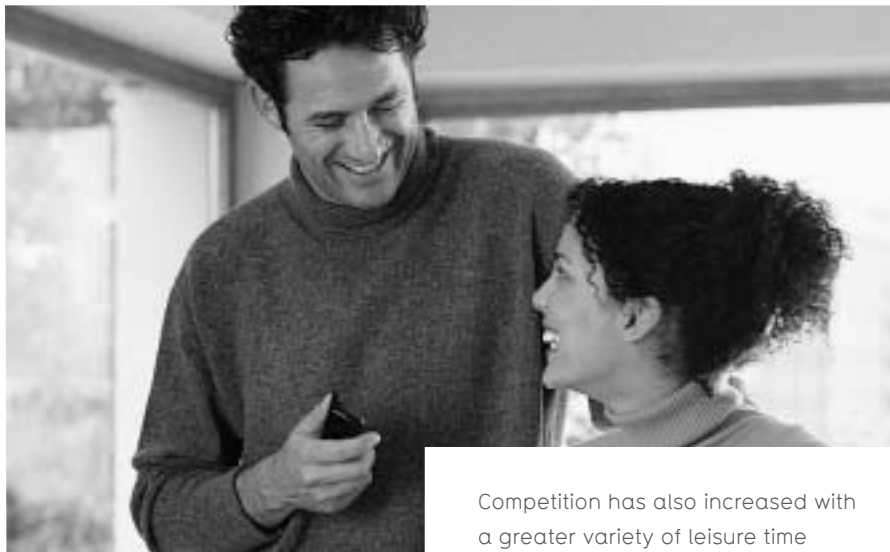


Case Study

/Great Escape Ballooning



/the customer

Founded in 1993, Great Escape Ballooning has been offering the paying public the chance to experience a hot air balloon ride across Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire for the past ten years. The business currently employs five and operates 2 balloons.

/the challenge

Belying the serene journey passengers experience is a highly competitive market, with over 100 companies across the UK vying for business. The UK's recent foot and mouth outbreak also caused massive collateral damage, grounding balloons for almost a year and forcing 1 in 7 balloonists out of business.

Competition has also increased with a greater variety of leisure time experiences being offered online and in the high street. From go-karting to scuba diving, all have impinged upon Great Escape's traditional market.

This intense competition for the money in consumers' pockets encouraged Great Escape Ballooning to begin taking bookings over the internet. Within three years of the initial site going live, one third of Great Escape's bookings are now received through this channel.

"The shift to the internet has not only improved customer numbers, but it's also shifted the age range." Kevin Viney, managing director of Great Escape remarked. "I now find that many more of our passengers are younger couples, or children given the ride as a gift."

//at a glance

Company

- Great Escape Ballooning

Industry

- Leisure

Viatel Solution

- Viatel Hosting and Broadband service

Key Benefits

- Rapid access to website
- Fully managed & supported service eliminates need for in-house IT
- Secure hosting environment with backup servers for added resilience

"Viatel's support has been invaluable in helping us get our internet venture off the ground."

Kevin Viney, Managing Director



/the right connection

From the outset the hosting and connectivity for Great Escape's website has been provided by Viatel, and the connection has recently been upgraded from dial-up to broadband.

"Broadband has made a massive difference to our business." Viney continued "Customers are placing their lives in our hands, and therefore a robust and reliable website is a great boon when trying to instil trust in the nervous first-time customer."

Broadband has also allowed the firm to improve its operating strategy, with real-time weather reports now able to be streamed into the Great Escape offices, and more effective judgements made on whether conditions will be suitable for flying.

/a helping hand

"Viatel's support has been invaluable in helping us get our internet venture off the ground." Viney continues "We're a small organisation with no real IT grounding, so we relied heavily on Viatel to help us choose the most appropriate solution for our business. Now that the service is up and running, we know that we can rely on Viatel to give us the support we need."

Great Escape's website is hosted at Viatel's secure facility just outside London, and in case of failure is mirrored onto backup servers. Network traffic and website performance are monitored by Viatel's skilled network technicians.

/about us

Viatel provides business communications services to companies of all sizes across Europe. We think differently at Viatel. We listen to our customers, make a point of understanding their needs, and deliver a service that is right for them, not most convenient for us. We have been in this market since 1991 and we are here to stay.

/want to know more?

To find out more about Viatel services, please contact one of our team or visit our website at www.viatel.com

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Your feedback matters, so if you have any questions, comments or suggestions please email us at info@viatel.com

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