



CASE STUDY: LINCOLN PROPERTY COMPANY & COMMUNITYSHERPA



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. Clients may also feature sections highlighting amenities, leasing information, the management team, and a gallery of images. Monthly reports detail traffic and leads, referral activity and member information for measuring retention among users.



**Apartment
Finder™**
ApartmentFinder.com





BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Lincoln Property Company was founded in 1965 for the purpose of building and operating quality residential communities. Since then, Lincoln has grown to be the fifth largest property manager in the United States, with over 130,000 apartment units currently under management. Lincoln enjoys a strong national reputation of providing best-in class property management services. In fact, more than 70% of Lincoln’s apartment management portfolio is comprised of fee management accounts for third party investors. This is a reflection of Lincoln’s unique value proposition, which includes an experienced management team, effective employee recruiting and training processes, state-of-the-art systems support, and a comprehensive national marketing plan for each of its 350 apartment communities under management. Lincoln’s marketing plans include traditional, offline channels and, more recently, place a greater emphasis on reaching its online audiences. In the Fall of 2009, Lincoln encountered problems executing a key component of their online marketing plan - social media:

“We recognized that social media was critical for resident retention and creating a sense of community, but we simply did not have enough internal resources to dedicate to it.”

-Jennifer Staciokas
Vice President - Marketing & Training

Understanding this challenge, the national Apartment Finder sales team introduced CommunitySherpa to Staciokas and Scott Wilder, Sr. Vice President of Residential Management. Immediately, both executives recognized its potential and identified 72 apartment communities to implement in late 2009 and have added another 48 so far this year, creating an impressive, national social media footprint in a relatively short time.

LINCOLN PROPERTIES ROLLOUT SCHEDULE

MONTH	NUMBER OF CS PROGRAMS LAUNCHED
SEPTEMBER 2009	46
OCTOBER 2009	8
NOVEMBER 2009	8
DECEMBER 2009	9
JANUARY 2010	12
FEBRUARY 2010	10
MARCH 2010	21
APRIL 2010	1
MAY 2010	5
	120

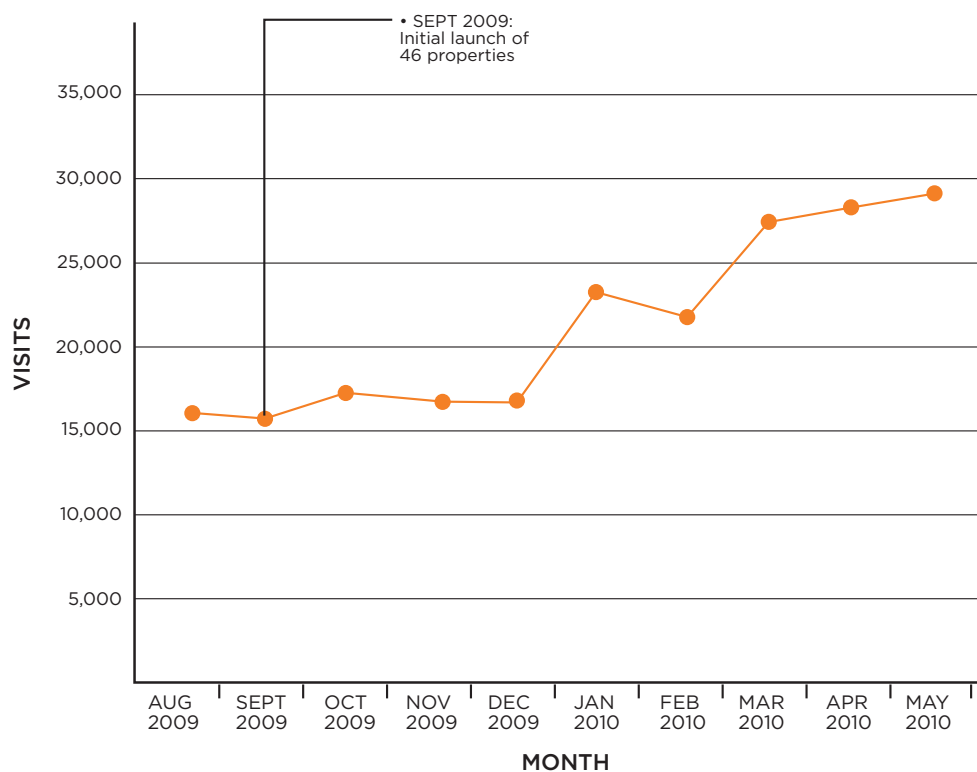
LINCOLN PROPERTY COMPANY
a company for people. a company about people.



