



Who they are

- Happy Hound Play & Daycare
- www.happyhound.com
- Oakland, California
- 33 employees
- Boutique-style daycare and boarding for dogs



What they did

- Started with **Google AdWords** in 2004
- Set up a campaign for each service
- Fine-tuned geographic targeting options to reach a local audience
- Tracked leads through client applications

What they needed

- To get a new business off the ground
- To grow their customer base
- To target customers in their local market

What they accomplished

- **Grew business:** Are now at maximum capacity for daycare and boarding
 - **Solid customer base:** Cater to loyal group of local clients
 - **Consistent leads:** Acquire 40 new clients a month through Google AdWords
 - **New horizons:** Plan to expand geographically
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Woman's Best Friend

Dog daycare and boarding facility Happy Hound gets 90% of its business through Google AdWords.

Dogs allowed

"I've always been crazy about animals," Suzanne Golter explains amid a chorus of enthusiastic barking – the soundtrack to a typical day at Happy Hound. "I grew up with two horses, a cow, a goat, five dogs, and a bunch of cats. And it was my job to take care of them." After 20 years in sales and marketing, Suzanne finally got the chance to return to her roots. She points to the dozing Dalmatian curled up at her feet. "Rennie absolutely loved her drop-in doggy daycare back in Los Angeles," Suzanne recalls, "but when we moved up to the Bay Area eight years ago, I couldn't find that same type of positive environment. So I thought, 'Hey, maybe there's a business opportunity here.'"

In March 2004, Suzanne rented out a warehouse in Oakland and opened Happy Hound, a boutique-style daycare and boarding facility for canines of all shapes and sizes. "My mission is to ensure the happiness, comfort, and health of each and every client – both dogs and humans," she says. "I decided to use a state-of-the-art ventilation system, environmentally-friendly cleaning products, and a webcam so people can keep tabs on their pals throughout the day."



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"On average, we get 40 new clients a month through AdWords, along with almost as many applicants we can't accept right away. Overall, AdWords generates 90 percent of our business."

Suzanne Golter, founder, Happy Hound

Fetching clients

"Those first few days, it was just me and my two dogs in a huge warehouse," Suzanne remembers. "They needed new playmates and I needed some business." So she turned to the Internet to reach her market: working professionals who want nothing but the best for their loyal companions. "I knew that my target clients don't open the Yellow Pages – they go on the Web. Because that's what I would do."

Suzanne signed up with Google AdWords™ shortly after kickoff. "Right here at my desk, I set up my primary means of advertising in one sitting," she says. "As the founder of a new local business, I had to wear a lot of hats. AdWords let me do my marketing all by myself." Rennie the Dalmatian gives her a wounded look. "Of course, how could I forget – my dogs came up with most of the ads and keywords."

"At first, I set my geographic targeting options so my ads showed as far as Sacramento," Suzanne continues. "I got so many calls I didn't know what to do!"

About Google AdWords

Google AdWords™ is a performance-based advertising program that enables businesses large and small to advertise on Google and its network of partner websites. Hundreds of thousands of businesses worldwide use AdWords for text, image, and video ads priced on a cost-per-click (CPC) and cost-per-impression (CPM) basis. Built on an auction-based system, AdWords is a highly quantifiable and cost-effective way to reach potential customers. For more information, visit <http://adwords.google.com>



So I scaled back and focused my resources on the Oakland-San Jose area. I like that flexibility. When I expand, I'll just broaden the region I target with AdWords."

Best in show

Since launching Happy Hound, Suzanne has tried out other advertising methods, but Google AdWords has stood the test of time. "I've tried running print ads in dog-related magazines with national circulation," she says. "They were expensive and inefficient, especially for a local business like Happy Hound. AdWords has been my most effective means of advertising since the beginning – which is why it gets 90 percent of my advertising budget. And it even works nicely with our other main source of business: word-of-mouth. People tell their friends about Happy Hound, they go and type it into Google, and our ad comes up."

"Given the nature of my business, it's very easy to track exactly where my leads are coming from," Suzanne continues. "Prospective clients are required to fill out an application with a question about how they found us. On average, we get 40 new clients a month through AdWords, along with almost as many applicants we can't accept right away. Overall, AdWords generates 90 percent of our business."

Groomed for success

Today, Happy Hound rarely has vacancy. Its 33 employees provide care, supervision, exercise, and fun to roughly 120 dogs per day and 30 per night. Suzanne plans to open new locations based on the same conviction: dogs and people alike deserve convenient and customized services that accommodate their lifestyles. "That philosophy – along with Google AdWords – has put us ahead of the pack."

