

2014 Season Statistics

BOOKINGS

Bookings this season were up modestly from last year.

	<i>Cape Cod</i>	<i>Martha's Vineyard</i>	<i>Nantucket</i>
Season to date vs. 2013	+0.7%	+2.3%	+0.4%
Summer 10 weeks vs. 2013	-0.5%	+4.6%	+1.3%
Fall to date vs. 2013	+3.7%	+2.5%	+13.0%

RENTAL RATES

- Early booking season pricing experienced *the largest price increase in our 16-year history*:
 - Cape owners increased their initial 2014 prices 2.3% or \$63/week
 - Vineyard prices went up 3.5% or \$120/week
 - Nantucket prices up 4.3% or \$206/week
- During the season, prices dropped: Cape .6% or \$15; Vineyard: .5% or \$16 and Nantucket .8% or \$40.
- Average prices are now: Cape: \$2,573; Vineyard: \$3,571; Nantucket: \$4,815.

Miscellaneous 2014 Season Statistics

- In the height of the season with 3500 listings, 2/3 of our listings are **year-round listings**.
- **798 Last-Minute Availability Alerts** were purchased during the summer 2014 (vs 488 in 2013).
 - 2013: Properties received a 61% increase in email inquiries and 36% increase in property views with Alert vs. 2 weeks prior to the Alert week.
 - 2014: Properties received a *126% increase in email inquiries and 96% increase in property views* with Alert vs. 2 weeks prior to the Alert week.
- In a recent survey of vacationers:
 - 94% said they are more likely to inquire about a home with several positive **guest reviews** and one negative one with a reasonable homeowner response, versus a listing with no reviews at all.
 - Over 30% would not even inquire about a property with **NO guest reviews**.
 - 61% would be more likely to write a **guest review** if asked by the homeowner.
 - **Pictures:**
 - i. 56% would not even inquire if a listing's **pictures** are dark or grainy.
 - ii. Over 90% believe it's either "very important" or "important" to view interior pictures of all bedrooms, all bathrooms, kitchen (over 99%), living room (98%), dining room, front of house, deck/porch/patio (99%), and water view (if one).
 - 86% think a **map** showing their exact location is essential or very important.
 - 94% love (50%) or like (45%) that we're a **small, family-owned business**.
 - 65% rated their **experience with WeNeedaVacation.com** excellent, and 26% rated it above average.
 - 51% feel that the **homeowner should contact them** shortly after their arrival.
 - 85% want a **home stocked** with paper goods, soaps, and kitchen supplies.
 - 81% want resources about **local attractions and activities**.
 - The fact that our rentals are focused only on the Cape & Islands and that our staff all live or own homes here matters to 56% of vacationers who said they love that **we're local experts**, 36% did not realize but say they like it, and only 8% don't think this matters.
 - 94% value that we've been in business for over 16 years.
- Our website data indicates that the **most searched-for amenities** are:

Walk to beach	1	42.6%
Water view	2	24.5%
Washer/Dryer	3	23.3%
A/C	4	21.7%
On water	5	20.7%
Deck/Porch/Patio	6	17.9%
On beach	7	17.8%
High speed Web	8	17.6%
Cable TV	9	15.4%
Outdoor shower	10	13.0%
Dishwasher	11	12.5%
Pets considered	12	11.9%
Linens included	13	6.9%

The Ideal Listing

Your listing allows you to *market* your property by presenting your home and its setting as inviting, welcoming, and relaxing. A well-written, carefully thought-out and informative listing gives a positive impression of both the home and of you, the owner.

Pictures and video

- They should provide a complete overview of your home. At a minimum, include an exterior
- front shot, living room, dining room/area, kitchen, at least one bedroom (MBR),
- porch/deck/patio, sunroom, back yard – and a beach picture!
- Pictures should be of good quality and *as large as possible*. Poor resolution can indicate a dark, shabby, unattractive property – even if it isn't!
- Stage your scenes by setting the table, adding flowers, opening doors, turning on lights, etc. (No personal effects or people in the pictures.)
- Video is an excellent enhancement, especially if your property has expansive views.
- Include video of both your home and your surroundings.

