

COMMUNE HOTELS & RESORTS

International Boutique Hotel Group
Commune Hotels Gets 25%+ Increase
in Bookings and Drives Loyalty by
Improving Performance 90%

Gerard Fane
Director of
Digital Strategy,
Commune Hotels

“It took us only 30 minutes to switch over to Instart Logic and run live production traffic through their platform. We saw a 90% improvement in our content load time instantly. Since we turned on Instart Logic, I barely even think about it. It just works. And I think that's the best compliment you can give to a technology service provider.”

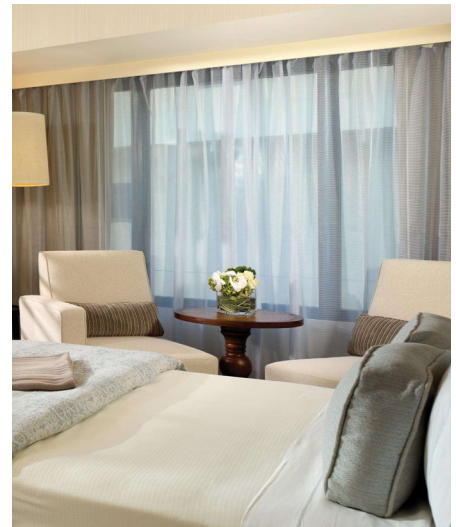
The Challenge



Commune Hotels & Resorts has built stellar brands that span three countries and is expanding its global portfolio. To match the digital with the physical brand experience, the company and its newly hired Director of Digital Strategy wanted to completely revamp Commune's web presence. “We are targeting people that want to have a unique hotel experience, who care about where they stay, and what the local experience is like. Our collection is incredibly diverse. We have Joie de Vivre – our eclectic collection of hotels focused on hyper-local culture; Thompson Hotels – urban and sophisticated properties with a refined edge; and tommie – a new design-centric micro-lifestyle hotel brand,” explains Fane. “We have to be able to display each of those properties in a way that is appealing to customers and the best way to do that is with images of the hotel experience.”

COMMUNE

HOTELS + RESORTS



Company:

Commune Hotels & Resorts

Location:

San Francisco, California

Description:

Commune Hotels & Resorts is an international hotel management company with a leading portfolio of transformative, boldly innovative boutique hotel and resort brands. Led by industry veteran Niki Leondakis, Commune Hotels is a growing multibrand platform that comprises three collection brands – Joie de Vive Hotels, Thompson Hotels, and tommie – each with its distinct culture and feel. Commune strives to create the kind of distinct hotel and resort experiences in the physical and digital world alike that can transform a visitor's day, trip, or even their life.

The Challenge (cont.)



In order to help drive bookings, Commune needed extremely fast response times for its website. “We look at our website as a storefront. The further we can get people into the site, the better the chance they will book,” explains Fane, who also noted that fast loading web pages influenced Commune’s SEO. “The majority of our traffic is coming from search engines. Our page performance needs to be fast because search engines penalize slow sites.”

In order to perfect the online brand experience that Commune wanted to project, Fane planned to add large, hi-res images to the site. These new images would be a clear priority that Commune’s web performance solution provider would need to address well. The new sites Fane was launching would have seven or eight 1500x1000 high-definition images on the home page plus an Instagram feed of six more images. “Beautiful images are table stakes in our industry now. If you don’t have them, you lose customers,” says Fane. “For Commune, the visual experience is so critical in conveying how unique our properties are that we needed to make sure those images came up on any device.”

However, the large number of high-resolution photos added made the load times very slow. “We constantly got complaints that the site was slow. It was obvious to the naked eye,” says Fane. In particular, Commune’s websites had a less than optimal mobile presence. “We weren’t optimized for mobile with our old sites and needed to do better because our customers increasingly use smartphones or tablets during the consideration phase,” Fane explains.

Fane also needed a web performance solution that was future-proof and could handle plans to upgrade all of Commune’s brand sites to Responsive Web Design in the next year. This would require a technology significantly better than traditional CDNs, which cannot handle the type of infinite image sizing possibilities required to properly deliver RWD sites while maintaining super-fast load times.

Ultimately, too, Fane wanted to improve Commune’s visitor conversions to boost reservations through the online channel and to augment the time visitors spent on site. He wanted to do this quickly and without having to go to multiple vendors or dedicate engineering time and resources. Says Fane, “We are a global brand and needed a partner who can handle all this for us.”

In this ambitious effort, Commune Hotels wanted:

- Significantly improved load times for all its brands’ websites
- Fast delivery of high resolution images
- Improved performance on mobile devices
- A clear path towards a Responsive Web Design site in the future
- Improved conversion and site visitor metrics





The Solution



Fane began to shop for acceleration solutions and met Instart Logic. “It was clear the product and the technology was very different from old-style CDNs,” says Fane. Instart Logic partnered with Fane and his team to quickly set up a nocharge Proof-of-Concept and put one of the Commune Hotels properties onto Instart Logic’s software-defined application delivery platform. This entailed nothing more than reconfiguring DNS settings and was completed in 30 minutes.

The Result



"It was like night and day. As soon as we redirected our DNS to Instart Logic, we could see a visible improvement on the site," says Fane. Analytics showed a 90% improvement in site load times immediately after the switch. "The complaints about slow site load times stopped that day and I haven't received another yet," says Fane. On the Commune sites that used Instart Logic, Fane tracked a 25% increase in conversion rates as well as double-digit increases across all site-visitor engagement metrics. Instart Logic also gave Commune perfect uptime since launching in April 2014. Says Fane, "I think I have maybe made one phone call to them. That's it. I really don't think about it all. It just works."

For the redesigns of the brand's other web properties, Fane relied heavily on Instart Logic's unique capabilities for highperformance RWD site. Also, Instart Logic's Image Streaming and Dynamic HTML streaming features played a significant part in ensuring that Commune's new site designs would dazzle users and encourage even more engagement. "We incorporated User Generated Content with Instagram so our image delivery and display has to be stellar," says Fane. "We built three new websites this year and all of them are on Instart Logic."



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