



Digital pioneer – *a&o Hostels* switch successfully to the web-based property management system powered by the software company ASSD

Vision, dynamic, change: within the hostel industry a&o has always been a trendsetter regarding technical and operational innovations. Only within a few months they have very successfully changed all of their 40 hostels in 23 cities and 9 European countries to the web-based ASSD Hospitality Cloud 3.0.

„It has always been evident to us that we would move from a windows- to a web-based system with ASSD. From the very beginning ASSD has provided us with comprehensive support, they react steadily and promptly to our specific requests and for many years now we have together grown as companies.” Oliver Winter, CEO *a&o Hostels*

Since the opening of the first *a&o Hostel* Berlin Friedrichshain back in 2000, the windows-based ASSD PMS has reliably accompanied *a&o*'s successful rising. In the course of 2021 the web-based, with PHP and MySQL completely new developed

„Huge benefit: no extra training time and no unnecessary expenses for a new system!“ Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o Hostels*

ASSD Property Management Software has superseded the former host system. The transformation process was enormously facilitated due to the fact that the new system offers a hundred percent data and set-up compatibility with the former windows software.

The advantages are crystal clear to *a&o hostels*: at the push of a button all data can be transferred. Custom made configurations that have been set up over many years can thus remain untouched and the daily work process goes continually on without needing to re-train staff.

How exactly is the software migration done at such a large and international chain?
Live Premiere in April 2021: following intense briefings and preparations the *a&o Hostel Berlin Main Station* was the first to be switched from the windows- to the web-based ASSD PMS. Afterwards they gave it a go and tested thoroughly all functions, interfaces and features, not only in Berlin but also at the meanwhile newly opened *a&o Hostel Edinburgh* which has been run with the web-based system from the very beginning.



As soon as everything went save, sound and smoothly in the German as well as in the Scottish Capital, the migration of the *a&o Hostel Hamburg City* followed. With more than 2.000 beds is this the largest of all *a&o hostels*. Any resulting adjustments and modifications occurring throughout the

“A minimum disturbance of the everyday operations and thus for our guests was extremely important to us regarding the migrations.” Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o Hostels*

subsequent live phase were implemented with the ASSD developers in a short time. Downtimes or system failures did not occur.

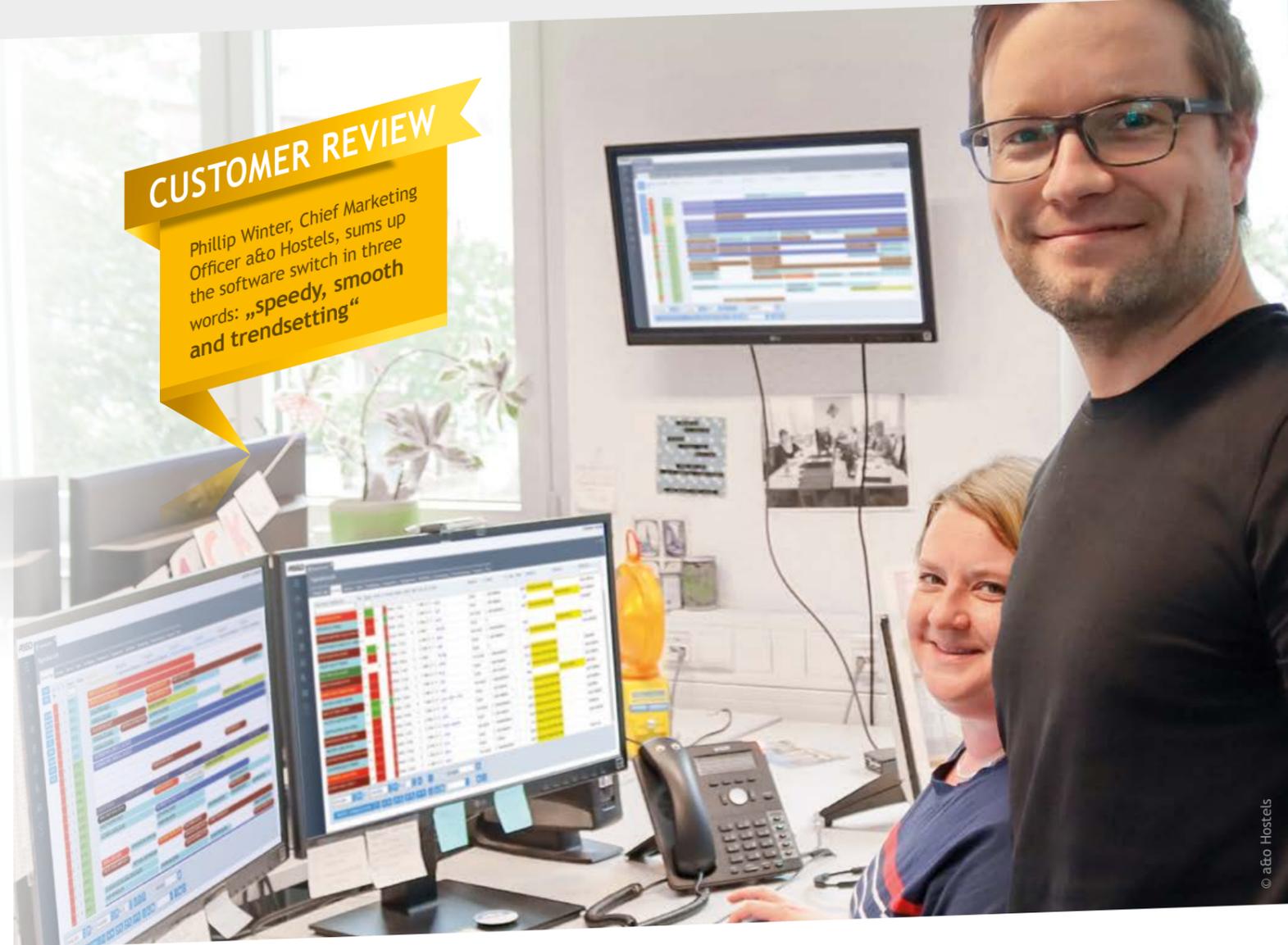
„Our first test migration was still a bit bumpy. But due to that test phase we could eliminate a great deal of issues and develop an efficient migration plan for all future switches. We have had daily exchanges and talks with ASSD, all problems were solved immediately. Needs for optimisations were met really fast and all further migrations went absolutely well.” (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o hostels*)

