

# The Ultimate Guide to Managing 25+ WordPress® Sites With WP Engine<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> WP Engine is not endorsed or owned by, or affiliated with, the WordPress Foundation



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# The ultimate guide to managing 25+ WordPress sites with WP Engine

No matter if you're working with five, 25, or even 500 sites, WP Engine's platform not only helps you manage your clients' sites, but also your workflow, team, and clients—all in one place!

As your agency grows you'll find yourself proposing, building, launching, and maintaining more and more WordPress sites every day. Not only that, you'll understand the importance of seamlessly scaling your infrastructure's footprint and you'll discover the grind of a slew of repetitive, likely un-billable tasks on your plate.

This could be anything from managing plans to configuring security plugins—tasks your proposals don't focus on because clients just expect their sites to work. As necessary as these tasks are, you didn't get into this industry to be a glorified IT professional. That's where we come in.

We believe agencies like yours should lean into your expertise, delivering innovative and effective web and marketing solutions to your clients. You shouldn't have to deal with administrative and behind-the-scenes tasks just to keep those digital experiences running. Your WordPress sites—and those of your clients—should naturally be secure, speedy, and scalable.

When an agency is new, there's often a lot of experimentation to find the best workflow or solution. In fact, you might have tried a handful of hosting companies, a plethora of plugins, or

a ton of tools to help streamline your process. Unfortunately, this often results in a mess of sites across several plans and accounts, with varying levels of performance and stability. There is a better way.

## Any of these scenarios sound familiar?

- ⓘ Traffic spikes on one site (or another tenant on your shared plan) negatively affect the performance of others.
- ⓘ A site goes down at a critical moment, resulting in unhappy clients.
- ⓘ One site gets hacked, leading to wasted hours trying to clean it up and protect other sites on the server.
- ⓘ A code change breaks the live site, and there's no backup to rely on.
- ⓘ A new version of WordPress is released, meaning you have to update every. Single. Site.
- ⓘ You're fiddling with disjointed workflows and out-of-date software tools and everything is just hard.

**What you need is a hosting platform that not only helps you manage your sites, but also your workflow, team, and clients—all in one place.**





# We're here to help

WP Engine is here to set you up for success (and seamless scaling and site management). In this ebook, we'll share our best tips to help your agency streamline workflows, leverage WP Engine for tasks you'd rather not handle, and ultimately grow your business.

Here's what we'll cover:

- ✔ How to move 25+ sites to WP Engine (Hint: We do it for you, for free!)
- ✔ Tips to help your team collaborate and stay organized with WordPress
- ✔ How to handle WordPress security at scale (and never clean up malware again)
- ✔ How to provide outstanding site performance to all of your clients (Hint: We have plans with isolated resources for agencies)
- ✔ 4 simple ways to speed up site management & development
- ✔ How to access support that's with you every step of the way
- ✔ Accelerating growth with recurring revenue

Let's dive in!

# How to move 25+ sites to WP Engine

We know it's not always easy to move WordPress sites from one server to another, especially when you're talking about a large quantity. That's why we provide the tools needed to tackle the migration, free of charge, and keep your sites up and running the entire time! (Yep, even if you have 50+ sites!)

How do we do it? The short answer:

**Powerful automation and world-class service.**

Sure there are other WordPress plugins that help you backup and download your site—some even claim to help with migration. Our [free Automated Migration plugin](#) simply requires you to install the plugin on both the existing and the new site, copy and paste a bit of text, and we literally handle the rest. Your WordPress instance is automatically copied onto the new server, maintaining 100% uptime during the process.

Not sure about trusting automation? Don't worry—our agency partners have direct access to advanced technical support from experts in WordPress, including our [free managed migration service](#) for qualifying plans.

**Our automated migration and dedicated support take the migration burden off your team.**

Once your site is migrated to WP Engine's servers, you can preview it before it's live. It functions just like the live site, and you'll even be able to stress test it for performance and compatibility as needed.