RESULTS

Soon after the initial implementation in the Fall of 2009, Google and other search engines began noticing an increase in links, content and overall web activity related to Lincoln. As expected, their search algorithms began to view the corporate site (www.lincolnapts.com) as more relevant, which resulted in higher page rankings for more keyword searches and a steady increase in natural (non-paid) search traffic finding the site. Below is a graph that illustrates the increase in non-paid visits from search engines to lincolnapts.com. The relatively flat line from October to December represents the time it took the search engines to index and associate the new content with Lincoln (in this case, approximately 8 weeks). Once that began to occur, the resulting increase is dramatic:

GROWTH IN ORGANIC (NON-PAID) SEARCH TRAFFIC



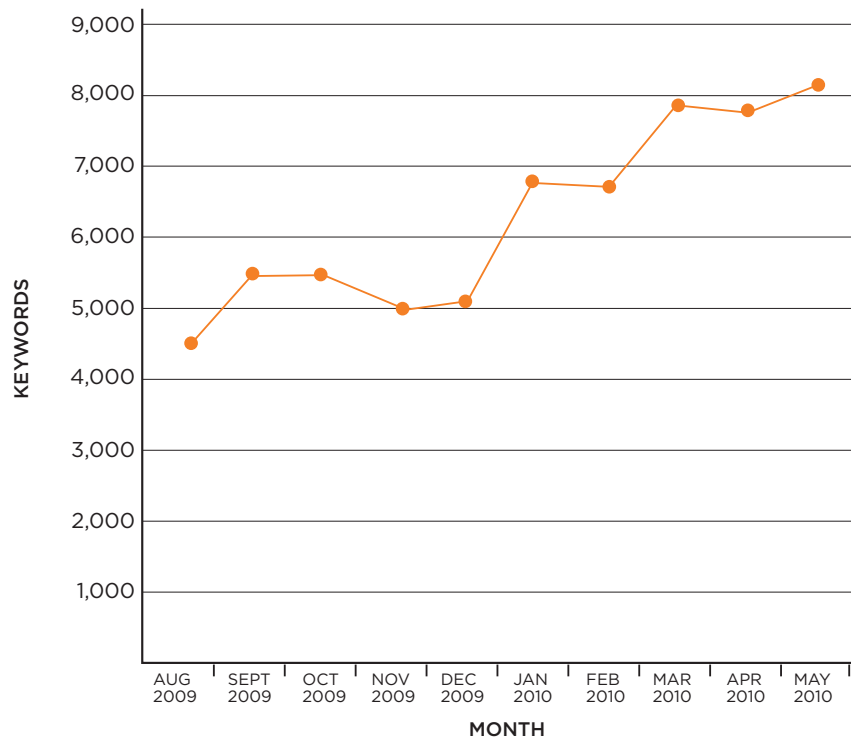
It is important to note that there were no site enhancements to lincolnapts.com during this time period and CommunitySherpa was the only major online marketing initiative.

Also interesting, is the growth in the number of keywords being used to find lincolnapts.com. By expanding the breadth of content associated with their brand, Lincoln has been able to reach new audiences that may likely represent future residents. The following chart illustrates a steady increase in the number of unique keywords that resulted in natural search generated site visit. This trend will continue as more blogs are rolled out.



RESULTS

NUMBER OF KEYWORDS USED TO FIND LINCOLNAPTS.COM



In addition to driving new prospects to their web site, CommunitySherpa provides an innovative way to improve resident retention. While it is still too early to present concrete data, Lincoln reports that many of their properties have seen higher participation in resident activities since launching the platform. Residents are actively engaging with each other and leveraging the platform to form lasting relationships, and offer support to one another:

“Residents are now able to interact with their neighbors and it is not facilitated by us; we had a great example at the Goodwynn in Atlanta where the residents joined together when they found out a fellow resident had breast cancer.”

-Jennifer Staciokas
Vice President - Marketing & Training

Based on these results, Lincoln is aggressively marketing the CommunitySherpa platform to all its property owners this year and plans to implement it with as many properties as possible.



SUCCESS FACTORS

As one of NCI's first CommunitySherpa customers, Lincoln has identified 3 critical success factors for the CommunitySherpa program.

- 1. Executive support.** Lincoln's executive team recognized social media was a critical component to their marketing plan and effectively communicated its benefits to their leasing offices.
- 2. Leasing office participation.** Lincoln's leasing professionals and property managers understand that CommunitySherpa helps increase leads and retain residents. They include it as an amenity when speaking to prospective residents, and leverage it to cultivate relationships with existing residents. In addition to the weekly posts, Lincoln's property managers typically update postings at least 2 to 4 times per month with important information such as property enhancements, resident news and upcoming social events. According to Lincoln, the platform provides an extra line of communication and improves relationships between residents and the leasing office.
- 3. Relevant content.** NCI's CommunitySherpa Online Content Managers (OCMs) work with each property on an individual basis to create unique content tailored specifically to their residents. Blog entries are designed to improve the life of residents, and range from health and nutrition tips, money saving ideas, special offers, local events, to restaurant recommendations. Each OCM has a unique writing style and works closely with the property to select topics that will help them cultivate a loyal and engaged audience.

"All levels of the Lincoln organization have embraced the CommunitySherpa social media platform as a means to engage both current and prospective residents online. As a result, our content is extremely relevant and we are seeing increased traffic to our corporate and community websites. We look forward to expanding our social footprint by leveraging this digital asset to more of our communities."

