move with US ™

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CONSULTING

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How Move with Us puts property data in the hands of home owners

Founded in 1997 and employing over 300 people in Cambridgeshire, Move with Us is trusted by the UK's leading house builders, probate practitioners and mortgage lenders, providing a broad range of services and tools to help consumers and businesses value, manage and sell their properties.

Client Overview

Through their partner network, comprised of over 1,200 independent estate agent offices in the UK, they manage more than 6,000 moves a year providing property instructions, conveyancing and moving services. Their nationwide panel of solicitors manage over 60,000 conveyancing transactions per annum.
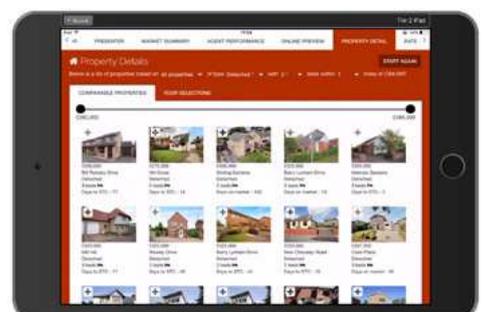
Move with Us has 10 years' experience assisting UK house builders with their part-exchange activity and has rapidly grown to become the largest provider of part-exchange management services in the UK.

Data insights drive market valuations and Move with Us are committed to analysing the housing market, identifying key trends and using data to help clients enjoy success in the current and future property market.

Their residential Market Review is produced every quarter, analysing over 3,400 property sales completed by Move with Us, with data derived from around 750,000 property listings supplied by Home.co.uk.

Move with Us is also home to the UK's largest Rental Index which takes a weekly snapshot of over 150,000 rental properties advertised on major portals across eleven regions in the UK covering England, Wales and Scotland.

Their significant business growth has been recognised with a number of prestigious awards, including Deloitte's top 1000 performing business in 2012; Grant Thornton top 100 businesses in Cambridge in 2012; the Telegraph Fast Growth List, 2011; The Sunday Times Profit Track 100 award in 2008, 2009 and 2013 in addition to the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 award in 2005 and 2006.

Project Brief

Move With Us wanted to 'externalise' their data to create tablet-based sales support applications for their primary sales channels – firstly their network of independent estate agents and secondly their house building partners running on-site marketing offices.

Whilst the smart use of property data is the common denominator between each, the need for two separate applications was clear from the outset.

The Move with Us MarketApp was conceived as a way to provide localised housing market insights for network agents, and to help them secure more listings when used in initial consultations with vendors in their homes. The follow-on benefit being additional conveyancing business for the Move with Us panel providers.

This was seen as a demonstrable way of adding value to the network support package, whilst creating a clear point of difference and securing local market advantage.

However, converting more local area opportunities into actual listings and conveyancing deals is a different sales scenario to supporting house builders dealing with home owners visiting site offices, looking to part-exchange their property, often moving from outside the area.

As a result, the need for a second application – Move with Us iPX – was identified. In this application, whilst property data is used to support likely sales prices, the emphasis is on data-capture and automating the process of booking and scheduling valuation appointments.
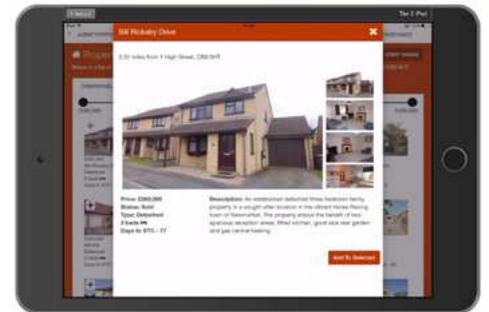
Project Delivery – MarketApp

The objective was to create a rich-media iOS tablet-based mobile application with a personalised front-end presentation to introduce the agency office and key personnel.

Using overnight syncing with Move with Us data feeds, the agent can use property details from homes already on the market to allow the vendor to rate and compare their home with others and review similar property valuations.

The agent can show the percentage of those similar properties sold and time on the market – along with a review of how well other estate agents in the area have performed with similar properties.

