

# Hawaiian

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## Discount Car Rentals

**The Best Rates On The Islands,  
Featuring Avis, Budget, Dollar, Thrifty, Enterprise**



Aloha Harriet,

In 1998, I was working as a manager for a fortune 100 printing company which produced paperboard packaging for firms such as Celestial Seasoning and Georgia Pacific. At the time, new technologies were emerging which gave our customer base a lot of different options other than paperboard packaging. With that in mind, I felt the future of that company would be one of decline and that my career would go down along with it.

I went out to lunch with a gentleman that I used as a mentor and he suggested we draw up a 5 month / 5 year plan covering everything from family, business, hobbies, and religion goals. I grew up in an entrepreneurial family and have always wanted to be self employed. After the 5 year plan was complete, it became obvious that if I were to add some marketing and finance skills to my already strong management know-how that I would have a decent skill set to work with as an entrepreneur.

I enrolled in the MBA program at Seattle University and embarked on that path in 1998. In my second year, I took Management 586 which I found to be invaluable later on. I still use the Startup Business Model Worksheet and the Business Plan for Established Businesses that I picked up in that class. I also learned one of my most important lessons from a guest speaker named Dan Byrne who started his own company selling specialty gases. Dan asked what the first thing is that you need to start a business. After many wrong guesses we arrived at the correct answer: "A customer".

After graduation, I purchased a small company that managed and rented privately held vacation condos on the island of Kauai. As I rented out the condos, I kept being asked for quotes on air fare and rental cars. A customer! I found out that the various car rental agencies were willing to give me discounted contracts to rent cars throughout Hawaii to the general public. We started the car rental program on the back page on the condo site: [www.wailuabay.com](http://www.wailuabay.com). However, there are a lot of questions when renting a car and the one page was not enough. So we created [www.hawaiidrive-o.com](http://www.hawaiidrive-o.com), which is dedicated to nothing but renting cars in Hawaii. We loaded it with features to make the car renting process smoother. Among these are a comparative rate checker, maps and descriptions for pick up at each airport, car reviews, fun drives, and on and on.

Of course, all this is fine but you have to be seen to grow. We began by simply buying advertising on google which put us on the top of page one. This is expensive though so we also began a campaign of building quality links to raise the sites higher in the google ranking naturally. We learned that only quality links really matter and these come from people linking to a service or information that you offer. Examples include we began posting our drives on wikipedia with a link. We found out that .edu links are highly valued so we created pages to help students at each of the ten University of Hawaii branch campuses, not selling anything but providing rental information for their parents when visiting.

Through this combination of purchased and natural link building, our sites are viewed roughly 10,000 times a month. Once there, we offer the customer convenient features and helpful articles that other sites do not. Through this combination, we have grown the car rental side of the business into a very profitable site that actually aids our customers while planning their trips to Hawaii.