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*WP Engine provided a solid foundation for migrating our client's website, freeing up our teams to focus on delivering value to the client. They made it easy to move and manage the site, added additional security with a WAF and Global Edge Security, and offered us the ease of scaling around the site as we built it up.*



**Landon DePasquale**

Enterprise Web Strategist, [Americaneagle.com](https://www.americaneagle.com)

Once you're satisfied, you'll simply redirect your DNS and you'll be live on WP Engine! But this is just the beginning. Next, let's cover a few house-cleaning tips for keeping your team organized on WordPress and the ways WP Engine helps.



# How to collaborate and stay organized with WordPress

When it comes to scaling your agency and managing multiple sites, you'll work with a plethora of usernames, passwords, plugins, themes, credentials, logos, brands, etc. These items need to be stored securely, instead of just lying around in a Google Sheet.

## Login credential management

For storing credentials, consider using a password management tool such as [LastPass](#) or [1Password](#). Tools like these will keep login information secure while also speeding up your workflow. Instead of shuffling through papers or performing "Command + F" to try to find a password hidden in a document, these tools will allow you to sign in with just the click of a button.

## Client assets

When organizing assets for your clients, you'll want to set up a solid naming system for your folders early on. If all of your files follow roughly the same pattern for each client, you'll be able to fly through folders to get what you need instead of trying to remember how you named something or where you saved it. This organization should apply to local storage on your hard drive or with cloud file systems like [DropBox](#) or [Google Drive](#) that you share with clients.

## Pro-tip:

Once you determine the naming system, make sure everyone on your team knows and follows it, too. A solid system only works if everyone does it!

You should also consider creating documentation for each client detailing the theme, plugins, and any extra functionality you've built for their site. Your team will appreciate the ability to see that information all in one place. Then, in a few months when that client has questions, you can quickly get back up to speed.

## Collaborating on WP Engine

WP Engine's platform is built to optimize the WordPress creative and development workflow. With that in mind, we created several features that help keep your team organized and efficient.

As an agency account holder on WP Engine, you will be assigned the Owner role by default. You can then invite your agency employees to your account from the dashboard and they will each be able to set up their own account.

As you're setting up your agency team on WP Engine, you'll have the ability to assign your employees [different roles](#) for each environment, which provides differing levels of access to each site on the WP Engine account. Each level of access includes both a billing and no-billing version, allowing you to tailor your team and protect against inadvertent changes to billing, site structure, or even whether or not changes are pushed live.

## SFTP access

User roles will also determine [SFTP access](#) for your team members. They'll use their WP Engine login credentials and, based on their roles, have access to the sites you've set them up on. This single login approach streamlines your internal processes and keeps your clients' web properties more secure by eliminating the need for shared, unsecured credentials.

Every team operates differently, so the optimum setup for your workflow may look different than the agency down the street. But finding the right structure for your team means your employees are set up to focus on what they do best!

## API access

Our premium plans—which feature isolated resources for sites you manage—also include API access, allowing your developer teams to create more integrated, more collaborative workflows across your agency.

Next, let's talk about scaling the security of all those sites.

**Finding the right structure for your team means your employees are set up to focus on what they do best!**





# How to handle WordPress security at scale

[WordPress powers more than 40% of the web](#), which means there's a rich ecosystem and community surrounding it. It also means WordPress is a consistent target for cyber attacks. Because of this reality, it's crucial to use a hosting provider that protects your WordPress instances and gives you [the tools needed](#) to keep all of your sites secure and up-to-date.

And when you're managing sites on behalf of a client, it's not just your business or reputation at risk, but those of your customers as well. So how do you keep WordPress secure at scale?

First, it's important to recognize that WordPress security is a two-way street, and depends on collaboration between the website owner(s), the hosting provider, and any third party (like your agency) who accesses or manages the site, with all parties actively working together to ensure the site's security.

At scale, security becomes even more complex, with numerous sites, plugins, and users to monitor. This is where automation, managed services, and robust security features—like automated updates, backups, malware scanning, and web application firewalls—become indispensable.

Leveraging a hosting provider that specializes in WordPress security and offers these critical tools will not only protect your clients but also streamline your workflows. In the ever-evolving cybersecurity landscape, staying ahead of threats requires vigilance, the right partnerships, and the right security solutions to ensure long-term success.



