

Data#3 Customer Story

# Knight Frank

*Knight Frank Cloud Transition Enables  
Breakthrough Property Services*

Data#3



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## Project Highlight

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Craig Holt, Head of IT,  
Knight Frank Australia.

## Objective

The Knight Frank team in Australia sought to reduce its on-premises data centre footprint and create operational efficiencies by moving to the cloud. Aside from increasing resiliency and capacity, it was intended for the new process to pave the way for a smarter use of data and provide the foundation for Knight Frank to offer exciting new services for customers.

## Approach

Initially, Knight Frank considered a number of major cloud providers. As they narrowed down the options, Microsoft Azure emerged as the platform that would best suit their needs. Knight Frank had an existing relationship with Data#3, built over the course of many successful projects. Knowing that Data#3 is Microsoft’s largest Australian business partner, and an Azure Expert MSP, meant Knight Frank was confident in their abilities to deliver the solution.

## Solutions & Services

- ☑ Microsoft Azure
- ☑ Project Services
- ☑ Cloud Migration

## Benefits

- Azure workload migration from data centre to cloud
- Enabled Azure BI and Analytics
- Skill Share with the Knight Frank team
- Improved performance, visibility, and agility
- Able to introduce new services for customers
- Better insights from data
- Support needs managed locally

## Testimonial

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## Knight Frank

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## The Background

Knight Frank is a highly respected global property brand, with 22 of its 488 offices located in Australia. Headquartered in London, the business has built its name on quality and service. Today, Knight Frank's Australian business marries this tradition with a technology-forward approach that gives customers access to modern capabilities and service excellence.

In the past, the Australian team managed on-premises infrastructure, supported by colleagues in the UK. The time difference often made interactions challenging, and the team saw the potential to modernise its service while escaping support challenges by moving to the cloud. This transition would set the foundation for a digital transformation, enabling new services to continually improve customer experience.

## The Challenge

For Knight Frank Australia, it knew that it was top their top priority to assess the current situation, and identify opportunities that would better align the business as it moves to forward. As part of that process, Craig Holt, Head of Information Technology looked beyond the IT environment, and investigated Knight Frank's overall strategic direction.

*“First, I looked at where we were succeeding, what business gaps existed, and where the organisation needed to go. We did an assessment of our existing footprint, and discovered that a lot of machines were at, or approaching, end of life. It was important to take that step back and ask ourselves, where do we want to go?”*

The planned transition to cloud was about far more than merely addressing any support challenges. It would allow the Knight Frank team to focus more on building services and advancing the business, because less of their time would be poured into infrastructure matters.

It would also provide a modern, agile platform for digital transformation that keeps the business at the forefront of the property industry.

*“Cloud would give us better security, flexibility, and agility, but for Knight Frank, it was also around the transformation of apps and workloads, collaboration, and remote working. It was also about how we were engaging with the customer. We wanted our cloud journey to be an enabling force,”* said Holt.

Knight Frank enlisted Data#3 and Microsoft to help with a cloud migration assessment, followed by a three-phase project to migrate their data centres to Microsoft Azure.

*“For us, the focus was on the next phase of where we were going as an organisation, and what we would be bringing to market. We developed a ‘cloud-first’ strategy as a result. After we did benchmarking on what our environment could look like on each of the major cloud platforms, we settled on Azure. We worked closely with Microsoft and Data#3 to build in more detail about what that would look like,”* explained Holt.

Knight Frank was keen to avoid simply relocating their IT ecosystem ‘as is’ to the cloud, and instead wanted to employ Software as a Service (SaaS) alternatives to existing applications where possible.

## **Knight Frank**

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## **IT Outcome**

Data#3 and Microsoft specialists worked closely with Knight Frank to draw up a detailed transition map to the Azure platform.

*“From our initial business case, we built the move as much as possible around cloud. We started moving to cloud for traditional reasons, like wanting to shut down our data centre, but as we drilled into the apps we used, and those available with the new platform, we broke into smaller groups, and looked at the longer-term opportunities for cloud. It is not a static solution - even today, we continue to evolve and build new things,”* outlined Holt.

Initially, work followed a planned timeline, but all that changed when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Overnight, remote working became essential for the entire business, while many services were brought forward to help Knight Frank’s customers to adjust to the sudden changes they faced.

*“COVID-19 accelerated much of our work. It meant we had to roll out the project, and get the work done quickly. Part of our cloud story is the ability to scale, build and run services quickly. Twelve months ago, we would not have been able to roll out toolsets as we have; we built and deployed our cloud platform in three months,”* stated Holt.

While Holt had worked with Azure before, for some of his team this was a new experience.

*“Many of the team members had not worked with Azure, but Data#3 and Microsoft facilitated both formal and informal training. We wanted Data#3 to involve us in the process throughout, so we could upskill on the platform as we went. I saw this as key to our success.”*

## **Business Outcome**

The Knight Frank team saw cloud as an enabler, rather than a destination in itself. True to their traditions of service, when the pandemic struck, they worked to find meaningful ways to help customers in their time of need. The ability to harness data assets was a cornerstone of the initial plan, using Power BI and Analytics to create insights that would hold meaning and value for customers.

*“Working with data analytics aligned closely to our cloud project. We were able to take data coming from the cloud and visualise it,”* said Holt.

*“We manage portfolios like office buildings and shopping centres, and were able to use financial data around rents, outgoings, and electricity and water utilities, and analyse sustainability goals, in a number of initiatives. We could share that data with customers. For example, one large shopping centre owner now has a tenant portal, where retailers can administer their leases, make payments, and use a messaging platform behind that. Retail has had a tough time through the COVID-19 pandemic, but our customer has a whole engagement platform, which means they are getting paid quicker, and have access to better, up-to-date communications with retailers, giving them better visibility.”*

Bringing forward these initiatives involved a frequent reworking of the planned rollout, and Holt said highly valued the approach of Data#3 and Microsoft. It was all about getting the job done.

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The availability of local support has not simply been a matter of convenience for Knight Frank. Holt said that the relationship with Data#3 and Microsoft has been all-important.

*“This has really been a transformation project, rebuilding and reworking workloads, and rolling out new services for customers. It helped that Data#3 has a view of our organisation in terms of where we want to go, they understand our direction. They are not treated as a vendor, but as a partner that understands the bigger picture, and this leads to better results.”*

### Conclusion

For the team at Knight Frank Australia, the planning and preparation for their cloud transition and subsequent analytics projects paid off when facing the unexpected. At a time when many organisations scrambled to take an unplanned leap, Knight Frank was positioned to capitalise on the work they had already done.

*“We accelerated in our team, and cloud was a critical part of that. We became a more agile organisation that could move as quickly as our clients needed us to. Our industry is in various stages of digital transformation, but we have been more agile with our speed to market,”* highlighted Holt.

*“We were able to take advantage during the COVID-19 pandemic of the work we had put in. It levelled the playing field in some ways. Technology has been a bigger factor since COVID-19, and with customers now discussions are no longer just about the traditional service we provide, but about our technology platform.”*

The response from customers has been positive, concluded Holt.

*“Customer engagement with the new services is fantastic. The data analytics is changing how they forecast, what their portfolio looks like, their view of how their assets are performing. This will change the way they do business – we are invested in making our client’s live easier by putting the power of data back in their hands, so they can make better decisions.”*