Captions

- They should be as informative and descriptive as possible.
- Use adjectives to set the tone and influence the viewer.

Guest reviews

- Post as many as possible and be sure to add current ones each year.
- Take advantage of our Request Form feature to solicit new reviews.
- Don't wait too long after your tenants have left to ask them for a review.

Title

- Highlight your property's greatest asset(s).
- Set the tone for your property.
- Be specific, inviting and descriptive.
- Include words that optimize your visibility on search engines (e.g, the name of your nearest beach).

Property Description

Describe what makes your place unique. Include information on *all three* of these topics:

1. The **interior** of the house itself including a general description and layout of the rooms and bed configurations as well as any special, individual amenities.
2. The **immediate setting** including your porch/deck/patio; yard; immediate neighborhood; and any nice views or water access if applicable.
3. The **general location** including your proximity to beaches and other area attractions such as restaurants, shopping, ferries, golf, bike trails, playgrounds, etc.

Do's

- Use complete, flowing sentences rather than short phrases and abbreviations.
- Describe your home and its environment accurately. It is better to have tenants be pleasantly surprised than disappointed upon their arrival.
- Double check for typos or grammar or punctuation mistakes, which can be off-putting to prospective tenants.

Don't's

- Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS or excessive exclamation points.
- Avoid filling your web page with pricing policies and restrictions; your goal in this section is to encourage inquiries about your home. Legal and other business issues should be stipulated in your lease, not your listing.

Pricing and Availability Calendar

- *Keep it up to date regularly* by clicking "Submit" – even if there haven't been any changes. This automatically displays the current date, assuring vacationers that all information is accurate.
- Make sure there are no odd checkmarks midweek, and do not check as unavailable the day of the tenants' departure.

Owner Special

- Be specific about what you are offering.
- *If you are advertising a discounted price in your Owner Special, be sure to adjust your calendar to reflect the new price.*
- Give vacationers an incentive to book sooner rather than later.
- Make it intriguing so that vacationers are persuaded to view your full listing.
- Be sure to keep your offer current and appropriate to the time of year.

Last-minute Availability Alert

- Use the Alert to further highlight availability within the next four weeks of posting.
- It's most effective when used in conjunction with an Owner Special.
- Be sure to reflect any price reduction on your calendar, too.
- The feature displays an icon on the Power Search results page and on the town property directory page, as well as on your actual listing.


Contact information

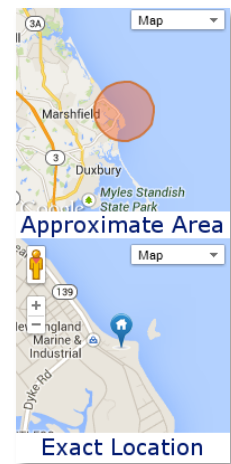
- Be sure your contact information is always current and accurate and includes at least one phone number and email address.

Guide to Successfully Managing Your Vacation Rental

- **Communicate** adequately with the vacationer before, during and after their stay.
- When **screening** tenants, convey an accurate, if not conservative, description of your home in order to manage their expectations.
- Try to offer some of the most **popular amenities** (WIFI, cable TV, etc.) and beware of the “silent killers” (no guest reviews, nothing larger than a double bed). Help them to beat the heat by providing fans, de-humidifiers, and screens in good condition.
- Use the **Booking Management** system to track all documents/payments, keep notes on your vacationers, and prevent double bookings.
- Make sure your **lease** covers you adequately. If you have any unusual check-out expectations of them, be sure they are mentioned in the lease or at some point prior to their arrival.
- Is your **payment schedule** fair (not too aggressive, nor too lenient)?
- Set up your **professional team**: housekeeping/trash/landscaping/home repairs/pest control, etc.
- Provide those **extra touches**: welcome gifts, a well-equipped kitchen, paper products, rainy day activities, etc.
- Leave a **Welcome Letter/Book** not only to convey a personal tone of welcome, but also to point out where things are kept, any specific instructions on how things work in your home, and also what your expectations of your guests are upon check out.
- Provide information about your area: Download and print a copy of our **Cape & Islands Guidebook** providing information about local beaches, activities, restaurants, etc.
- Be compulsive about **cleanliness** – many vacationers are.
- Return **security deposits** as soon as possible.
- Request **guest reviews** immediately after returning the security deposit.

