



# SAFE AS HOUSES



## How a proactive approach to IT has built a firm foundation for growth and stability for one Kent Estate Agency

*It's one of the most stressful times of your life, so they say! When you've spent weeks dealing with your estate agent, solicitor and buyer, the last thing you need is for the completion of your house sale to stall because of an IT problem. If you're a landlord, collecting rents on time is critical for your business.*

*We asked Robert Brady, Sales & Lettings Director of Canterbury based Regal Estates, about the challenges of maintaining business continuity in a busy, thriving agency.*



## The property market has seen a lot of change in recent years, how has this impacted your company?

*Business has seen substantial growth and expansion into new areas. Our lettings business has doubled in the last five years, driven by a significant increase in professional lets.*

*We now have over 25 skilled staff covering East Kent, and their main aim is building close relationships with our customers. Maintaining that personal touch matters a great deal to us, and is absolutely at the heart of our philosophy.*

*Every member of the team takes their responsibilities very personally, and treat their work as a "mini business" within the overall company.*

## “THE PERSONAL TOUCH MATTERS”

### How have these changes affected your IT systems?

*Everything has become much more time critical. Sometimes we need to move fast to satisfy our clients.*

*If we're selling a property, we need to get the details and images up on our website as quickly as possible. On completion day it is imperative we can keep communications flowing to make sure everything happens when it needs to.*

*More importantly, our lettings business is very time critical. Every working day we receive rent from tenants and have to process and reconcile them before making payments to our landlords. That makes our clients' businesses dependent upon ours.*

*If we have an IT outage, it's not just our cash-flow that is affected, and that means a lot of pressure to keep our systems running efficiently.*



## “A TIME CRITICAL BUSINESS”

## How did your systems cope as the business grew?

*Initially, things worked out well, but as we grew we began to experience regular issues.*

*Even though we worked with our supplier to keep the system updated, our servers often became very slow. We'd regularly experience downtime of three or four hours. So managing our growth was very challenging as the IT issues were badly affecting our effectiveness.*

## “MANAGING GROWTH BECAME A CHALLENGE”

### How did you go about identifying and dealing with these problems?

*We asked our previous IT supplier to quote for some new upgrades to help alleviate the problems. Around the same time, I had met Jacqui from JJ Systems at a networking event. I immediately liked the way she seemed to understand my issues and talked to me in a way I could easily understand.*

*So I asked her to provide a like-for-like quote, but she refused!*

*Instead, she and her team took the time to get to know our business and undertook a survey of our systems. They put forward an alternative solution that we liked the look of, and we went ahead.*

## “WE NEEDED TO INVEST WHERE IT WAS NEEDED”

### How did that differ from what you already had in place?

*We soon began to realise that we had been wasting time and money on pointless upgrades. We'd invest money and get no proper return and learned, with Jacqui's help, how to target our IT spend where it was needed.*

*Now with JJ Systems we have an ongoing programme of reviews and phased upgrades that enable us to maintain the performance and reliability of our systems.*

*Problems are fixed much more quickly now, due to both the fast response we experience with JJ Systems, and the fact everything is tailored to our needs as a business.*



## “WE'RE READY FOR ANYTHING!”

### With IT playing such a vital role in your business how do you maintain security?

*We put all our staff through JJ's cyber awareness training. That way we know our team have all the information they need to work effectively and keep our system safe from cyber threats.*

*We've also signed up for their Disaster Recovery service - which means that if we experience a fire at one of our offices or some other catastrophic event, we can move to their facility. We know the systems have been properly backed-up and can be quickly replicated with our staff up and running as normal within hours.*

*With such a time critical business, it is a great comfort to know we have easy access to the right kind of place to do business from; we're ready for anything!*