## How WP Engine keeps WordPress sites secure

Because of its ubiquity, there is no shortage of WordPress security plugins or best practices. And when WordPress sites are hosted on a generic web host server, it's important to have those tools in place.

But with WP Engine, we provide the functionality of those third-party plugins at the server level, making ongoing security plugin maintenance a thing of the past.

Common security hardening measures that we take on all servers and instances include:

- ✔ Disk write protections and limitations
- ✔ Proprietary firewall
- ✔ Blocking public access to known vulnerable WordPress and server files and directories
- ✔ Blocking user enumeration requests
- ✔ Prohibiting plugins that pose a known security risk

Any plan (shared or premium) can add Global Edge Security (GES) which provides the following:

- ✔ Managed Web Application Firewall (WAF)
- ✔ Advanced DDoS mitigation
- ✔ Cloudflare CDN with Argo Smart Routing (ensuring being secure doesn't impact performance)
- ✔ Cloudflare Polish
- ✔ Automatic SSL installation

In addition to isolated resources for better performance, our premium plans also provide additional security features including:

- ✔ A dedicated onboarding manager who checks sites for security issues before going live (as well as performance and reliability!)
- ✔ Ongoing access to security advisory services
- ✔ SOC 2 compliance and ISO 27001:2013 certification.\*
- ✔ Advanced DDoS and Web Application Firewall.\*

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*We chose WP Engine because of the enterprise-level security it offers. Post-migration, we value the heightened security features and improved developer tools that have increased agility and efficiency during the development process.*



**Josh Peichoto**  
[Envoy Mortgage](#)

In addition to the hardening measures taken, we also keep daily backups of every site and we ensure that the server's PHP version and your core WordPress installations are kept [intelligently up-to-date](#). And, with [Smart Plugin Manager](#), we give you the capability to keep every one of your clients protected from the source of 50% of WordPress security issues—out-of-date plugins.

*\*Available on Enterprise Plans*

## How you can keep WordPress sites secure

Beyond WP Engine's security features, there are a few small things you'll need to do at the site level to boost security:

- ✔ Use strong passwords
- ✔ Avoid obvious usernames
- ✔ Keep your themes and plugins updated (if you're not taking advantage of our automated updates)
- ✔ Uninstall inactive plugins and themes
- ✔ Move your WordPress login URL
- ✔ Add an SSL certificate (included for every site using Global Edge Security)
- ✔ Add Captcha and/or two-factor authentication

By following these simple security practices and leveraging WP Engine's platform and update automations, your clients' sites will be well protected from cyber attacks. This keeps your team focused on delivering value to those clients and gives them peace of mind that their web properties are safe.

**Following simple security best practices and leveraging WP Engine builds scalable security across every site you maintain.**





# How to provide outstanding site performance to all of your clients

Much like security, achieving great site performance takes collaboration between you and your hosting company. While there are several things developers can do to keep things loading quickly, there's also a lot that depends on how your host has set up servers and networking.

If you've used low-cost, commodity hosting you've probably experienced a time when one site gets a bunch of traffic that causes the other sites on the same server to lag or crash.

As an agency managing sites, this quickly turns into a customer service nightmare with calls coming in from multiple clients. Suddenly your team is pulled away from billable work and sent scrambling to fix the issues.

## How WP Engine helps site performance

Situations like this are why it's crucial to not only choose a host that is focused on WordPress performance, but to choose the right products and plans from that host.

When your agency is building business-critical sites for your clients, it's important to guarantee that their sites will operate at peak performance. And once you're doing that at scale, it might be time to look for something other than a shared environment.

That's why we offer premium plans with isolated resources, dedicated onboarding and technical support, and help optimizing backend and frontend code across your clients' sites. Additionally, our premium plans come with a 99.99% uptime SLA — which works out to less than an hour of downtime **annually**.



Of course we've built our infrastructure to optimize WordPress performance at all account tiers. That's why every account comes with [EverCache®](#), our cloud-based, WordPress-tuned caching that often results in 40% faster loading times, and a global CDN, powered by Cloudflare.