Marketing Checklist to Increase Bookings and Revenue

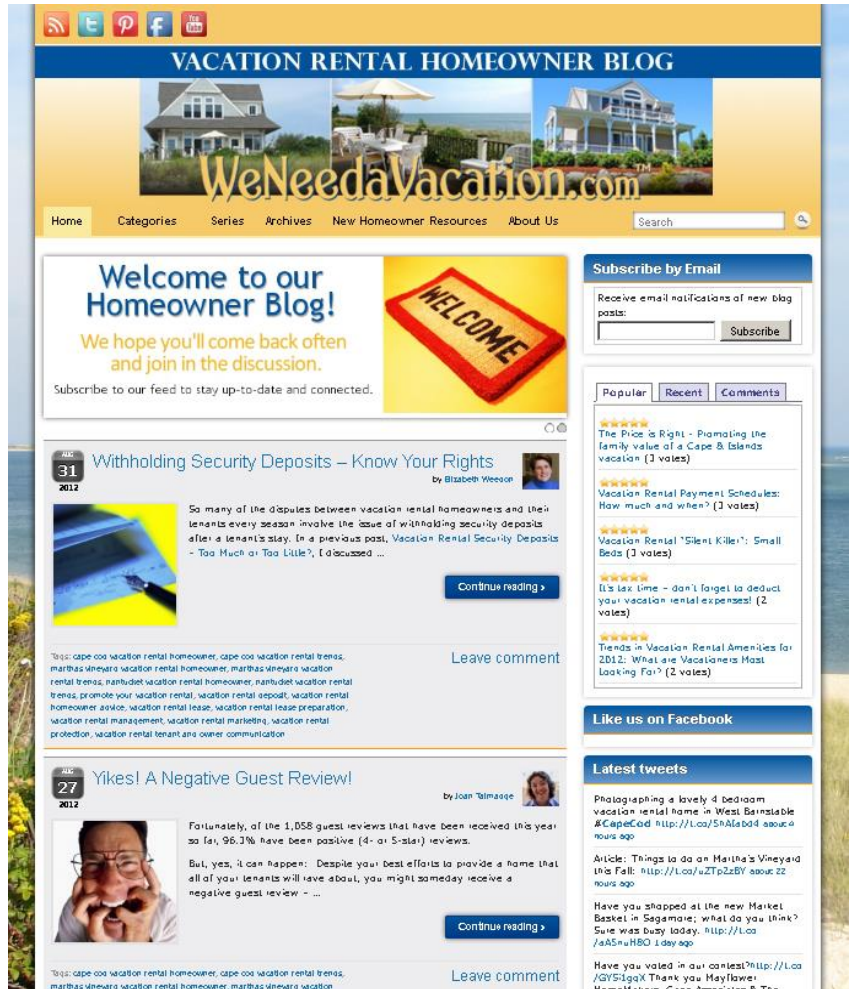
- Provide as many large and high-quality pictures as possible. And video, too.
- Enter descriptive and informative captions for your pictures.
- Add as many and as current guest reviews as possible, preferably vacationer-entered.
- Make sure your Title and Property Description are informative, descriptive, and well-written.
- Enable the zoom option on your GoogleMap feature. 
- Set up an Owner Special or Last-minute Availability Alert, if needed.
- Keep the date stamp on your calendar current.
- Contact your former tenants and/or past inquirers.
- Take advantage of social media.
- If possible, offer as many of the most popular amenities as possible (A/C, WIFI, king/queen bed, cable TV, outside shower)
- Employ management techniques that engender positive reviews and repeat tenants.