-Scott Wilder
SR Vice President - Residential Management



PRODUCT SAMPLE

Below are screen shots of an actual CommunitySherpa blog, Facebook and Twitter page for St. Andrews Apartment Homes, a Lincoln property located in Augusta, GA:



REFERENCE SITES

Below is a listing of all current Lincoln Property Company's CommunitySherpa blog sites. For more information on Lincoln Property Company, please visit: lincolnapts.com. For more information about CommunitySherpa, please visit: community-sherpa.com or contact your Apartment Finder sales team.

- blog.1050lenoxpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.1401southstate.lincolnapts.com
- blog.5thstreetcrossingatgarlandstation.lincolnapts.com
- blog.altaatkstation.lincolnapts.com
- blog.belmontparkbridge.lincolnapts.com
- blog.bishopsview.lincolnapts.com
- blog.brickcove.lincolnapts.com
- blog.canyonpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.carringtonpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.cityplacewestport.lincolnapts.com
- blog.colonnadeatwillowbend.lincolnapts.com
- blog.copperspringapts.lincolnapts.com
- blog.corbincrossing.lincolnapts.com
- blog.cumberlandcrossing.lincolnapts.com
- blog.cypresspoint.lincolnapts.com
- blog.deervalley.lincolnapts.com
- blog.desototowncenter.lincolnapts.com
- blog.eastbridge.lincolnapts.com
- blog.eastwoodonhenderson.lincolnapts.com
- blog.echelonatkstation.lincolnapts.com
- blog.edgewood.lincolnapts.com
- blog.firestoneupperwestside.lincolnapts.com
- blog.flandershill.lincolnapts.com
- blog.flats130.lincolnapts.com
- blog.fountainview.lincolnapts.com
- blog.glenlakeclub.lincolnapts.com
- blog.glenridgewalk.lincolnapts.com
- blog.glenviewhouse.lincolnapts.com
- blog.greensatedinburgh.lincolnapts.com
- blog.greystoneatwidewaters.lincolnapts.com
- blog.halstead.lincolnapts.com
- blog.hamiltonridge.lincolnapts.com
- blog.haverly.lincolnapts.com
- blog.homesofprairiesprings.lincolnapts.com
- blog.inmanpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.jeffersonatbellingham.lincolnapts.com
- blog.jeffersonatsalemstation.lincolnapts.com
- blog.jeffersonatwesttown.lincolnapts.com
- blog.kendallcreek.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lakeatjamesplace.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lakeridgemoors.lincolnapts.com
- blog.latitudesmoors.lincolnapts.com
- blog.laurelcanyon.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lavistacrossing.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lincolnlakeside.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lincolnascolinas.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lincolnparkfortworth.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lincolntrinitybluff.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lincolnwoods.lincolnapts.com
- blog.mainstreetvillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.marinerslanding.lincolnapts.com
- blog.maroneal.lincolnapts.com
- blog.masonvale.lincolnapts.com
- blog.merrittriver.lincolnapts.com
- blog.midtowncommons.lincolnapts.com
- blog.mirage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.mirasolatcelebration.lincolnapts.com
- blog.montclairresidencesatbaystreetstation.lincolnapts.com
- blog.mountlaurelcrossing.lincolnapts.com
- blog.mustangpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.northbridgevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.oakwoodvillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.parklake.lincolnapts.com
- blog.parksidebuckhead.lincolnapts.com
- blog.phoenician.lincolnapts.com
- blog.pikecreek.lincolnapts.com
- blog.plymouthsquareat37.lincolnapts.com
- blog.promenadoaks.lincolnapts.com
- blog.reservelenoxpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.riverheights.lincolnapts.com
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- blog.thebendinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.theberkeley.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thechaseinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.cliffsandbluffs.lincolnapts.com
- blog.ascotglen.lincolnapts.com
- blog.cornersdallas.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thedakotainthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.estatesliving.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thefountainsatmemorialcity.lincolnapts.com
- blog.gateinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.goodwynnattown.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thegreeninthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.highlandsoverlandpark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thehillinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thejuliana.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lakesinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lincolnatfairoaks.lincolnapts.com
- blog.lodgeatsouthpoint.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thelodgeatspringshadows.lincolnapts.com
- blog.themansionsatdelmar.lincolnapts.com
- blog.meadowinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.overlookatlindbergh.lincolnapts.com
- blog.parkcitywest.lincolnapts.com
- blog.parkinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.theplaceonmillenia.lincolnapts.com
- blog.reservesugarloaf.lincolnapts.com
- blog.residencesatsevendables.lincolnapts.com
- blog.theridge.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thesavoy.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thetriopalisadespark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thevenue.lincolnapts.com
- blog.villageatpotomacfalls.lincolnapts.com
- blog.thornberrywoods.lincolnapts.com
- blog.towncentrelexington.lincolnapts.com
- blog.treetopsapts.lincolnapts.com
- blog.bogeyhills.lincolnapts.com
- blog.villasatoldconcord.lincolnapts.com
- blog.waterfordplace.lincolnapts.com
- blog.westsideinthevillage.lincolnapts.com
- blog.woodbridge.lincolnapts.com
- blog.woodburypark.lincolnapts.com
- blog.woodmontmews.lincolnapts.com