



G6 Hospitality Leads Business Transformation with Cloud First Strategy

**Flux7 Helps Implement G6 Hospitality IT 2.0 Program, Enabling
Strategic Business Goals through Technology Innovation**

Case Study

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Profile: At G6 Hospitality, it is their mission is to build on the iconic heritage of their brands – Motel 6 and Studio 6 – to become the universally recognized leader in economy lodging. G6 Hospitality operates its business with the drive and creativity of an entrepreneur, guided by a heart that's dedicated to hospitality and service. The G6 Hospitality network consists of more than 1,400 locations in the U.S. and Canada and in 2015, it was rated one of the top ten hospitality companies according to the Hotel Management Top Hotel Companies rankings list, which evaluated over 260 hotel companies.

Challenge: Striving to continuously reinvent the economy lodging category while remaining 100 percent committed to delivering a great experience to its guests, team members, franchisees and partners, G6 Hospitality challenged itself to a major transformation of its technology platforms. Named IT 2.0, the program has three succinct goals:

1. Cloud-first in their technology approach—through three paths: strategic sourcing of off the shelf SaaS solutions; building tailored solutions with the help of partners (like HotelKey and Above Property) that are born in the cloud; and building competitively-advantageous cloud solutions themselves with the help of consultants Flux7.
2. Increase the 'option value' of the G6 Hospitality technology platforms—anticipating the ever-increasing evolution of business demands over time.
3. Increase the speed of their technology platforms in performance, flexibility, scalability and ability to respond to business goals faster (agility)—enabling business innovation at the strategic level.

Designed to address the rapidly changing landscape of the hospitality space where consumers are increasingly digital-first, and booking channels, like mobile sites, search and OTAs, are heavily technology driven, IT 2.0 is focused on increasing G6 Hospitality's responsiveness, connectivity, and mobile-friendliness.

Business Needs

Cloud-first approach to increase speed, flexibility, scalability

Strategic technology transformation in support of business goals

Increase the 'option value' of G6 Hospitality platforms

Technologies Used

AWS

Red Hat Openshift

Jenkins

Ansible



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Solution: G6 Hospitality EVP and CIO, Jessie Burgess, knew that both planning and creating strategic partnerships were imperative to a successful IT 2.0 implementation. The IT 2.0 program was designed first with the business in mind; the planning process proactively identified business needs and then, working from that foundation, mapped out how technology could best support those needs.

From the identified corporate initiatives, the G6 Hospitality technology team made several technology environment decisions. For example, they determined through a structured assessment process that becoming a single cloud shop, standardizing on AWS, was the best approach for their business. With this decision in hand, the team began looking for a cloud services integrator partner who could help the company build core components of its re-envisioned technology platform in the AWS cloud.

G6 Hospitality chose AWS Premier Consulting Partner Flux7 to help support its transition as both teams had a similar strategy of how to approach and attain the IT 2.0 program goals. Specifically, Mr. Burgess noted that, “our team is doing the important work today to keep the lights on and the business running. They can’t simultaneously do this and be dedicated to a project of this magnitude. While in the building phase, we need people who are one hundred percent dedicated to the project, and that’s where the Flux7 team -- and their AWS experience -- came in.”

Flux7’s deep AWS expertise allowed them to hit the ground running as they joined the G6 Hospitality team. According to Burgess, “They have the know-how which allows them to work at increased speed, with decreased mistakes and greater throughput. There is a huge benefit of working with people who already know how to do it.” However, the Flux7 team didn’t just come in and build the solution. Through a structured transition plan, it taught the G6 Hospitality team how to use, maintain, and extend the new systems. As Mr. Burgess points out, the speed of business and technology is moving so quickly that the team needs to build innovative systems today and an agile platform that can extend to support future, still undefined needs. Flux7’s experience contributed to G6 Hospitality’s ability to achieve both goals, innovating for today and extending toward tomorrow.

As the Flux7 team completes structured knowledge transfer phases with their G6 Hospitality counterparts, the G6 technology environment is moved from legacy system dependency to AWS, allowing the company to simultaneously retire technical debt and seamlessly reassign the Flux7 engineers to other parts of the IT 2.0 effort. In this way, G6 Hospitality is able to serve the business by keeping core systems running smoothly, advancing internal AWS knowledge, and efficiently utilizing financial resources—all while transitioning to the cloud and increasing the option value of its technology platforms.