WeNeedaVacation.com Homeowner Blog

<http://blog.weneedavacation.com/>

- **A valuable resource for you** – our authors are our staff, Cape & Islands homeowners themselves, who write specifically for the vacation rental industry
- **Get advice tailored to the season** – we provide advice on screening your tenants during the winter, for example, and handling early bookings in the fall
- **Find the information you need** – search our blog archives by keyword, category, or tag. If it's not there, let us know, and we'll write about it!
- **Join in the discussion** – by commenting on posts, homeowners create a community for sharing information and ideas
- **Learn more about our staff** – read our author biographies to learn more about some of the people behind the voices of our Homeowner Support Team



WeNeedaVacation.com Homeowner Blog

It's easy to stay up-to-date! New posts are published 2 - 4 times a month.

Subscribe by email:

New posts are automatically delivered to your inbox.



Subscribe by RSS:

New posts are automatically delivered to your favorite RSS feed reader.



Bookmark the front page:

In most browsers, simply right click on any part of the front page that is not hyperlinked, and click "Save to Favorites" or "Bookmark This Page." Visit often to see our recent posts.

We invite you to send us your burning questions and ideas for future posts!

Social Media Marketing for Your Vacation Rental

WeNeedaVacation.com is very active on each of these social networks to promote vacation rentals!



Social networking is the fastest and least expensive way to market on the Internet. They:

- Empower you to encourage your friends to spread the word about your listing
- Encourage vacationers to remember your listing via "share" and "favorite"
- Encourage a medium for you to communicate with other homeowners
- Drive traffic to WeNeedaVacation.com, which also benefits you

Here's how you can participate:

Facebook




1. "Like" your WeNeedaVacation.com property listing by clicking the Facebook thumbs-up "Like" button on your listing page. This will post a link and picture to your rental on your Facebook wall for all of your friends to see.

2. Add a message that says "Invite your friends, come rent our fantastic house.

Book by December 1st for 2015 prices!"



3. Use the "share" option on your listing to choose from several other social media sites to share your listing. If you choose the Facebook option, you can choose where on Facebook to post your property. Perhaps you belong to a group. Find our business page and like it!

 **Pinterest:** The fastest growing, popular visual site focused on pictures, videos, and all things beautiful.

1. Create a Pinboard for your rental: Click "Create boards," and then on the Create Your First Pinboards page, click "Add," select a category, and click "Create."
2. Install the "Pin it" button to your bookmarks bar. This can be done by clicking on the "About" tab, choosing "Pin it Button" and then dragging the "Pin It" button shown to your Bookmarks bar.
3. Go to your WeNeedaVacation.com listing, and click the "Pin it" button for the most beautiful pictures on your listing. Keep in mind that the secret to success on Pinterest is BEAUTIFUL. Once you choose which of your pictures you would like to pin, they will appear on your chosen pin board. Be sure to pin other interesting pictures (check out our galleries on WeNeedaVacation.com - <http://www.weneedavacation.com/Cape-Cod/Photos/Photo-Galleries/>) that will give potential renters a visual of activities/restaurants/beaches that are near your rental property. Write a brief but concise description of the picture. Remember that this description stays with the picture as it travels around Pinterest. This picture will link to your property listing!
4. Stay active on Pinterest by liking, following, commenting and re-pinning. Please visit our Pinterest page – "WeNeedaVacation.com Cape Cod"


YouTube

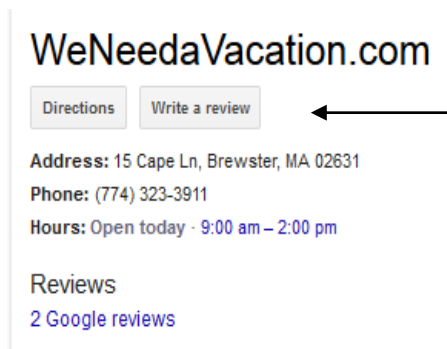
1. YouTube is the second most popular search engine behind Google. And...Google owns YouTube, so this site is powerful!
2. Check out our YouTube channel - WeNeedaVacation.com. We have uploaded many Cape and Islands town videos as well as property videos that we produced. If you would like us to create a video for you or add your video to our channel, contact Becky@weneedavacation.com
3. Once you have a video on YouTube, be sure to use the “Share” button to spread the word and show it to many people via Facebook, email, Twitter.

