

Important Reminders!

- Reservations have begun for 2016! Remember to provide your dates for personal use as soon as possible to avoid conflicts with rentals. You should have received a request form to be completed and returned with your dates. If you have not received the request you can log in to your owner portal to block out your dates, email dates to reservations@holidayvacationrental.com or call 888-242-7555
- Rent payments are now being processed and mailed by the 10th of each month

Inside this issue:

Holiday Vacation Rentals Launches Mobile-Friendly Website	1
Property Insurance— Are You Protected?	1
Paying Attention to Detail	2
Value of Repeat Guests	2
Industry News	2
Managing Online Reviews— The New Reality	3
Why Holiday Vacation Rentals?	4

Holiday Vacation Rentals Launches Mobile-Friendly Website

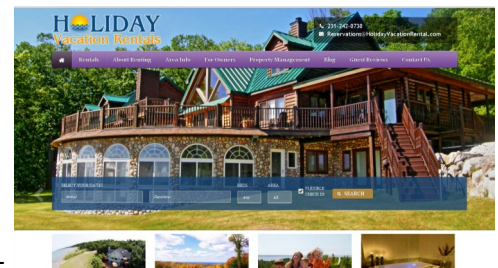
Holiday Vacation Rentals' (HVR) new responsive design website improves the user experience for the increasing number of travelers using smart phones and tablets to search for vacation rentals. The goal of HVR was to create a website with better property images, easy to use navigation, and faster loading time. With the complete redesign of the website, users can select from drop down menus or search rental categories to easily find homes meeting their selection criteria. HVR wanted travelers to also have an improved vacation planning experience by providing more destination and activity information and to be inspired by the scenic natural beauty awaiting rental guests in Northern Michigan.

With improved navigation that is easy and convenient for users, new look and fresh content, greater guest loyalty is expected.

Renters can search and view availability calendars, receive an instant quote, and easily make reservations. When more information is needed, reservation specialists are available by email or phone to answer questions. More features, like the use of drone videos, will be added over the coming months. With better SEO (search engine optimization), the website will rank higher in search position and be found

by more travelers seeking new vacation destinations and experiences.

The website will also reduce reliance on the large online



travel agencies such as VRBO, HomeAway (now owned by Expedia), and Trip Advisor that are creating pricing pressure and increasing the cost of renting a vacation home with expensive ads and increased fees.

HolidayVacationRental.com

Property Insurance—Are You Protected?

Many vacation rental homes may not be correctly insured for short term rentals. Unknown to many homeowners, many insurance companies require expensive commercial policies if you rent your home. Many homeowners are surprised to learn that they **may not be protected** by their current insurance policy and are **“at risk”** for casualty losses such as a fire or claim if someone is injured on their property. Holiday Vacation Rentals understands the in-

vestment that homeowners have in their vacation home as well as the importance of good risk management.

HVR has insurance options for owners in our rental program to protect against the possibility of a catastrophic loss. Now available is *nightly rental insurance* that becomes the primary coverage when your property is rented. The nightly insurance plan fills gaps in the coverage of a traditional homeowner's policy and provides commercial

grade coverage during rental periods. Liability coverage is available ranging from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000.

Another option is **Proper Homeowner Insurance**, underwritten by *Lloyds of London*, created specifically for vacation rentals to ensure coverage on the investment you have in your home, at a reasonable cost. Contact Holiday Vacation Rentals at (231) 242-0730 if you would like information.



Paying Attention to Detail

Good first impressions are important and necessary for the satisfaction of guests. That is why pre-arrival inspections are performed on every rental beginning at the property boundary. Is it welcoming and clean? Free of spider webs, leaves or snow? BBQ grills are cleaned and propane tanks checked. A complete walk-through of the home is done, checking for missed dusting, cobwebs, fingerprints, smudges or anything that might have a negative impact on an arriving guest. In-

spectors make sure that the heat or A/C is set to a comfortable temperature, lights are checked and burned out bulbs are replaced, clocks are set, TV remotes and internet are confirmed to be in working order as well as all appliances. They ensure that guest supplies have been stocked. Should unexpected problems arise, maintenance is scheduled and, if necessary, arriving guests are contacted to know that repair service has been arranged.