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Growing Option Value: G6 Hospitality embraces the idea of Option Value, the concept of moving from an older, inflexible platform that may have technology and architectural limits, to a newer, more advanced platform with merits like flexibility—driven through innovation and best practices. The team evaluates these merits to better understand how they can respond to business needs in a rapid, efficient and effective way—with a higher likelihood of success. “Option value is the detailed measure of the increase in our ability to respond in a timely and effective manner to the business needs of tomorrow—which are often unseen today. It quantifies a continuing move from the enforced inflexibility of the past to the sustainable innovation needed for the future,” said Burgess.

One such example of how G6 Hospitality has grown its option value is its property management system. As the system that’s used when customers check in to a hotel, the property management system is critical to hotel staff efficiency and the guest experience. The company moved from a traditional on-premise, server-based, hub and spoke architecture solution that required highly customized PCs and several disparate peripherals behind the front desk to the all-new, cloud-based HotelKey property management system. Featuring a highly advanced architecture and an AWS back end, HotelKey is an application that runs on an iPad, making the check-in experience faster, more consistent and more engaging.

With the intuitive and flexible interface, the front desk staff can focus on the guest rather than the traditional, deep PC menus often required to complete the check-in process. Moreover, with fewer hardware components, the HotelKey app is easier to support and maintain. Whereas before the property would have to call central support to diagnose and fix critical hardware failures, (which could result in a lengthy process of ordering, configuring, shipping and reconnecting a system) now properties need only procure a highly-available, off-the-shelf iPad and download the AWS-delivered HotelKey app. With all of their data in the cloud, there is no lengthy reconfiguration to be back up and running—delivering a positive guest experience and resuming operational efficiency.

Prioritized based on business need and technology dependencies, G6 Hospitality has also made significant progress in retiring their legacy Central Reservations System platform, being replaced by the advanced AWS cloud-based Distributed Reservations System with AboveProperty. This platform includes an advanced, cloud-native core for rates and availability, revenue management optimization, property content, and call center application. While this significant transition of their core reservations environment is not yet complete, G6 Hospitality is already experiencing positive impacts from the speed, resiliency and flexibility of this advanced platform. In addition, G6 continues to build out other foundational services to AWS.



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Benefits: When G6 Hospitality launched its IT 2.0 program, it identified and documented all business objectives and metrics that would be critical to measuring return on investment. As a result of G6 Hospitality's detailed planning effort, the benefits of its new AWS-based systems are manifold.

A big benefit touted by the company is the lowered cost of experimentation. Now due to the flexibility of the AWS cloud platform, the G6 Hospitality team is able to explore and test new business initiatives faster and with less risk. And, with its agile scrum approach, the team is also able to subsequently innovate, build, and test faster -- with less cost. Changes that took several months before can now take just a couple of weeks.

With their fine-grained microservices architecture, G6 Hospitality is able to move more quickly today and will be able to change more quickly in the future. They are already reducing their dependence on legacy platforms while greatly increasing their flexibility. According to Burgess, "One of our goals was to achieve higher speed connections and updates across platforms, and as we're building out in the cloud, we're seeing increased parity of data and information across environments. We are also able to ensure that we establish and maintain a single source of truth for our data in the network, while requiring that our key vendors communicate through our foundation services."

They are improving interactions with guests and giving hotel general managers more capability to interact with staff and guests as they spend much less time on legacy, disparate or paper-based systems. With these changes, G6 Hospitality is able to open and onboard new properties faster, as training on these new systems is much faster and the time required to turn up a property and get connected has been greatly reduced. In addition, their ability to connect to vendors with more speed and flexibility is allowing greater ability to capitalize on business opportunities and operational needs. These changes create a virtuous cycle of benefits with greater guest, employee and franchisee satisfaction creating ripple effects throughout the business.

Yet, the biggest benefit of all of the G6 Hospitality cloud-first technology transformation is that it has empowered the company to be more visionary, innovative and successful in a way that wasn't possible even a decade ago.

About Flux7: As DevOps and AWS experts, Flux7 offers a suite of solutions that help organizations design, build, own and manage IT modernization projects. Focused on architecting and optimizing their clients' AWS infrastructure and training internal IT teams to manage their own infrastructure, Flux7 solutions are rooted in DevOps best practices. Flux7 has delivered hundreds of agile, right-sized projects to satisfied customers across industries, creating a well-architected core from which these business can own and expand their IT modernization.



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