But we don't stop there. We approach performance as a multi-pronged effort that combines best-in-class cloud infrastructure, SOC2-compliant security, and expertise in managed WordPress. And we're constantly looking for ways to improve our performance and validate our claims via third-party data or analysis.

Take [Time To First Byte](#) (TTFB) for instance. Without an initial fast loading time, all other performance metrics will suffer. And, according to third-party data, we're nailing it. Out of one million sites, over a trailing six-month basis, [WP Engine has the highest percentage of sites that load in less than 200ms](#) among all other WordPress platforms.

WP Engine has the highest percentage of sites that load in less than 200ms.

## EverCache®

Put simply, [EverCache®](#) is WP Engine's proprietary front-end system that allows us to make all of our customers' digital experiences incredibly fast and ridiculously scalable.

By pairing best-in-class cloud infrastructure with our deep expertise in WordPress, we've created a caching process that reduces server strain and follows WordPress caching best practices. Our custom WordPress ruleset is continuously audited and updated to make sure our caching approach evolves with the WordPress ecosystem.

**Note:** This means you can stop configuring caching plugins, and that alone can save your team a bunch of time!

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*When we move sites to WP Engine, it's because we want that foundational level of performance and security taken care of. From there, it's much easier for us to identify where the real issues are, fix them, and provide our clients with a faster, more secure final product.*



**Candice Wyatt**

Sr. Director, Web & Platform Solutions,  
[Red Door Interactive](#)

## Global CDN

Working hand-in-hand with EverCache® is our [global CDN solution](#), provided by [Cloudflare](#). By dispersing large, static content from WordPress sites (like images or theme elements) across the [Cloudflare Edge network](#), sites load faster for end users, no matter where they are.

When DNS is pointed to our advanced network, each site on WP Engine automatically has:

- ✔ **Cloudflare Polish:** Lossless image compression reduces the size of images to help them load more quickly.
- ✔ **WebP image optimization:** Converts large images to the optimized WebP format to further improve load times.
- ✔ **Automatic SSL installation:** All CDN assets are secured with SSL and served over an HTTPS connection.
- ✔ **CDN at Edge:** Assets will be served from the website's own domain, meaning no unique or clunky CDN URL will be displayed on your assets.

While we work hard to deliver world-class out-of-the-box performance, there are a few best practices we like to recommend to our customers so they can take full advantage of their sites' inherent speed.

## How you can improve site performance

Having a solid host is just the first step in the performance puzzle. Next, you need to nail down the development process and ensure everyone at your agency is following the same standards for site development. Creating a repeatable process is key when working with multiple WordPress sites!

To start, make sure these steps are included in your workflow:

- ✔ Write clean code that's well documented
- ✔ Optimize images used on a site
- ✔ Vet plugins for functionality AND performance
- ✔ Disable any plugins, themes, or features the site doesn't need
- ✔ Minify assets such as CSS and JavaScript

**Note:** As new technologies emerge, there will always be better ways to develop your site and optimize performance. Our best tip? Continue learning and experimenting to see what works best for your clients' sites (just remember to experiment on a test site so the live site doesn't break!).

WP Engine allows you to launch your sites on an amazing architecture, so you don't have to stress about server uptime, caching plugins, special optimizations, or time-consuming solutions.

With migration, security, and performance buttoned up, it's time to focus on speeding up your development workflow!



# 4 ways to speed up site management and development

When developing and managing dozens of client WordPress sites, using your agency's time wisely is one of the most important things you can do.

You likely already know the basics:

- ✔ Have clearly defined processes
- ✔ Understand who's responsible for what on your team
- ✔ Have a point of contact for every client

These fundamental pieces keep your team and your clients on the same page, so work stays on track and collaboration freely flows. But there's always more that can be done to deliver value to clients quickly or to free your team up to focus on more complicated problems. To that end, WP Engine has four features to help you create sites with ease and spend less time managing sites.

## 1. Speed up deployment with Local

[Local](#) is our all-in-one development tool that agencies can leverage to develop and manage multiple sites. In fact, you don't have to use our hosting to use the development app.

