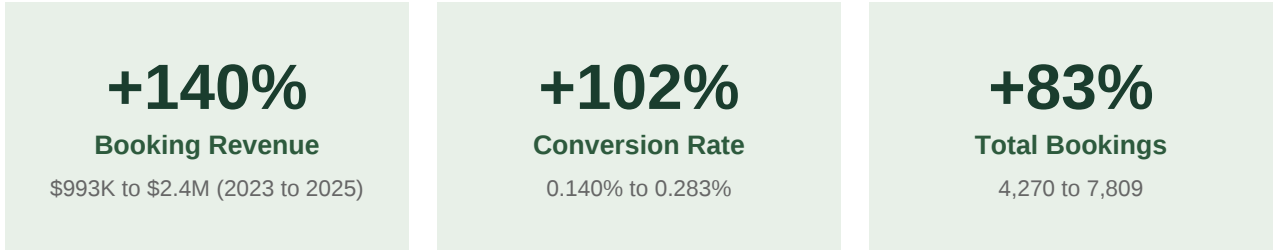


CASE STUDY

CruiseDirect: Rebuilding \$2.4M in Post-COVID Booking Revenue



Client	CruiseDirect
Industry	Online Travel, OTA, Cruise Booking Platform
Services	Paid Search, Performance Max, YouTube, Demand Gen, Display, International Expansion
Engagement	2023 to present (post-COVID recovery and growth)

Background

CruiseDirect is one of the leading online cruise booking platforms, offering travelers access to thousands of cruises from the world's top cruise lines at competitive prices. The COVID-19 pandemic brought the cruise industry to a near-complete standstill, leaving CruiseDirect with depleted traffic, lower conversion rates, and a customer base that needed to be rebuilt from the ground up as consumer confidence returned.

When Evergreen PMG took over paid media in 2023, the brief was to rebuild booking revenue both domestically and internationally as the cruise industry came back online. That meant capturing returning demand efficiently while expanding reach to new audiences who needed to be reintroduced to cruise travel.

The work

Paid Search built around cruise-shopper intent

We built Paid Search around high-intent cruise queries: specific cruise lines, destinations, deal-based terms, and itinerary searches. Tightly themed ad groups paired with relevant landing pages improved Quality Scores and lowered effective CPCs, which drove a consistent pipeline of in-market travelers ready to book.

The cruise category rewards specificity. A searcher looking for "Royal Caribbean Western Caribbean 7-day" is a fundamentally different person than someone searching "cheap cruises 2025," and the account structure needs to reflect that difference at the ad, landing page, and bidding level.

Performance Max for incremental reach

Performance Max campaigns extended coverage across Google's full inventory, including Search, Display, YouTube, Gmail, and Maps. By feeding strong audience signals and creative assets aligned to high-LTV traveler profiles, PMax reached incremental audiences that Search alone couldn't access, contributing meaningfully to booking volume as the account scaled.

Upper-funnel awareness through YouTube and Demand Gen

YouTube and Demand Gen campaigns brought cruise-curious audiences into the funnel earlier in their decision journey. Targeting included travel enthusiasts, past cruise travelers, and in-market vacation planners. These campaigns built brand familiarity and primed audiences for conversion, which shows up clearly in the sustained improvement in booking conversion rate across the engagement.

International expansion beyond the U.S. market

We extended campaigns into international markets to capture cruise demand from global travelers. Localized bidding strategies, geo-targeted campaigns, and market-specific audience signals enabled CruiseDirect to grow its booking base well beyond U.S. domestic traffic.

Results

2023 to 2025

Metric	2023	2024	2025	2-Yr Change
Booking revenue	\$993,436	\$1,897,930	\$2,386,623	+140%
Total bookings	4,270	6,061	7,809	+83%

Conversion rate	0.140%	0.186%	0.283%	+102%
Ad spend	\$659,650	\$1,192,798	\$1,569,280	+138%
ROAS	1.51x	1.59x	1.52x	Stable
Avg. CPC	\$0.22	\$0.37	\$0.57	+159%

A note on ROAS in cruise booking

In cruise booking, ROAS is measured against gross booking value, and agency commissions typically run 10 to 15 percent of that value. Maintaining a stable 1.51x to 1.52x ROAS while nearly doubling booking volume, and doing so in a category where post-COVID CPCs surged 159 percent, represents strong contribution margin at scale.

A note on CPC inflation

Average CPC grew 159 percent across the engagement as the entire travel category recovered and competitive bidding pressure returned. Growing bookings 83 percent in that auction environment is the underlying story behind the topline numbers.

Conversion rate as the leading indicator

Booking conversion rate more than doubled from 0.140 percent to 0.283 percent over two years. That kind of efficiency gain reflects better traffic quality from improved targeting, sharper ad and landing page relevance, and a full-funnel approach that warms audiences before they hit a booking page.

What this engagement demonstrates

Travel and OTA paid media expertise

CruiseDirect operates in one of the most competitive paid search categories, where high-ticket consideration purchases intersect with seasonal demand spikes, international markets, and a long path-to-purchase. We manage paid media across that full landscape.

Conversion rate as a primary KPI, not a vanity metric

Booking conversion rate doubling is what separates a paid media account that scales sustainably from one that just spends more. The numbers here reflect a program designed to convert better at every step, not one designed to chase volume.

Recovery and growth in volatile categories

Post-COVID travel recovery wasn't linear, and the cruise category specifically faced unique consumer confidence challenges. Rebuilding booking revenue 140 percent in this environment required active campaign management rather than set-and-forget automation.

Work with Evergreen PMG

Evergreen PMG runs paid media for high-consideration purchase categories where booking, conversion, and full-funnel attribution all matter. We work on a flat monthly fee with no media markups and no long-term contracts.

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