



CASE STUDY



Industry
Ecommerce, Agency

Site
vegepod.com.au

Challenge
Scaling site to handle significant traffic spikes during live TV appearance

Results
95% site uptime against 11,000 sessions on the TV finale of Shark Tank Australia

“Had Vegepod not made the transition to WP Engine prior to the episode, the whole thing would’ve crumbled.”

- Adam Sharon-Zipser
Director of Elephant Room

Scaling Ecommerce For Season Finale Success

ELEPHANT ROOM AND WP ENGINE HELP VEGEPOD REMAIN ONLINE DESPITE TRAFFIC SPIKES DURING TV FINALE OF SHARK TANK

The Company

Vegepod (vegepod.com.au) is a Sydney-based company with headquarters in Terrey Hills on Sydney’s Northern Beaches. Owned and operated out of Australia, starting in 2009, Vegepod prides itself on providing everyday Australians with a simple and easy way to grow vegetables at home. Their garden kits are the most efficient and practical on the market today.

Elephant Room (Vegepod’s digital agency) specializes in building and growing online presences for local businesses. Based in Sydney, the integrated digital marketing agency helps clients reach their highest potential by designing and implementing innovative, effective, and measureable solutions.



The Challenge

When Vegepod was set to appear on the season finale of Shark Tank Australia, they suspected their new found fame might draw a bigger audience to their site. Their infrastructure placed on a data center across oceans in Singapore, Vegepod foresaw issues, like site downtime, occurring due to the distance in hosting.

“Being in Singapore meant the website had performance latency issues,” said Adam Sharon-Zipser, Director of Elephant Room (an online marketing provider for local business, hired by Vegepod to create vegepod.com.au).



The Solution

Anticipating their ecommerce store might crash during the live airing of Shark Tank, Vegepod reached out to Elephant Room who recommended they switch hosting to WP Engine to ensure their site would remain online despite an unusual increase in site traffic.

Even in instances where the unexpected occurs, Elephant Room trusts WP Engine as the hosting provider for all of their WordPress instances, with more than 50 clients (and growing rapidly).

“Support at WP Engine helped us lockdown every facet of static content on the website and also worked around WooCommerce caching,” said Sharon-Zipser.

Elephant Room undertook the work to rebuild the entire Vegepod website on WordPress and WP Engine. Moving to WP Engine, which has datacenters and an integrated CDN option in Australia, meant Vegepod's site was on a new infrastructure, one that could handle an increased addition of concurrent users. The morning of the finale, Vegepod migrated to WP Engine in under two hours with WP Engine's automated migration technology.

"We spoke to the WP Engine team who worked to ensure the site would be able to scale when the actual show aired," said Sharon-Zipser. He added, "at the time WP Engine was also rolling out [HTTP/2](#), which was a big plus." (HTTP/2 accelerates the transmission of data over HTTP, which results in enhanced site performance.)

Sharon-Zipser continued, "The WP Engine platform is rock solid and offers the key components to achieve the level of scale we need. Backups, CDN, and SSL are key areas that helped save us time during the setup. They are all instant and all backed by 24/7/365 support. If that shaves three hours a week off our workload...over the course of a year that could amount to 154 hours which is meaningful. This allows us to refocus our time on things that drive the business forward like client servicing and selling. The speed performance is also so good that it allows the dev team to redistribute its time away from doing nonsense debugs."



The Results

According to Sharon-Zipser, while Vegepod's site remained 95 percent online, all of the other contestants' sites crashed during the finale. During the two-hour episode, Vegepod's minor site downtime was due to an Instagram plugin that could not be cached.

"Our Achilles heel (for only one minute) was the Instagram plugin, which freaked out and kept serving data, making the database freeze. Working with WP Engine, we were able to detect the issue and rapidly get the site back online with minimal downtime," he said.

Airing in both Sydney and Perth, Vegepod's website experienced 11,000 sessions to their website the day of the airing, followed by 8,000 additional sessions from re-runs of the episode the next couple of days.

According to Vegepod's CEO and Founder Matt Harris, "With Vegepod's success in the Shark Tank grand finale, it was crucial that our website was able to cope with the sudden influx of interest and sales. Fortunately, by working with Elephant Room and WP Engine, the website easily handled the traffic influxes and the experience for thousands of new Vegepod users was a positive one."

"Had Vegepod not made the transition to WP Engine prior to the episode, the whole thing would've crumbled," said Sharon-Zipser.

He added, "While WP Engine is a premium service, we absorb that cost through efficiency and time savings by not managing an infrastructure."

Also, because a section of Vegepod's website is on WooCommerce, they achieved optimal sales from their Shark Tank exposure. And if you're wondering whether or not Vegepod got the Shark Tank investor deal ... well not only did their site experience optimal uptime, but they got the deal!

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, Limerick, Ireland, and London, England.