner, developer and manager of luxury multifamily apartment communities in the Eastern United States, having over 10,000 apartment homes in 23 communities under management. In the Fall of 2009, Bainbridge's VP of Marketing, Jared Miller, was faced with declining market conditions, including pressure on occupancy and rental rates and a reduced online marketing budget. Miller knew the most effective way he could combat these conditions would be through developing a comprehensive SEO and social media strategy for his properties, which quickly became a top priority. However, to execute his strategy would require resources he didn't have:

“We needed a robust platform, resources to monitor the content, and resources to develop it. We simply didn't have those resources available internally.”

-Jared Miller, VP of Marketing

Fortunately, Miller had learned about the CommunitySherpa program through his existing Apartment Finder account team. Recognizing the potential, Miller made the decision to implement the service for 21 of 23 Bainbridge properties (the others are small assets without a large enough base to warrant the program). In early November, 2009, 19 Bainbridge communities launched with CommunitySherpa, and the remaining 2 communities followed soon after.

BAINBRIDGE

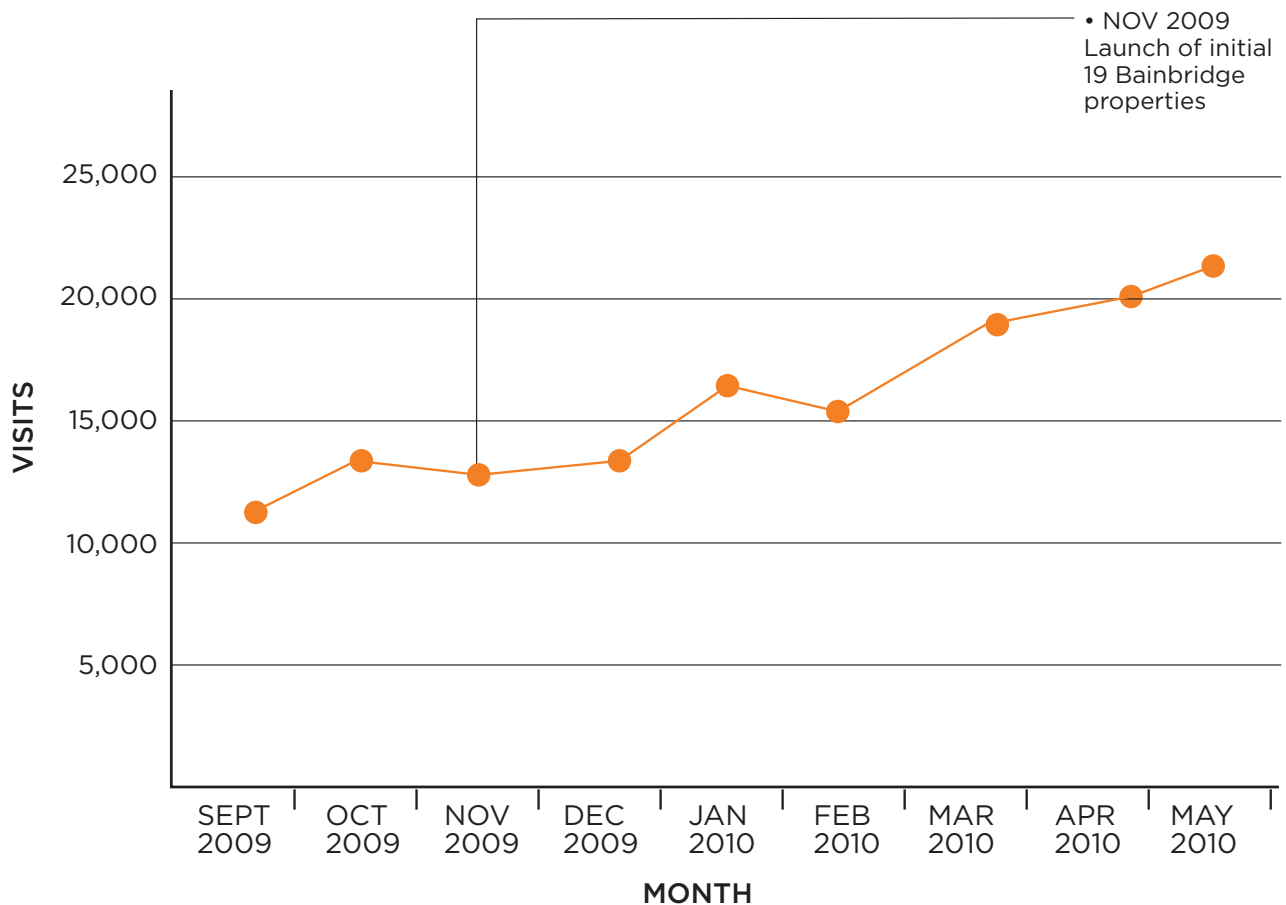
THE BAINBRIDGE COMPANIES LLC



RESULTS

Overall, the results for the program to date have far exceeded Bainbridge's expectations in terms of increased site traffic, reduced online marketing spend and resident engagement.

Since launching in late 2009, every participating Bainbridge property has realized an increase in organic, non-paid traffic to their property web sites. Combined, this represents a 67% overall increase from October, 2009. Interestingly, ten properties have realized an increase in organic traffic by more than 70% and four of these properties have realized an increase of over 100% and one of over 230%. The following chart illustrates the growth in organic traffic that Bainbridge has enjoyed over the past 9 months:





RESULTS

These gains, which resulted from a combined focus on search engine optimization and the CommunitySherpa social media platform, continue to increase month over month and have allowed Bainbridge to initiate a plan to eliminate pay-per-click advertising by the end of 2010. This will result in a cost savings of over \$100,000.