The successful completion of the first as well as the largest hostel was the kick-off for the finish: from September to December 2021 all other 38 European *a&o hostels* have been migrated to the web-based ASSD system, following a strict schedule. This means on average two or three migrations per week. Depending on the size of the hostel it took up to half a day or in many cases rather half a night to not disturb the daytime hostel business.

To keep up the common guest database throughout the migration process was one of the specific challenges. Within four months some of the 40 *a&o hostels* were

CUSTOMER REVIEW

Phillip Winter, Chief Marketing Officer *a&o Hostels*, sums up the software switch in three words: „speedy, smooth and trendsetting“



still working with the previous windows software whereas others have already been switched to the new web-based property management system and yet all of them had to access the same guest database. This never posed a problem, even at critical load times.

An effective interface to *a&o*'s Channel Manager as well as the fiscal requirements all over Europe were additional strong challenges that were met easily by the web-based ASSD PMS.

Besides it was extremely important for *a&o* to take along their staff “as changes are known to scare sometimes”(Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o hostels*). The responses after

the migrations speak for themselves: „Especially new colleagues value the comprehensibility of the web-based system, processes are more intuitive. Also long-time employees would not switch back to the windows software. They all got used to the new surface in no time at all and appreciate the modern functions and extended options.” (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o hostels*)

The new dashboard, showing all relevant data at a glance, earns a very special applause from the staff. Immediately after login the display shows all arrivals and departures and also the average rates for the current day as well as the upcoming fortnight.

Why switch at all when the windows system is reliably running?

„Regarding our further growth it is extremely important to us to work with a stable PMS that meets our requirements and the needs of a continually growing database. We would have soon reached our limits with the old windows system.“ (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o hostels*)

Without doubt web-based systems are the future. To *a&o hostels* it is only a matter of time that windows software can no longer keep up with latest developments. Modern technologies set a high standard and speed. External impacts like the Corona pandemic additionally encourage digital and contactless implementations.



On top, a progressive company like *a&o*, focussing on expansion and evolution essentially relies on state-of-the-art-technologies. The web-based system is significantly more scalable and prevents pace losses even if further 40, 80 or 100 properties go online. To switch to the new web-based ASSD PMS is a technological leap that is indispensable for future development.

a&o's overall results are straight positive:

- **Speed and flexible use**

„Our new ASSD PMS is significantly faster than the windows system and serves us with a clear cloud benefit: you can work anywhere and anytime, all you need is a tablet or computer and off you go.“ (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o Hostels*)

- **Precious real-time information**

„We are now able to track our sales in real-time and company-wide. That was much more of a hassle in the past.“ (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o hostels*)



- **Impressive individual layout options and customisation**

„The new PMS on the basis of PHP as well as the brandnew report generator enable us to set up most reports and letters ourselves. Also the one-click-email feature gained great individual options.“ (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o Hostels*)

- **Huge benefits with new technology**

„We have now unlimited databases and the new system requires less maintenance. In addition, the modern programming language makes future interface linking much easier.“ (Sven Pflüger, Head Supervisor PMS *a&o Hostels*)

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