CASE STUDY

sally's *baking* addiction
A SPRINKLE of FUN and ADVENTURE

Sally's Baking Addiction Cooks Up Web Success With WP Engine

WORDPRESS-BASED BAKING BLOG GROWS FROM HOBBY TO 7 MILLION VIEWS PER MONTH

Industry
Blog

Site
sallysbakingaddiction.com

Challenge
Massive crash the day before Thanksgiving on a previous provider

Results
Reliability, speed, scalability, consistent performance

> "I don't have the time or the knowledge to fix infrastructure problems when something goes wrong. WP Engine empowers me to focus on baking and writing for my blog, which has become a full-time job. Hosting Sally's Baking Addiction with WP Engine allows me to follow my dream."
>
> **- Sally McKenney,**
> Founder,
> Sally's Baking Addiction

The Site

Sally's Baking Addiction (sallysbakingaddiction.com) is a wildly popular baking blog that started as a hobby and a place for writer, recipe developer, and photographer Sally McKenney to share recipes with friends. Quickly, it evolved into a go-to site for baking enthusiasts where McKenney shares recipes and offers step-by-step insight into her kitchen creations, accompanied by mouthwatering photos. McKenney's pictures, which she shares via social media, dramatically increased the visibility of her blog. Today, sallysbakingaddiction.com has 7 million visitors per month and generates enough revenue that it is now McKenney's full-time job (along with writing cookbooks, the second of which is coming soon).

The Challenge

The traffic for sallysbakingaddiction.com came swiftly. As more people stormed the site for the latest confections, the site's speed, scale, and uptime became imperative. At the hobby stage, McKenney was less concerned about overall site performance, but once the site became a full-time job and started generating 7 million visitors per month, the site demanded top-notch performance.

"I want the site to run fast, and accommodate growth in traffic," McKenney said.

But disaster struck the day before Thanksgiving in 2014 – a day when average the traffic to sallysbakingaddiction.com typically doubles. The site, which McKenney was hosting with a provider other than WP Engine, crashed and was unavailable.

"People were upset. They needed their pumpkin pie receipe," she said.

McKenney said she couldn't give a straight answer about why the site was down - on a day when many people are planning their baking regimen for Thanksgiving Day. Eventually, McKenney said, she was told the downtime was her fault.

"It was a nightmare," she said. "I had no control over it."

All told, the site was down for 10 hours – resulting in lost revenue and angered visitors. To get it back up, McKenney was forced to remove ads from the site, which resulted in an additional revenue hit. And even then, the site was still sluggish.

The Solution

Within a week of the crash, McKenney contacted WP Engine. She said she heard about WP Engine's managed WordPress hosting platform through word of mouth and via interaction with fans and readers on her social networks. The migration, McKenney said, was a smooth and painless experience and her interaction with WP Engine's onboarding team was helpful to get the site up and running quickly.

The Results

According to McKenney, WP Engine saved her blog just in time for the Christmas baking season, which also creates a massive swell in traffic. At the same time, sallysbakingaddiction.com was faster than ever, with photos serving at incredible speeds.

McKenney now has the peace of mind that her blog can handle massive traffic increases, such as those around the holidays, without crashing at the first sign of a spike.

The support experience with WP Engine is also a key differentiator, McKenney said. WP Engine's support staff is there for her 24x7x365, whether it's 4 a.m. on Thanksgiving or midnight on Christmas Eve. McKenney said she can choose how she wants to engage with the support team, whether via chat, ticket, or phone, and is confident that she'll always talk to someone who is a WordPress expert.

McKenney said she can consult with WP Engine at any time to get advice about her site, whether she is planning for a high traffic event or discussing backups in the event that things go wrong. Additionally, McKenney said she doesn't get overloaded with tech jargon during support calls; WP Engine offers clear, concise answers to all of her questions.

"I don't have the time or the knowledge to fix infrastructure problems when something goes wrong," McKenney said. "WP Engine empowers me to focus on baking and writing for my blog, which has become a full-time job. Hosting Sally's Baking Addiction with WP Engine allows me to follow my dream."

About WP Engine

WP Engine is a leading SaaS content management platform for websites and applications built on WordPress. Founded in 2010, the company is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas, and London, England.