

Case Study



Industry

Real Estate/PropTech

Site

propertymatcher.co.za

Challenge

Balance lightning-fast business growth with lean resources, while keeping a mission-critical website up and running as it adapts to rapid traffic growth.

Solution

WP Engine Digital Experience Platform

Results

PropertyMatcher has skyrocketed from a few hundred property listings at launch to nearly 20,000 and growing. The increase has been spikey—one three week period saw the site go from 600 listings to 4,000—and PropertyMatcher has relied on WP Engine to help them grow from a shared to a dedicated server.

Laying the foundation for a challenger brand to win online.

Real estate listing service PropertyMatcher depends on WP Engine for uptime and peace of mind, as well as the confidence needed to compete with some of the largest enterprise brands in its industry.

PropertyMatcher is a South Africa-based property technology (PropTech) platform that allows agents, property developers, tenants, and buyers to search and match their property requirements through an integrated, online solution.



The challenge.

Technology continues to change the way people buy things—from small items such as groceries and home goods all the way to more significant purchases, like homes themselves. [PropertyMatcher](https://propertymatcher.co.za), which is quickly becoming a leading property search website in South Africa, is cornering the market on the latter.

Founded in 2017, PropertyMatcher takes a technology-first approach to matching the requirements of property buyers and sellers with one another, and makes it easier for both parties to work with real estate agencies, financial institutions, and conveyancing service providers throughout the buying process.

The platform has enjoyed early success, it's grown from a few hundred property listings when it first launched to tens of thousands of them (and growing) today. Currently, the site sees anywhere from 55,000 and 75,000 searches a month. Part of the platform's popularity is due to the technology it employs, which includes the use of advanced data analytics and algorithms developed for the South African property market that make the property searching and buying process easier to navigate. More than 20% of its site traffic today is made up of returning visitors, which highlights the power of PropertyMatcher.

Behind the scenes, the site is being managed by Co-founder Julius Botha, who has taken on much of the day-to-day, front-end work that keeps PropertyMatcher up and

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Julius Botha,
Co-founder, PropertyMatcher



running, all while competing with the legacy players that still dominate South Africa’s booming real estate market.

“I’m competing with some of the most powerful companies in the country,” Botha said. “These are large Fortune 500-type companies that have been the traditional real estate powerhouses in South Africa for years—it has not been an easy task.”

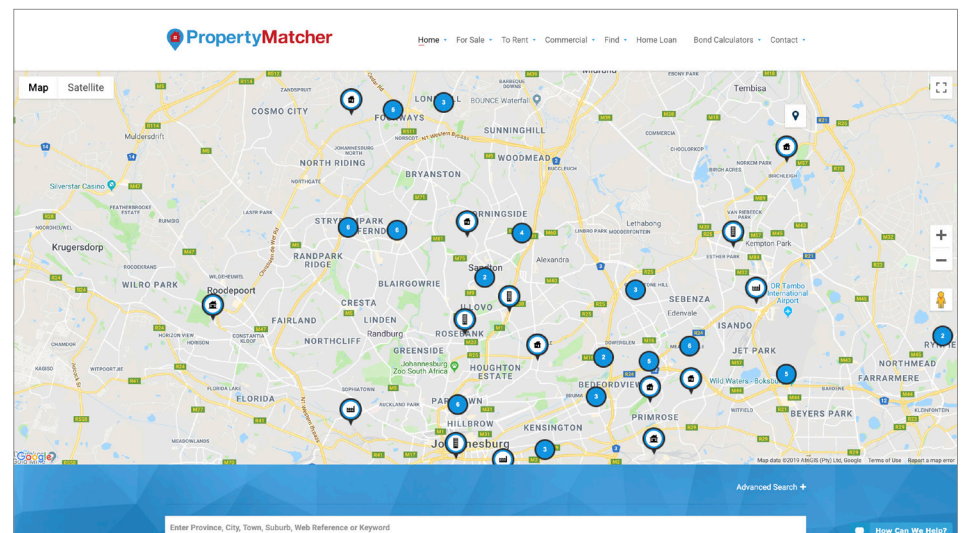
For PropertyMatcher to make an impact, Botha knew he had to do things differently from the start, and one of his first decisions was to build the website using WordPress, which raised some eyebrows, at first.

“People told me, ‘you can’t do that on WordPress, your project is too big,’” Botha said. “But I refused to believe that. I knew it could be done more affordably and at a fraction of the cost, while being able to integrate leading technology, and that WordPress as a framework could build something remarkable.”

Botha began working with a developer to build the site, but once it was up and running, he found that as listings were being added to the platform, they were eating up an inordinate amount of resources.

“Each property we list has some 20 images that accompany it, and those images are scaled up to 12 times per image,” Botha said. “Once we started hitting a few hundred properties, we started to notice some page loading issues that my developer was unable to address.” Currently there are over 1 million images that are managed on the system on a daily basis.

Additionally, the site was starting to see an increase in traffic, and Botha felt it was time to look for additional help before slow speeds began to have a detrimental effect on what was an otherwise promising business.



The solution.

Botha looked at various providers for assistance, but was underwhelmed with their offers. WP Engine, he said, was the first option he came across that truly stood out.



"My developer actually recommended we take a look at WP Engine and it was just night and day compared to what the other providers were offering," he said.

Botha was initially interested in the help WP Engine was able to provide with lower page loading times.

"That was fundamentally important," he said. "Every second counts, and every page click counts, so if we aren't loading within a few seconds, we've lost our user."

By moving to WP Engine, Botha was able to shave crucial seconds off his page loading times, regardless of the number of properties he was adding to the platform, or the number of searches that were going through the site at any given time.

Botha's Customer Success team at WP Engine was also able to assist with integrating a number of external tools and APIs into the PropertyMatcher platform, including integration with a Microsoft .net platform, which pulls property listings into PropertyMatcher.

"That was an absolutely massive integration," Botha said. "It really showed off WP Engine's capabilities, especially when we're talking about integrating two very different platforms together. It was this sort of technical, WordPress expertise that I came to WP Engine for in the first place."

The results.

While WP Engine's technical support and WordPress expertise have played a major role in PropertyMatcher's ability to get a website off the ground and manage rapid growth, it's the ongoing visibility into the business Botha said he is benefiting from the most.

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Coupled with WP Engine's 24/7 support, Botha said he feels like he's been equipped to take PropertyMatcher to the next level.

"Our team at WP Engine has been able to help us with everything from small troubleshooting issues to preparing for higher traffic and moving over to a better service plan when the time was right," Botha said.

"In South Africa, we put a lot of emphasis on camaraderie," he added. "We call it Ubuntu, which represents a spirit of goodwill. In my experience, WP Engine has embodied that."

About WP Engine.

WP Engine is the world's leading WordPress digital experience platform that gives companies of all sizes the agility, performance, intelligence, and integrations they need to drive their business forward faster. Founded in 2010, WP Engine is headquartered in Austin, Texas, and has offices in San Francisco, California; San Antonio, Texas; London, England; Limerick, Ireland, and Brisbane, Australia.