Also, by using the camera on the tablet, the agent can show the vendor how their property would look on the various property sale platforms (RightMove, Zoopla).
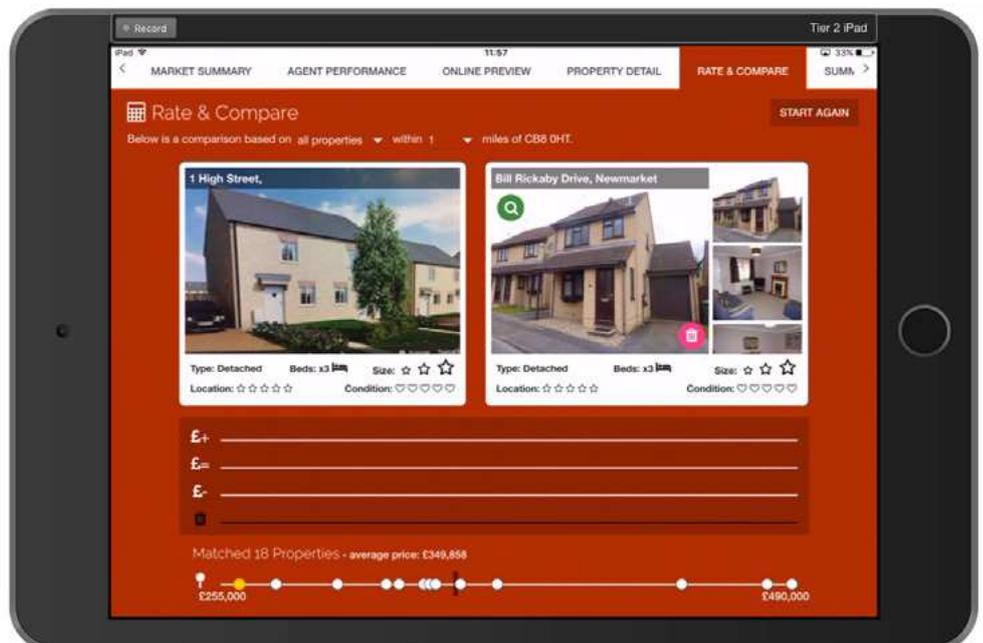
The aim was to find a way of delivering personalised market data into a mobile application that engaged the vendor with transparent, geo-targeted value

comparisons and market dynamics, whilst capturing the necessary vendor details to make the listing process a seamless, efficient and productive experience for all concerned.

The secured listing triggers a number of actions, including the conveyancing referral to panel member with a date and time allocated for the appointment.

MarketApp is not dependent on internet connectivity and is able to run localised property searches and deliver market data as a result of the overnight syncing.

Project Delivery – iPX

The needs of the many house builders who partner with Move with Us sit firmly at the centre of the functionality of iPX, with the aim of converting as many part-exchange opportunities as possible with value-adding technology.

Sales consultants use the iOS tablet-based iPX to first showcase their company and their schemes, before moving through the process of collecting vital data about the client and the property they are looking to part exchange, using guided menus and drop down menu selections where possible.
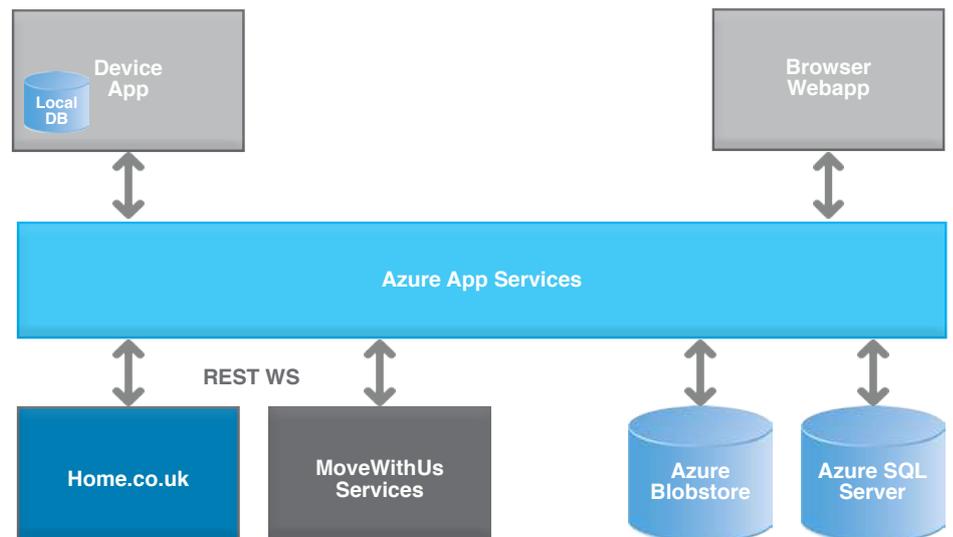
Online property searches can be done from iPX to review their property (if already on the market) which forms part of a comprehensive property comparison and valuation exercise, supported by a unique Market Appraisal Report.

iPX makes the sales process more engaging, less time consuming and automates the process of scheduling valuation appointments – delivering excellent customer service from site visit through to part-exchanged completion.

From the house builders perspective, the free to use iPX demonstrates a tangible commitment from Move with Us to be their partner of choice.

