

Furnished Finder Creates a Sweet Spot for Everyone in Mid-term Property Rentals

It is a win-win proposition: Landlords make better returns from paying a small, flat subscription fee, while tenants do not pay any booking or service charges.



Jeff Hurst

President & CEO of Furnished Finder



Some people look for a place to stay for just a few days, and there are those who plan to lease a property for the long term. In between, there are tenants who need a place for a month or longer. Satisfying the unmet need in this mid-term property rental market is Furnished Finder, an online rental platform that delivers a win-win solution for both landlords and tenants in this particular property segment.

"We're thriving in the middle, which is between the short-term rentals, like Airbnb and Vrbo, and the longer-term players, like Zillow or Homes.com," says Jeff Hurst, president and CEO of Furnished Finder. "We're building a property rental category, and we think there is something truly magical here. Being able to communicate directly and having more control of the transaction gives landlords and tenants a lot of comfort. However, most of our value actually comes from being able to provide a truly affordable alternative for both parties. Landlords realize excellent returns from making a minimal subscription payment, while tenants don't pay any booking and service fees."

How It All Started

The bootstrapped company began its journey in 2014, initially created to help a medical device salesman rent out his extra home. The individual spent a lot of time in hospitals and realized that many nurses were looking for places to stay as well, so he rented out his spare apartment. Over time, that inventory of one unit grew to more than 275,000 paid listings on the Furnished Finder platform today.

However, what truly propelled the company was the recent pandemic. During the health crisis, there was a massive demand for traveling medical professionals amid a glut in available housing as people could not move around. In addition, aggressive local regulation of short-term rentals has created a necessity for landlords to rent for greater than 30-day stays or sell their homes. As a result, the Furnished Finder site developed its momentum and grew rapidly to help accommodate the growing audiences in need on the supply and demand sides of the marketplace.

Excellent Value Proposition

The company's success comes as no surprise, considering its excellent value proposition for both landlords and tenants. For a subscription fee of only \$149 a year, property owners can make more than 100 times that investment during that time. Tenants, on the other hand, can choose from a large inventory of homes and save money since Furnished Finder does not charge a booking fee like many other rental platforms.

"It reminds me of the original internet promise of making things more available and cheaper for everyone," says Hurst, a former Vrbo president and Expedia's COO. "We've got an opportunity that tenants and landlords truly love, and we're hoping the real estate community sees more and more benefits through our value proposition."

For the price of only three lattes a month, property owners can access a growing market of tenants in need of stays of 30 days or more. Mid-term rental

opportunities abound not only for traveling medical professionals but also for business people, academics such as professors and graduate students, and families needing a place to stay temporarily. Landlords thus have a chance to help these people needing a place for several months or so and make significant money along the way. Compared to short-term rentals, mid-term rental bookings offer durations of an average of 90 days, resulting in less wear and tear on the property vs. repeated nightly rentals. Landlords on Furnished Finder also enjoy the benefit of more extensive vetting and control as they decide who stays at their property every time and how they pay. Mid-term property owners also need not furnish their property like a resort for tourists. This is because their tenants only need a place where they can stay and work comfortably.

At the same time, renters also enjoy countless benefits. The savings from using Furnished Finder can be significant as tenants booking a \$2,000 unit for the next three months can save as much as \$600 in booking and service fees. In addition, with more than 275,000 paid listings on Furnished Finder, tenants have a wide array of places to choose from, depending on their specific requirements. In contrast to short-term rentals, renters under a mid-term lease are often able to negotiate a lease extension when necessary since these rentals do not have a string of upcoming nightly rentals already on the books.

What to Expect

This year, Furnished Finder celebrates its 10th anniversary and looks forward to a far more exciting future. Landlords and tenants can expect a significantly improved online platform. The company has brought in a world-class team, including seasoned engineers and other experts in the field. This initiative is intended to modernize the customer experience by providing better map filters, seamless search processes and more intuitive app handling.

Before shifting to larger property managers, the Furnished Finder team will focus on optimizing the product experience for individual landlords first. On the tenant side of the marketplace, the team plans to continue expanding their partnerships with large organizations representing their common tenant categories like corporations, universities, insurance providers and health care staffing agencies.

"If at the end of three years, we have managed to have a greater product experience, built twice as much inventory, and maintained our position as a low-cost, best-price leader, I would be thrilled," Hurst says. "My long-term vision is to make it easier for people around the world to access our inventory by removing any barriers that would keep them from enjoying our platform."