Google+

1. Google+ is Google’s social media site. While Google+ has been a bit criticized for being difficult to use, it is getting better, and it’s Google, so it’s important to be present there.
2. If you have an @gmail email account, then you probably have a Google+ page, whether you created it or not. If you want to build your Google+ profile, great. You will be encouraged to do this when you login to Google.



3. Easiest way to promote your rental is to use the  button on your listing. Click it, and your listing will be posted.
- 4.



Google+ reviews are powerful, as Google credits sites and pages with reviews. If you use Google+ or have a gmail account, please consider taking 5 minutes to write a review for our site. You can find us by going to Google, searching “Weneedavacation.com map” and look for the “Write a Review” box.

WeNeedaVacation.com Blog

1. We have written over 100 posts of valuable homeowner information, each searchable by topic.
2. We publish 2 – 4 blog entries per month, and all past entries are always available. Please visit the Blog at <http://blog.weneedavacation.com>, feel free to post a comment, and let us know if you have ideas for future articles!
3. You can subscribe to receive notifications when new posts are published.

We are available to help you with these social media outlets. Please contact Becky@weneedavacation.com if you need assistance promoting your rental home.

Vacation Planner

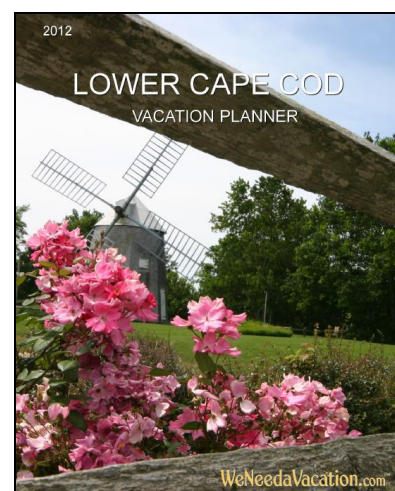
Overview

The Cape & Islands Vacation Planner highlights hundreds of businesses, allowing vacationers to search by region or town for dining, shopping, activities, and more. Some recent enhancements that promote vacationer engagement include:

- Reviews submitted by vacationers and homeowners
- Favorites and sharing capabilities
- Annual Guidebooks by region for you to leave for your tenants
- Daily listings of events by town



Vacation Planner



Regional Guidebook

How does this help vacation rentals?

- **Increases WeNeedaVacation's presence** – become known as the year-round Cape & Islands site for visitors (and locals too!)
- **Creates a stickier site** – encourages website visitors to return to the site not just to find their rental each year, but to help plan their vacation before and during their stays.
- **Promotes your town** – prospective tenants searching for rentals are often interested in what is nearby (restaurants, things to do, beaches, etc.).
- **Creates a more social experience** – the vacation planner, coordinated with our Facebook and Twitter pages, creates a community for sharing information and ideas.

The BEACON Room

★★★★★ 1 review
23 West Road, Orleans MA
(508) 255-2211
www.beaconroom.com
email
menu \$\$
Categories: Casual Dining

About Beacon Room... Often described as 'cozy', this casual yet elegant restaurant offers classic as well as creative cuisine in what was once a small cottage! Relax and enjoy the atmosphere while dining on some of the specialties which include Pan Seared Filet, creamy Parmesan risotto, Chicken Saltimbocca and Fish Tacos. The menu is varied and delicious... [show more](#)

[Save to My Favorites](#) [Write a review](#)

Sort By: **Date** | Rating

Reviews (1 review total)

Dana R., Waltham, MA
1 review
Member since [unreadable]

Wonderful atmosphere - delicious food!
★★★★★
6/7/2011
I dined at The Beacon Room a couple of weeks ago and had a wonderful experience with the food, staff and relaxed atmosphere.

Sample Business Page

Past Tenant Communications

Following up with past tenants is highly recommended, both to solicit valuable feedback on their stay and to encourage them to return the next year.

Guest Review Request

You can send past tenants a request to write a review on your property by either using the pre-defined email template or by creating and saving an email of your own. The feature makes it easy for you to request the feedback after each tenant leaves, and provides a direct link to your property's guest review form.