In terms of equitable valuations, the need for transparency and independent observation is paramount. iPX uses data integrity to build trust between house builder and house buyer.

Technical Overview

The web services were developed using standards-based Java based technologies, and deployed on Azure Cloud services with Azure SQL and App services for Tomcat & IIS. A core component of the services, triggered via overnight updates, is to capture the latest property data from the Home.co.uk data services. This data contains the current properties on the market, as well as historical information of properties sold, and is persisted in the Azure SQL database with any associated images uploaded into the Azure Blobstore.

The Apache Cordova platform provides the ability to build & package an HTML5 application as a native application that can be deployed on to a device, supporting multiple device platforms. An initial requirement was to be able to provide both a browser-based and device application. Apache Cordova was the perfect fit, allowing the development of a single codebase for both, with separate build/deploy strategies.

The architecture followed the core principles of a single-page application, based on the AngularJS framework, and was developed with standards-based

web, mobile development technologies and best practices. The native device functionality, such as camera/database/geo-location/network state, is also provided by the importing individual Cordova plugins into the project.

Agents are able to sync their device with all the latest property data and images for their respective area via the Azure cloud services, which persists into the local device database and file store for offline access. An agent can guide a client through the valuation process, accessing data/images for properties in their immediate vicinity, capture the client's information, take photographs of their property locally on the device and then immediately search/view this data on-demand.

The valuation sync functionality pushes their local valuations to the Azure cloud services and retrieves other valuations associated with that team. The agent valuation interaction on the device is fully audited and persisted during this sync process, allowing external systems to create comprehensive reporting across regions, offices and agents.

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Client Perspective

"Tier 2 Consulting came highly recommended but of course the proof is always in the pudding, reflected Ben Greco, Move with Us Managing Director.

I'm pleased to say we've been delighted with the technical skills, team effort and pragmatic approach taken by Tier 2 and by their ability to meet some pretty tough deadlines set as a result of the need to have prototypes ready for partner events.

Using iterative development techniques and agile methodologies, their project management skills have helped us and our third party data providers keep on track - running a detailed program of work with calmness and professionalism.
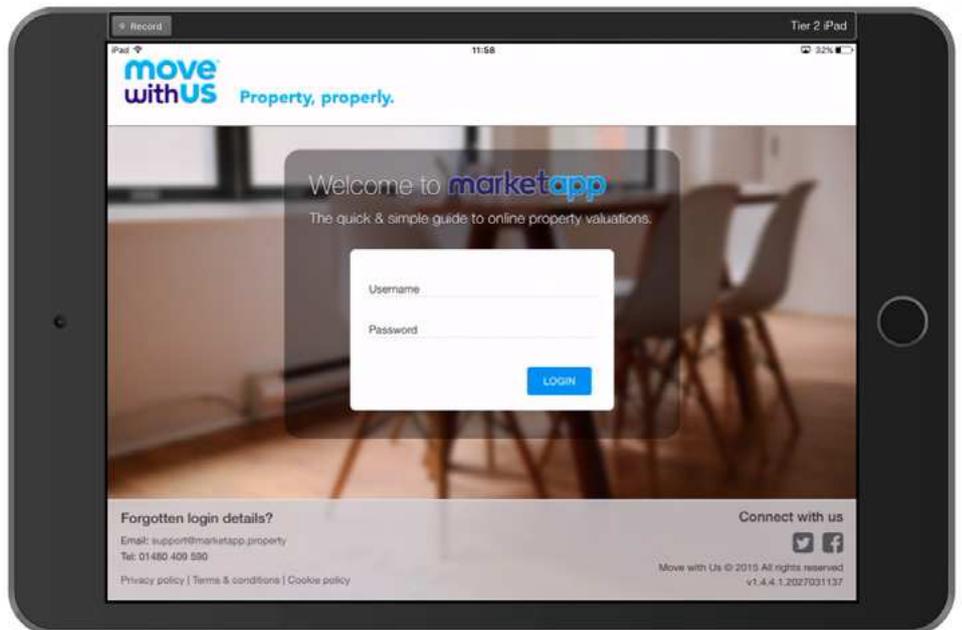
They've accommodated our change requests with patience and in an intelligent manner, often suggesting a path of least expense rather than just citing a way forward that would add significant cost. That in itself is a refreshing quality.

We knew we could do more with our data and through these mobile applications our work with Tier 2 has opened our eyes as to how technology can have a significant impact on customer service and a differentiated offering.

So rather than data just driving internal processes we can see how it will also help us attract new partners and win more business.

We would have every confidence in Tier 2 Consulting helping us do more in this space and have no hesitation in recommending their mobile and web application design and build skills."

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