It is the inspector's job to ensure that our housekeepers have accomplished their goals in both cleanliness and organization and that each home is staged and welcoming for the guests. Our inspectors also make sure that lights are turned on to welcome guests and a special welcome bag is awaiting guests' arrival.

Our mission is to make guests feel welcomed and greeted with attention to details and a high level of customer service during their stay.

Value of Repeat Guests

There is no reservation more valuable than that of a repeat guest. In fact, according to a recent Gallup study, repeat guests spend 13%-29% more than first timers. Through good first impressions, responding to requests, creating relationships and closely tracking leads and trends, our team works diligently to ensure that guests return again and again.

We want rental guests to feel comfortable and important as their loyalty and goodwill are the foundation to the growth of Holiday Vacation Rentals and property owners. We do this by greeting guests by name, becoming their personal concierge, and gathering as much information as we can about their interests and why they are vacationing in the area.

Once we earn guest loyalty and trust, it is inevitable that repeat guests will in turn attract even more repeat guests through Holiday Vacation Rental loyalty incentives, social media posts like Face book, and photo shares on Instagram of their vacations and rental accommodations!

“According to a recent Gallup study, repeat guests spend 13–29% more than first timers.”

Industry News

The biggest news in the vacation rental industry is the sale of HomeAway to Expedia. While it is likely that most are familiar with Expedia, for those of you who are strangers to HomeAway, HomeAway was the leading third party distribution channel until Airbnb recently took the lead in late 2015.

So why is this news such a big deal? Competition just heated up. Your property will

now compete alongside hotels on Expedia. HomeAway, VRBO and Expedia also intend to increase the take rate, (the percentage that they will charge on every booking). Booking fees are anticipated to range from 3% to as much as a 15% in the future!

Holiday Vacation Rentals continues to improve its online presence to avoid reliance on OTA's and the high fees that they will require.

HVR continues to increase exposure of homes in its rental program and the value of the brand with social media, regular e-Promotions and the commitment to building a high ranking and user friendly website. The new user-friendly website will produce better results for home owners in our rental program in the changing landscape of large third party distribution channels.

Here at HVR we understand the importance of direct bookings and the value of trained reservationists in delivering exceptional customer service so more guests rely on HVR for the rental homes and vacation experiences they want.



Managing Online Reviews—The New Reality

Increasingly important to vacation rentals is the reality of having to manage online reviews. Online Reviews, over which you seem to have little control, can affect every interaction that you have with potential guests. This is the world of social media and online reviews.

While our personal preferences may not yet be vulnerable to star ratings, nearly every aspect of the vacation rental businesses are — how we manage personal interactions, how efficient our websites are, how courteous our employees are, how clean the houses we rent are, how well the appliances work, how many steps to the beach, and even the weather. Online comments and ratings, unreasonable as some of them may seem, can make or break the success of a vacation rental. “Online reputation management is important. It’s about creating a positive Web presence to make your home (and the Holiday Vacation Rental brand) one that people trust and want to engage with.

Vacation rentals are particularly sensitive to online reviews and how such reviews influence reputation, because guests have many choices for a vacation rental. Each time they check out a rental website they want to know: Should I spend my money here or not? Online reviews provide the elements to answer that crucial question.

Satisfied guests are encouraged to write reviews about

their experience. “This is a biggie and it’s only becoming more important,” writes Barone. “We’re going to sites like Yelp, Google Place Pages, TripAdvisor, etc., to learn about the experiences others had with your brand. Make sure you’re not only doing what you can to encourage customers to leave reviews, but positively responding to any negative or neutral comments that may be there. You not only help save that relationship, but you show everyone else who may find that review in the search results that you’re listening, you care, and that you hear them.”

Bad reviews—even the ones you think are unfair, ill-informed or just plain crazy? Here’s what Megan Totka, editor of Chamber of Commerce, an online magazine, suggests you don’t do:

- **Deny the problem exists.** “When a customer has a complaint, insisting that they’re wrong in a public forum is a big mistake. Even if you’re convinced that the problem was on their end, you should acknowledge the issue.”
- **Argue with the reviewer.** “It’s only natural to feel hurt or angry when someone posts negative criticism about you. But responding in anger could cripple your reputation permanently because information stays on the Internet forever.”
- **Game the system.** “Some business owners, faced with multiple negative reviews, have paid people to write

positive reviews and counter the impact. This is not only a bad idea, but also comes with the likely possibility that you’ll get caught. Some consumer review sites, like Yelp, have systems in place to warn readers of suspected paid reviews.”