Property ID# 2007

Dear Paula,

We hope you enjoyed your stay at our property recently. We would really appreciate your taking a moment to provide feedback on how your stay was, what you enjoyed most, and any suggestions that could help us improve a future stay for you and other guests.

Please submit your feedback by clicking the "Write a Review" button below.

Write a Review ▶

Thank you for your time,
John



[Property ID #2007](#)

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Past Tenant Email


Prior to the next rental season, we encourage you to reach out to your past tenants and inquirers using the Past Tenant Email form.

Emails are customized by you, the homeowner, include a link to your property listing, and may include your 1st property photo and a 4-month calendar preview

Email Creation / Edit
Preview & Send
Email History


Displaying 1 of 32 emails [Send All](#)

Subject: Cape Rental for Summer 2010


Property ID# 8727

Dear Jim,

We are offering our vacation rental home in Brewster to our previous tenants first at a discounted price. Book by February 15th and take \$250 off the weekly rental price. Please see our calendar availability below.



Price	JUNE 2010							Price	JULY 2010						
	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F		Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F
\$2,000				2	3	4		\$2,100							
\$2,000	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	\$2,700	1	2	3	4	5	6	
\$2,000	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	\$2,900	11	12	13	14	15	16	
\$2,700	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	\$2,700	17	18	19	20	21	22	
\$2,700	26	27	28	29	30			\$3,000	24	25	26	27	28	29	
								\$3,000	31						

Price	AUGUST 2010							Price	SEPTEMBER 2010						
	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F		Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F
\$3,000								\$2,700							
\$3,000	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	\$2,000	4	5	6	7	8	9	
\$3,000	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	\$2,000	11	12	13	14	15	16	
\$3,000	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	\$2,000	18	19	20	21	22	23	
\$3,000	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	\$2,000	25	26	27	28	29	30	
\$2,700	29	30	31					\$2,000	28	29	30	31			

For more information and photos, please click here: [PropertyID #8727](#)

Available
Booked
Not specified

* calendar availability as of 1/29/2010 - click [here](#) for full calendar

Please call or email me with any questions.

Best,

Mark Jones
508-222-1212
mark.jones@email.com

Past Tenant Communications

Improve your rental business



Photography

Video

Consultation

Create a strong first impression with bright, clear pictures

Showcase and enhance the strengths of your property with dynamic video

Benefit from insights and recommendations by a professional

Give your property the competitive edge

Respond to the growing demand from vacationers for more and better multimedia

Proven success stories from delighted homeowners



The photography, video and consultation services may be combined for a reduced price.

Please contact Becky Fischer for more information and a free quote.

Becky@WeNeedaVacation.com 508.785.5484

Marketing Efforts on Cape Cod, Nantucket & Martha's Vineyard - 2014

1. Press and Public Relations

Known as local Cape and Islands experts, WeNeedaVacation.com has been featured this year in Boston Business Journal, Boston Herald, Boston Globe Magazine, Bloomberg Business Radio, Fox25 News, the Cape Cod Times and The Cape Codder.

In the past, our press includes TV news reports for CNBC, WCVB-TV Channel 5, WBZ CBS Channel 4, and NECN (the New England Cable Network), and on WCVB-TV Channel 5's [Chronicle](#). We have also been featured in *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Coastal Living*, *Cape & Plymouth Business* magazine, *Vineyard Gazette*, *Barnstable Patriot*, *Patriot Ledger*, and [CapeCodToday.com](#). We have been quoted often on National Public Radio (NPR) and have appeared in **Connecting with Vacationers**.

- Our Vacation Planner provides vacationers with ideas for restaurants, shops, and activities such as boat tours, biking, and kayaking. The more vacationers know about the many possibilities in your area, the more likely they are to want to book your home!
- The beach directory offers images and information of all Cape and Islands beaches. Beach lovers are encouraged to write beach reviews with helpful information.
- Our popular Events calendar offers hundreds of local festivals, parades, theatre, road races, etc. throughout the Cape & Islands. Events may be searched by town and date.
- The Reviews feature invites people to write a review of the local businesses.
- The Vacation Planner also includes articles specific to vacationing on the Cape & Islands We have published over 70 articles!
- We email a monthly Vacationer Newsletter to 75,000+ vacationers who have used our site in the past. The newsletter includes interesting articles and a link to the Vacation Planner as well as a BIG push for vacation rentals!

2. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is the name for the half-science, half-art of achieving top rankings in key search engines. We work constantly to follow Google's every move which helps us make the necessary changes to our web pages to maintain top SEO rankings. We often hire consultants to advise us on current best practices. We have consistently been on page 1 (the top 10) for virtually all important search phrases. Our recent achievement was to finally rank in the local google search.

3. Social Marketing

It is increasingly important to participate in social media. This powerful marketing strategy is free and we spend many hours every week promoting our site, your listings, and informational content on several social media sites.

We are active on these social networks and request that you follow us!



WeNeedaVacation.com began promoting our site on Facebook and Twitter in 2009. We currently have 1060+ Likes (followers) on our Facebook Homeowner Page, *WeNeedaVacation.com*, and 3700+ Likes on our Vacationer Page, *Cape Cod and Islands Vacations*. Facebook is one of the leading referral sites for web traffic to [weneedavacation.com](#)!

* Post the link of your vacation rental on social media to drive traffic to your specific listing. Need help? Contact Becky@weneedavacation.com.

* New this year is our account on Instagram. We have also worked hard to boost our Google+ page and we invite you to visit us and write a review! <https://plus.google.com/+WeneedavacationCapeCod>

* Full of thousands of excellent pictures, Pinterest focuses on all things beautiful. <http://www.pinterest.com/weneedavacation/> has sent impressive traffic to our website. Visit our boards that include Lighthouses, Events, Cape Cod Weddings, Favorite Beaches, Coastal Gardens, etc. We currently have published nearly 70 boards and have over 2000 followers.

* LinkedIn – If you are on LinkedIn, please connect with the staff and look for our company page. <https://www.linkedin.com/company/weneedavacation-com>

4. Chamber Memberships

WNAV is a member of 17 Chambers of Commerce throughout the Cape, South Shore, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Benefits include advertising on their websites and Guidebooks and receiving monthly updates from each Chamber about the important issues, events, and businesses in each town. We attend Chamber networking meetings to promote WeNeedaVacation.com and learn about our Cape and Islands colleagues. Relationship building throughout the local communities is an invaluable strategy in supporting our leading referral source – word of mouth.

WeNeedaVacation.com has sponsored many Chamber events in the last few years including the Orleans 4th of July Parade, Brewster in Bloom, Canal Christmas, Brewster Town Holiday Tree, Christmas in Orleans, Eastham Golf Tournament, Yarmouth Summer Celebration, Fall for Harwich, and Dennis Chamber Golf Tournament. In the last two summers, we have also distributed over 25,000 Frisbees with our logo and thousands of free postcards.

5. Local Expos

In the last few years, WeNeedaVacation.com has exhibited at several local Expos, including Plymouth Business Expo 2009 & 2010, and the Lower Cape Business Expo 2009 – 2014.

6. Cape Abilities

For the past six years, we have partnered with the nonprofit organization Cape Abilities to distribute over 6,000 of their "Welcome to Cape Cod Buckets." Cape Abilities provides employment to Cape residents with disabilities to fill over 30,000 beach buckets with snacks, maps, beach toys, coupons, restaurant guides, and other goodies. This is a win-win-win, so please consider purchasing buckets. See the icon on your Homeowner Center for more information.

7. Lawn Signs

Many of you have taken advantage of our attractive lawn signs and have already received inquiries as a result. In addition, our signs serve to advance recognition of the WeNeedaVacation.com name and our presence on the Cape and Islands. We have distributed hundreds of signs each year since 2009.

8. Radio

In the spring of 2013, we participated in a 2 month ad campaign on WCAI, the local Cape & Islands NPR station. While difficult to measure, we received much feedback and recognition from the ads. Goal – Invite people to list and rent vacation rentals.