

Knight Frank

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Craig Holt, Head of Information Technology, Knight Frank.

Business Outcome

The Knight Frank IT team has a strong focus on delivering a superior service to their users and the flexibility they gained contributed to successfully delivering on their project outcomes. There were also some less anticipated gains that caught user attention.

“We believed we had good performance, then we migrated to Microsoft Azure. Suddenly, the finance department noticed that everything was running quicker, and asked us what we had done,” recounted Holt.

The direct and indirect cost benefits have been significant for Knight Frank. What Holt described as a “flexible commitment to resources” enabled by the cloud environment mean that the business only pays for the resources it uses, when it uses them, without the waste of on-premises hardware sitting idle when it is not needed. That was only the start.

“We have office moves coming up and we don’t have to worry about provision of server rooms, so it is less hassle and expense. No special air conditioning and heat control are needed for sensitive equipment, which is another huge benefit,” said Holt.

“The development team can stand up equipment and, more importantly, stand it down when they are not using it, with auto shut-down reducing energy usage and cost.”

A reduction in energy consumption also serves to support environmental initiatives within the business, something that Holt has seen resonating with the Knight Frank client base.

“Another benefit is to our environmental, social and governance reporting. When we complete the move, we will be able to accurately report on our environmental footprint, where previously we had no way of getting a complete picture of our energy usage. There are tools in Microsoft Azure to make the process easier to see our environmental footprint. This is very much inline with supporting our journey to Net Zero.”

Conclusion

Transitioning to cloud has clear advantages in terms of flexibility, performance, and both financial and environmental cost but to gain full benefit, Holt said it is necessary to choose the right technology partner.

“It can be daunting, and it required a huge change in skills. Find a partner who is going to assist in building those skills through show and tell, and skill share sessions. We now have a team who are super-proficient with Microsoft Azure, and this came from Data#3’s knowledge transfer,” recalled Holt.

“They have a huge depth of resources, people of all skill levels, and they are backed by Microsoft supporting them. We had Microsoft on our fortnightly calls to go through any challenges we had and help us with any unknowns.”

Transitioning to the Microsoft Azure environment has freed Knight Frank from the usual hardware upgrade cycle, something that Holt described as “stressful” and “always involving risk”. Instead, the team can concentrate on the innovation and attention to detail that has given the business its highly regarded reputation.

“Replacing hardware in a data centre is fraught with potential problems but it will never again be a problem for us. There’s no way our internal team, no matter how good, could maintain an environment like Microsoft can because they have the resources. The way we look at it, if a system has a problem at Microsoft, they have got thousands of people to fix it – here we have a modest team.”

“Things are vastly different now. We have unlimited flexibility, if we need a sudden increase, we have the capability to provide it. The flexibility is the biggest thing.”