- **Do nothing.** “While a few negative comments are obviously the work of people who just like to say nasty things, for the most part, ignoring bad reviews in the hopes they’ll go away is a poor strategy. It sends a message that your business doesn’t care when people have negative experiences.” “Make sure that you respond to any bad review that you have gotten,” agrees Chris Hamilton at Small Business Trends. “Responding to bad reviews is an excellent way to turn a bad situation into a positive situation. If someone isn’t happy with your service, then see what you can do to make it better for them. By responding to bad reviews, you will show others that you are listening and that you do care.” Remember, a bad review isn’t necessarily bad if it identifies a problem needing attention.

- **Apologize and ask for input.** “Most often, the best response to an upset customer is to say you’re sorry without qualifying the apology to redirect the blame toward the reviewer’s feelings. Admit that a mistake was made, and ask what you can do to resolve the situation.”

“Most importantly, keep it consistent,” she advises. “When you actively respond to negative online feedback about your

small business, other potential customers can see that you’re engaged and that you care about your customers. With a consistent response policy, you can turn a bad online review into a positive outlook for your business.”

A bad review can actually add legitimacy to your company’s online reputation, comments Lisa Barone. Nothing but stellar, five star reviews on a website raise suspicion: who wrote these, the owner’s mother? “We don’t trust businesses that appear too good to be true because we know that we’re all human. We all make mistakes. And we all have bad days,” she writes. “If your online reviews are a true reflection of who you are, they’ll account for some of those bad days. The simple fact is we trust a business more if there are at least some negative reviews because it helps us feel like we’re seeing both sides.”

Holiday Vacation Rentals encourages home owners to visit our Facebook page and Google Plus and leave a review about your favorite things about the area. Reviews about the destination will benefit all vacation rental owners in the HVR program.

Sections of this article were republished with permission of the Vacation Rental Manager’s Association.

Why Holiday Vacation Rentals?

Why do more homeowners trust their vacation properties to a professionally managed rental company? To get the best value for their time and money! Our experienced staff handles it all and ensures that your property is well cared for. We provide unmatched value and benefits to homeowners including:

- **Rental income with lower fee options**
- **All inclusive program—no add on costs!**
- **Compliance with state and local regulations**
- **Property care and house-keeping services**
- **Property Damage Protection Insurance**
- **Insurance options to protect the investment that you have in your home**
- **Licensed and insured**
- **24-hour emergency assistance hotline**
- **Advertising on numerous rental websites and directories**
- **Customer list** – we match your home with the right guests from our database of over 10,000 travelers and past renters
- **Selling your home?** Renters sometimes decide to purchase a vacation property they have rented, increasing the potential for sale

- **Professionally trained staff and member of the Vacation Rental Managers Association and BBB**



Each guest arrives to complimentary welcome bags that include cookies, coffee, popcorn and valuable coupons.



Holiday Vacation Rentals

6789 S Lake Shore Dr.
Harbor Springs, MI 49740

Phone: (231) 242-0730

Fax: (231) 242-0735

E-mail:

reservations@holidayvacationrental.com

Visit us on the web!

www.HolidayVacationRental.com

Our mission at **Holiday Vacation Rentals** is to provide guests with memorable vacation experiences, re-book satisfied guests again and again, and to increase rentals for property owners while providing superior services to meet renter and owner needs.

Holiday Vacation Rentals is a family owned and operated full-service management company. We are passionate about our industry and have been working with owners and visitors in Northern Michigan since 2005. Holiday Vacation Rentals is pleased to offer many innovations as part of our goal to remain the best choice for vacation rental services. We are a member of the Vacation Rental Managers Association which is the trusted voice of the professionally managed vacation rental industry. We are also a proud supporter of Discover Vacation Homes online and the new TV series Getting Away Together to increase awareness of the value and convenience of vacation rentals. We have received recognition as a BBB Accredited Business and Rated Excellent Award as a leading vacation rental managers company by Trip Advisor and FlipKey.