

# Nominee: Six Degrees Group

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## Nomination title: Cloud Project of the Year

Renowned as one of the most innovative and forward-thinking residential estate agents in London, Foxtons has grown rapidly since its launch in 1981, opening 58 offices across London, Middlesex and Surrey. The offices manage thousands of properties, all of which are visible on the estate agent's interactive and award-winning website Foxtons.co.uk. Over the past three decades the estate agent has become well known for embracing change, with its online capabilities and presence having to keep pace in order to reflect the ever-changing demands of its customers.

### The challenge

Foxtons entire operation is underpinned by the company website. As the customer's first point of engagement, its website is a crucial part of their customer experience, it acts as a vital, experience-enhancing, self-service information hub. The website features interactive floorplans, 360° virtual tours, numerous colour photographs, slide shows, local information, location maps, aerial views and full colour brochures for every property Foxtons promotes.

With the property market constantly evolving, the website has also adapted to serve as an online portal for landlords and tenants to sign documents electronically, manage secure online payments and access online statements.

Foxtons team of expert IT developers had built the impressive applications and functionalities behind the website but there was a technology gap between their developments and the performance of the estate agent's infrastructure. The company needed a secure, resilient hosting environment to ensure the website achieved optimum performance in an increasingly competitive market.

### The Solution

Foxtons engaged Six Degrees Group (6DG) to design and provide a managed hosting environment to support its current and future website requirements. 6DG deployed a dual-site, highly-available and scalable web-hosting platform with a fully managed backup and disaster recovery solution. The primary environment consists of 6DG's specialist virtual private cloud environment, known as the 6DG Cloud Pod, located in its own highly secure, managed data centre in Birmingham.

The cloud hosting platform consists of two cloud web servers plus a back-end database, virtual firewall and virtual load balancer. As it is fully scalable, the private cloud configuration allows for additional resources (physical and/or virtual) to be added for short-term bursting and long-term growth. For added resilience, the solution is geo-replicated on 6DG's private cloud platform in London, allowing for full disaster recovery.

To provide Foxtons with a private, secure connection to its cloud platform, 6DG has deployed an MPLS network directly into the virtual private cloud. The network is completely resilient with the ability to re-route in less than 50 milliseconds and is capable of keeping traffic flowing to the

website 24/7. If a fault were to occur, 6DG's self-healing network means that neither Foxtons nor customers using the site would notice a thing.

#### **Cloud innovation, resiliency and support**

The Foxtons website now benefits from a two-site primary and secondary hosting platform, allowing the site to function with zero downtime. The estate agency has a resilient, high quality cloud to ensure its operations continue to run smoothly and efficiently. By deploying cloud technology, it leads the way as an estate agency for the future.

Working with the experts at 6DG also means the Foxtons IT team has total flexibility. They are able to pick up the phone and talk to 6DG at any time.

Leo Lapworth, Web Manager, Foxtons says: "Having an innovative, interactive website is an important part of what sets Foxtons apart from the rest of the market. The team at 6DG understands how important the website is to our business. They have helped us to create a unique hosting platform that can support the website as Foxtons continues to meet the changing needs of the London property market."

Campbell Williams, Group Strategy and Marketing Director, Six Degrees Group says "The Foxtons website is vital to its business functionality, as it is the first point of customer engagement when they start a property search. As such Foxtons needs a resilient, high quality cloud to ensure its operations continue to run smoothly and efficiently. By deploying cloud technology, Foxtons leads the way as an estate agency for the future. Working with the 6DG experts give the Foxtons IT team total flexibility, whilst the company continues to grow."

### **Why nominee should win**

- \* 6DG's unique managed hosting environment enabled Foxtons to use cloud technology to lead the way as an estate agency for the future
- \* 6DG provide a dual-site, highly-available and scalable web-hosting platform with fully managed backup and disaster recovery solution
- \* The private cloud configuration allows for additional resources (physical and/or virtual) to be added for short-term bursting and long-term growth
- \* The MPLS network can re-route in less than 50 milliseconds and is capable of keeping traffic flowing to the website 24/7
- \* Process was smooth and painless with minimal disruption

