

MSR Case Study



AirBedandBreakfast.com is a Website that combines the organic experience of staying with a local while traveling with the efficiency of booking a hotel online. Essentially, the site enables you to book a room exactly the same fashion as you would on Expedia.com or Hotels.com. However, instead of booking a room at a hotel, you are booking a stay with a local resident of whatever city you are visiting.

Not only does this enable folks to book rooms in expensive areas for far less than the cost of a hotel, but also provides a platform for a unique travel experience. By staying with locals, travelers can get the “inside” view of a city, rather than the typical tourist encounter. Additionally, the site enables travelers to attend events when hotels are booked solid.

MSR Communications began working with AirBed&Breakfast in July of 2008. Tasked with launching the site, MSR partnered with the fledgling startup to initiate a media relations campaign that would highlight the site’s ability to enable people to attend events, even when no hotel rooms are available. Additionally, the campaign needed to clearly differentiate AirBed&Breakfast from the competition, and illustrate why it provided a superior experience to Craigslist or CouchSurfing.com. The goal: put AirBed&Breakfast on the map.

MSR began by developing messaging that clearly communicated the advantages of AirBed&Breakfast, focusing particularly on convenience and safety. MSR then executed a media campaign centered on the hotel shortages at the DNC and RNC. First, MSR targeted Denver press and got the word out that folks could rent out their rooms to convention-goers. During this phase MSR secured coverage in the *Denver Post* as well as the local CBS and ABC affiliates. These efforts resulted in more than 900 Denver residents listing their houses on AirBedandBreakfast.com.

Once MSR had generated a decent supply of available rooms in Denver, the agency began a national press push which was equally successful, landing the company in *The New York Times* three times, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Newsweek*, *CNN.com*, *TechCrunch*, Sirius XM Radio, TV Tokyo, and numerous other outlets.

More importantly, however, this coverage has driven consumers to the site. Before the official August 11th announcement of the site, rooms were offered in slightly more than 100 cities, in 25 countries. Now, the site offers rooms in 751 cities in 72 countries around the world. This past summer AirBed&Breakfast was an obscure web site, shared only among friends. Today it is a serious player in the online travel industry, in talks with numerous investors.

“We chose MSR because of its proven media relations expertise enthusiasm for our company. When we first entered the MSR office we were an unknown startup. Now, thanks to MSR’s ability to quickly secure impactful results, our business is growing at a phenomenal pace!”

—Brian Chesky, co-founder of AirBed&Breakfast