

This case study explores how a couple of professionals, looking for a new life, took over a business in the hospitality industry and the journey they took establishing their web presence first using shared hosting, then migrating to VPS.

The Pyrénées Cycling Lodge

Cycling in the Heart of the French Pyrénées



Deciding what hosting plan is right for your business is not always an easy task.

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Everyone has a dream, but only a special few make it a reality. Mark and Niamh are passionate cyclists from Scotland and Ireland, but it was always their dream to turn their love of cycling into a business. When the [Pyrénées Cycling Lodge](#), a bed and breakfast situated in the heart of the Pyrénées mountains in France, came available for purchase in 2017, the pair decided it was time to take action. "It was always our dream to go to the mountains in France," said Niamh. "If we had waited any longer we would have missed our chance...so we just decided to do it."

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The Lodge, which is centrally located along the route of the Tour de France, offers a warm bed, hearty meals, local ales, and a chance for cyclists to join together with others who share their passion for cycling. The accommodation is nestled in the small town of Saint Savin in the Hautes Pyrenees. It's surrounded by breathtaking mountain backdrops, curving mountain roads, and medieval architecture. "It was a complete change of lifestyle for us, working for ourselves, doing what we love in amazing surroundings," said Niamh. "Meeting so many like minded, positive people from around the world... it's a dream come true."

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Creating the Digital Experience

When Mark and Niamh took over the lodge and its digital properties, the business already had a name and established domain. "Having the domain name was really important to us," said Niamh. "It's a really important thing to have as it has "cycling" and "Pyrénées" in the url." This allowed those searching for an adventure in the famous region to zero in on their business quickly. "We depend on our website for a lot of our direct bookings," said Niamh. However, when they took over the website it needed a lot of work. The website was hosted on a small local provider and Niamh didn't feel like it had enough power behind it to reach the global audience she was targeting.

Niamh set out on Google to find a new home for her digital presence. Her requirements? Reliable service, speed & performance, and good customer service. "I can work my way around cPanel but I'm not very technical so I depend on customer service." After reading several

reviews, looking at some of the other players in the space, and evaluating pricing and package features, she ended up deciding on A2 Hosting. "A2 was at the top of a lot of the reviews that I had read," said Niamh. "Packages were comparable between providers, but it was the customer service and package offerings that eventually swayed me."

Niamh initially chose the Shared Turbo Max plan. It came with cPanel, advanced NVMe storage options, 2X more resources than the standard plans, and a LightSpeed enhanced web server. It also came pre-optimized to get the most speed and performance out of WordPress, the CMS her website was built on. As her business grew though, she would eventually make the move to Managed VPS hosting.

Working with A2 Hosting

As a customer for more than four years now, Niamh has had a number of interactions with the A2 Team. "I've worked with support, sales, and billing a few times and I'm always impressed with the speed and efficiency that my ticket is dealt with," said Niamh. "They have provided me with constant communication and the technical teams are very knowledgeable and always supportive and patient."

Covid-19 has made this past year especially hard on the business, which saw a reduction in bookings causing added stress and financial strain on Mark and Niamh. "Billing has been especially helpful this year. They are always approachable and have been supportive with our renewals," said Niamh. "I know they didn't have to do that."

"I can't find fault in any of my experiences with A2 Hosting," said Niamh. "Our business relies on the speed and customer services offered by A2 and it has exceeded my expectations on both accounts."

Getting the Most Out of WordPress

While the previous site had been built using WordPress, it was a very basic deployment. “WordPress let’s me build my own site and I depend on the themes available for it to guide the aesthetics of our site,” said Niamh. The Lodge uses the [Sucuri](#) plugin to help with malware, [Checkfront](#) to manage the online booking system, and [Monster Insights](#) to help understand their web performance and usage patterns. Additionally, they leverage [Slider Revolution](#) for photo galleries and an Instagram feed plugin to help aggregate their social content. “We are quite active on social media,” said Niamh. “Instagram and Twitter are big drivers, there’s lots of interaction there and we get a fair share of bookings through it.”

The Future of the Pyrénées Cycling Lodge

Despite having success on the Shared Turbo Max plan, Niamh has been considering a move to Managed VPS Hosting (powered by A2 Partner [Virtuozzo](#)) for some time and as the business would be positively impacted by switching to A2’s VPS plans. She has decided to migrate over this year to receive all the added benefits that come from this upgrade.

VPS offers the Lodge the ability to have resources dedicated to just them instead of sharing with the other parties on the server. This means that they can count on the speed and performance of their server to be consistent throughout the year and not risk any performance dings that may be caused by a “neighbor” sharing resources.

VPS also provides the Lodge a greater level of security, more control over their environment, and more peace of mind for the small business owner. Shared is a great, low cost hosting option for personal websites and blogs, but VPS is always the better option for a business

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who depends on their website for revenue.

What advice would Mark and Niamh give a business owner who is about to walk down the similar path of taking over a business and reinventing it to make it their own? First, they recommend that you take some time to understand what the backend will look like before making your final choice. “I’ve used hosting providers before but didn’t have that much experience,” said Niamh. “Having a user friendly dashboard that is easy to work with... one you can work your way around, is important. A2 has made that easy for me.”

In addition, “You have to understand how important reliable customer service is when looking for a hosting provider. A2’s customer service has been right there or they get right back to you. For my needs, it has all worked out.”