“Now that the blogs have been live for some time, we are seeing stronger organic placement and overall web traffic monthly. The growth is building each month.”

-Jared Miller, VP of Marketing

Bainbridge has also seen a growth in the number of natural keyword searches driving traffic to their properties. By expanding the breadth of content, they are able to tap into new audiences that may likely represent future residents. In fact, Bainbridge reports higher lead conversion from their organic, non-paid traffic.

Finally, Bainbridge continues to receive positive feedback from its residents. Aside from giving residents the ability to connect on Facebook and Twitter, residents now receive important communications that they otherwise may have missed. For example, during the past winter's severe storms, Bainbridge leveraged their CommunitySherpa platform to send out emergency notifications from local municipalities via Twitter and Facebook. Numerous residents made it known how much they appreciated the effort. It is this type of highly personalized, real-time communication that benefits residents while providing a unique competitive advantage for Bainbridge.



SUCCESS FACTORS

As one of NCI's first CommunitySherpa customers, Bainbridge has outlined 2 critical success factors for the program:

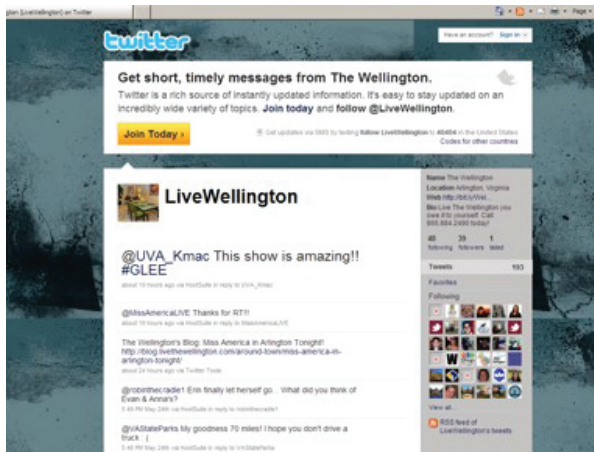
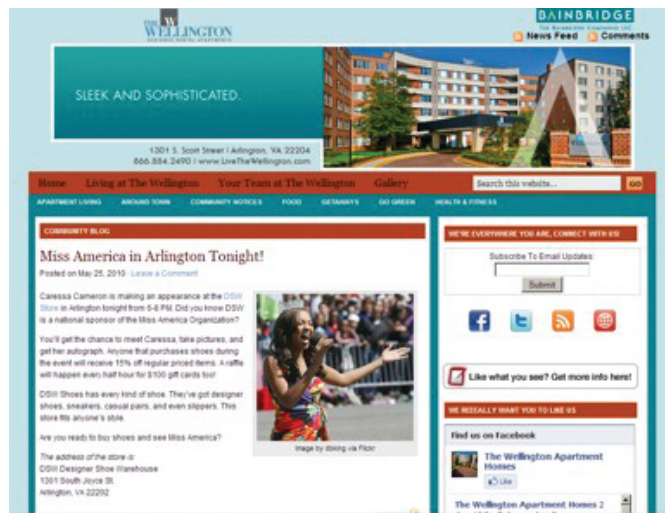
1. Regular participation by the apartment community, regional and executive management team. While CommunitySherpa provides the vast majority of the blog content, it is important for the community manager to also post relevant, hyper-local content on occasion. Topics such as property enhancements, resident appreciation parties, and neighborhood news generate a high level of interest and engagement. Bainbridge reports that all of its property managers post at least once or twice a month, while others post several times a week.
2. Cross-linking and internal promotion. Bainbridge configured their CommunitySherpa blogs so that they are linked directly to each property website's URL. They also are diligent about linking to the blogs from text within their website pages, and creating a focal point on relevant pages to drive additional traffic. Recently, they have begun the process of redesigning each of their property websites to better integrate the blog content. An example is www.livetuscanridge.com.

Because each property has a dedicated CommunitySherpa content manager focused on driving results, clients like Bainbridge are easily able to identify new opportunities for leveraging content on their sites while allowing their property managers to develop new skills.



PRODUCT SAMPLE

Below are screen shots of an actual CommunitySherpa blog, Facebook and Twitter page for The Wellington, a signature Bainbridge property located in Arlington, VA:





REFERENCE SITES

Below is a listing of The Bainbridge Companies' CommunitySherpa blogs. For more information on The Bainbridge Companies, please visit: bainbridgecompanies.com.

- blog.alexanmetrowest.com
- blog.alexansolmar.com
- blog.livebartonscrossing.com
- blog.liveblueisle.com
- blog.livecarlylestation.com
- blog.livecrystalsquare.com
- blog.liveeatonsquare.com
- blog.livetuscanyridge.com
- blog.livefoxrun.com
- blog.liveislandclub.com
- blog.livelionsgate.com
- blog.livesavannahpc.com
- blog.liveserramar.com
- blog.livesolara.com
- blog.livethebennington.com
- blog.liveheathbrook.com
- blog.livethewellington.com
- blog.liveturtlecove.com
- blog.liveuniversityheights.com
- blog.livemcnairfarms.com
- blog.livewatkinsstation.com

For more information about CommunitySherpa, please visit: community-sherpa.com or contact your Apartment Finder sales team.