But savvy agencies who use both have realized there's no more seamless way to build and deploy sites. By connecting the two tools, you can easily pull sites down for offline editing and push sites live when you're ready to publish changes.

Local Connect handles moving the entire site between the remote host and your local install, while MagicSync makes keeping plugins, themes, settings, and changes in sync a breeze with intelligent differential sync that tracks and recommends which files actually need syncing.



## 2. Use Local Blueprints to create sites faster

Local isn't just incredibly useful for ongoing site development and updates—it also helps stand-up sites quicker. Using the Local feature [Blueprints](#), you can create and customize templates with WordPress settings, themes, and plugins exactly how your team likes them. This saves your agency time if nearly every site you build starts with a standardized WordPress setup that you've developed.

Do you offer turnkey websites with the same basic choice of themes? Does your team immediately install Jetpack or Yoast SEO on every site? Do you like to start each new site with a particular page structure to give your developers a head start? These are perfect use cases for Blueprints.

**Save time and automate repetitive tasks by deploying sites from Blueprints templates.**

Getting started couldn't be easier. Simply start with an existing site, set up exactly how you like and Blueprints will use that site's theme and plugins as your custom configuration to build out future projects. When you create a new site, you'll have the option of starting from one of your existing Blueprints with the click of a button!

## 3. Make quick changes with a staging environment

Protect your team and clients from inadvertent mistakes like pushing updates live before they're ready or rolling out content for a campaign the day before it actually launches by utilizing [staging environments](#) for each of your clients' sites.

Additionally, staging sites let you or your client easily tweak small changes and see them on a live, functioning site without disrupting the current web experience. Creating a staging environment takes a single click on the site's dashboard in the WP Engine portal and changes can be pushed to the production environment just as easily. All changes are logged and easily rolled back—giving you peace of mind that the client's environment isn't impacted by updates that weren't quite production-ready.

**Staging environments protect you and your clients from yourselves and ensure the end users aren't impacted by rolling updates or tweaks.**

#### 4. Establish (and charge for) an update process

When it comes to WordPress, there's no shortage of updates needed to keep your sites running beautifully and securely. Between WordPress core, themes, and plugins, it can be a lot to keep track of. Our best advice? Set aside time at a regular frequency to run through your client sites and make sure they're updated.

And as a WP Engine customer, you can actually leave most of this work to us.

Your core WordPress installs (and the server's underlying PHP) are kept intelligently up-to-date. Updates are run once they're known to be stable and a testing snapshot is taken before and after the update. If the pre-update site passes our tests, the updates run and the site is tested again. Assuming everything is still

working, congrats! If either test fails, the update doesn't occur or immediately rolls back to the previous configuration.

On top of that, we offer [Smart Plugin Manager](#), which runs a similar process for all plugins in use!

Every manual maintenance process takes your team away from billable hours, so the more you can automate site management, the better your bottom line will be. And by charging for maintenance in addition to hosting, you can leverage these tools to create an easy recurring revenue stream for your agency!

**Build recurring revenue while keeping your client sites running smoothly.**





## The support team that's with you every step of the way

It's not fun to imagine worst-case-scenario situations, but to successfully manage multiple WordPress sites, you'll want to be as prepared as possible when something goes wrong.

For every product that you use to build your client's sites (themes, plugins, host, etc.) be sure you know how to contact their support teams. You may even want to create a spreadsheet with email addresses, phone numbers, or links to contact forms to help streamline the emergency process.

On the hosting side, all WP Engine [agency partners](#) receive priority advanced technical support. And when you host dozens of sites or more on WP Engine, you'll get the added bonus of a dedicated account manager who can help you with anything from escalating support issues to migrating sites at short notice. We believe in being a partner for your business and will work diligently to help you in every capacity we can.

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*In the past, we hadn't received this level of support from hosting providers, but it's why we were confident throughout the process with WP Engine. We knew from the start that we'd get the level of support we need as we grow.*



**Natasha Chandra**

Marketing Manager, [Lift Legal](#)

Partnering with vendors and suppliers you trust is key to building your brand and differentiating yourself from the competition—especially when you're managing dozens of client sites.

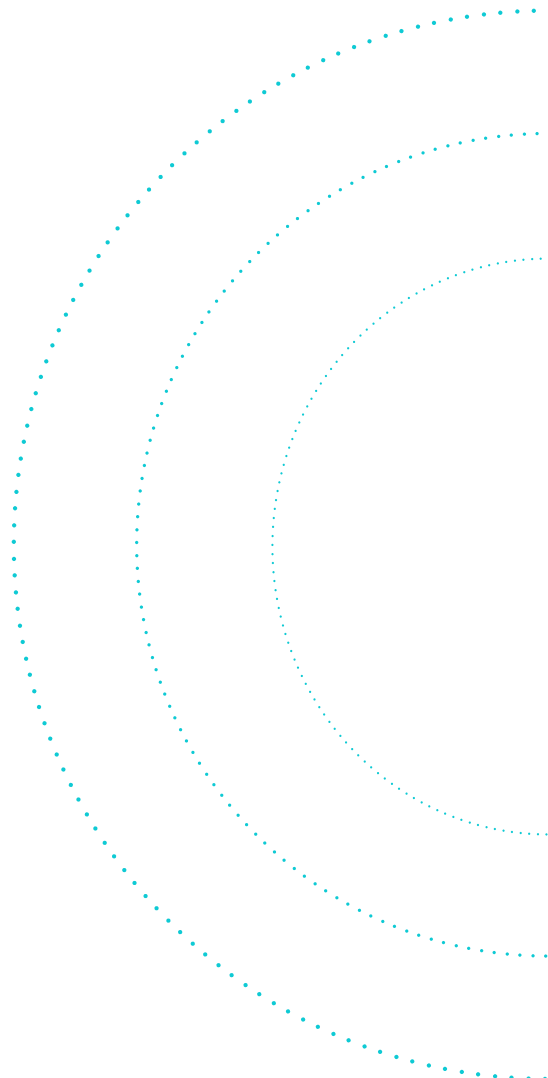




# Accelerating growth with recurring revenue

As you grow your agency's brand and reputation—not to mention your client base—it's important to create consistent and reliable revenue streams. There are several business models that incorporate recurring revenue with your clients and as you've seen, WP Engine's toolset can make a few of them mostly passive revenue streams as well.

Generating this recurring revenue is one of the main keys to scaling your agency, and reselling hosting is only one of them. Dive into our guide on ways to use [recurring revenue to drive growth](#) for more info.



# The Agency Partner Program

Long story short, WP Engine is committed to helping drive the success of our agency customers. And the best way we can do that for you is through our [Agency Partner Program](#).



## WP Engine Agency Partner Program

Generate leads, level up your team, and leverage the most reliable hosting platform for WordPress to grow your business. Sign up today to start receiving industry-leading benefits:

- ✓ Priority access to technical support
- ✓ Referrals to brands
- ✓ Industry-leading commissions
- ✓ Special discount pricing
- ✓ Listing in the Agency Directory
- ✓ Dedicated partner success manager

[Join Now](#)

## Connect with Us

Hopefully this ebook helps you get the most out of your WP Engine plans and products. Many of our suggestions are easy to implement from our user portal, but if you want to make sure you're really getting the most you can—or you want to explore upgrading from a shared plan to a premium plan with isolated resources and increased security and performance—reach out to us today to schedule a consultation!

[Book time with your account manager](#)



WP Engine empowers companies and agencies of all sizes to **build, power, manage, and optimize** their WordPress websites and applications with confidence.

Serving 1.5 million customers across 150+ countries, the global technology company provides premium, enterprise-grade solutions, tools, and services, including specialized platforms for WordPress, industry-tailored [eCommerce](#) and [agency](#) solution suites, and developer-centric tools like [Local](#), [Advanced Custom Fields](#), and more. WP Engine's innovative technology and industry-leading expertise are why 8% of the web visits a WP Engine-powered site daily. Learn more at [wpengine.com](https://wpengine.com).

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