



Investec Uses Customised System to Double Revenue Without Increasing Support Staff

Overview

Country or Region: UK Channel Islands

Industry: Financial services

Customer Profile

Investec Bank (Channel Islands)—a provider of offshore private banking services to a global client base—is part of the Investec international banking group.

Business Situation

Investec wanted to improve customer service with a customised banking system that could cope with its expanding business needs.

Solution

Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Vega Solutions deployed its internet-based Vision Online solution using Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft BizTalk Server, and Microsoft BizTalk Accelerator for SWIFT.

Benefits

- Consistency in support staff numbers
- Integrated straight-through processing SWIFT access
- Improved speed and complexity of reporting
- Enhanced competitive edge

“This has been an IT triumph. We have underpinned our private banking business with a robust, scalable Microsoft-based solution that is helping us meet our business challenges.”

Stephen Henry, Managing Director, Investec Bank (Channel Islands)

Investec Bank (Channel Islands)—a specialist provider of offshore private banking services—wanted to improve its core banking technology and manage its growing intermediary business more effectively. Vega Solutions replaced the bank’s previous banking system with a customised banking solution called Vision Online, based on Microsoft SQL Server and Microsoft BizTalk Server. Investec has doubled its revenue since 2004 without needing any extra back-office staff since the software went live. In the meantime, Vega Solutions has provided further enhancements. This has included integration with the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) network using Microsoft BizTalk Accelerator for SWIFT, and online banking giving customers straight-through processing for payments.



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Situation

Investec Bank (Channel Islands)—established in Guernsey in 1997—is part of the Investec international banking group. From a single office with fewer than 10 employees, it has expanded to become one of the most prominent providers of offshore private banking services in the United Kingdom, with a product range designed to meet the offshore needs of its global client base.

In 2003, Investec needed to replace its core banking system because vendor support for its current solution was being withdrawn. The bank used this opportunity to manage its expanding intermediary business more effectively and simplify processes for compliance with regulators. With thousands of new client profiles to handle, its existing—largely manual—system was struggling to keep pace. Determined to protect its reputation for excellence, Investec set about exploring options for a new core banking solution and development partner.

Investec wanted a system that would improve efficiency and allow the business to grow, without having to increase the size of its back-office team. Stephen Henry, Managing Director, Investec Bank (Channel Islands), says: “Our previous toolset had worked well in the past, but the changing nature of our business and new customer requirements meant it could no longer support our long-term requirements.”

Solution

Investec looked at its options and quickly discounted the banking systems on the market at the time. Some were too expensive or complex for the bank’s needs, whereas others were outdated or lacked the functionality that it required.

The quest for an end-to-end solution involved entering a business partnership with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Vega Solutions. Henry says: “The idea of having a customised banking solution instead of using technology from different vendors was first suggested by Vega Solutions.”

Investec was already using a secure internet application framework solution, called Sirius, developed by Vega Solutions. This provided the foundation for the banking solution and significantly reduced development time.

David Collings, Managing Director at Vega Solutions, says: “The initial project, which involved replacing the core banking system had a tight deadline, but we delivered it on time and within budget. After that, we deployed an online payment solution. The technology is industry standard, helping to ensure that there will be a future-proof development path.”

Henry adds: “Our online payment system Vision Online went live in less than three months. The Vega Solutions team was brilliant, making it look easy—and we were delighted with the outcome.”

In 2007, in a further development phase, Vision Online was integrated with the SWIFT network using Microsoft BizTalk Accelerator for SWIFT. This software extends the BizTalk Server environment to provide comprehensive, reliable, and secure delivery of financial messaging using the SWIFT format and network for its customers.

Recent developments of the solution include upgrading the database to Microsoft SQL Server and providing

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customers with online foreign exchange capabilities. Work on the foreign exchange feature began in 2010 and is scheduled to go live in the second quarter of 2011.

Benefits

Investec has stabilised back-office costs, while improving services—including online access to data and SWIFT integration—to both its account management teams and intermediaries. The bank has avoided the need for deploying software from different vendors by standardising on Vision Online from Vega Solutions, which is based on Microsoft products. Henry says: "This has been an IT triumph. We have underpinned our private banking business with a robust, scalable Microsoft-based solution that is helping us meet our business challenges."

Revenue Doubles While Back-Office Staff Numbers Remain Constant

Investec still has the same number of people managing its back-office services despite a doubling of revenue since 2004. Henry says: "At a time when our revenue has doubled despite the economic downturn, we have kept our support team at the same level. Greater automation has resulted in fewer manual processes and our experienced back-office staff can concentrate on exceptions highlighted by the automated system and other higher value work."

Clients Gain Self-Service SWIFT Processing Capability

BizTalk Accelerator for SWIFT ensures that customers and intermediaries can benefit from straight-through processing to the SWIFT network on a self-service basis. Henry says: "Clients like the look and feel of the online system. BizTalk Accelerator for SWIFT is highly

automated with little need for manual intervention."

Data Software Boosts Speed and Complexity of Reports

With changing business structures and increased complexities, Investec required a reliable, fast, and secure banking system that was simple to use, easy to interpret, and both flexible and scalable. With Vision Online, Investec will be in an even stronger position to accommodate changing regulatory requirements and provide detailed reports to customers. Investec is now always up to date with core banking requirements because its system runs on a platform that is constantly being enhanced to take advantage of the latest technical advances.

Collings says: "The key ingredient for success was how Vega Solutions bridged the gap between business requirements and IT." Henry adds: "Our banking system provides clearer and more comprehensive data, which is helping Investec make better decisions based on up-to-date information."

Partner Expertise Puts Investec One Step Ahead of Its Competitors

The business partnership forged between Investec and Vega Solutions has resulted in continuous improvement of customer service and innovation. Henry says: "Vision Online, which is based on Microsoft technology, is simple in structure, easy to use and fully functional. We could not have met the business challenges of the past six years—and stayed one step ahead of the competition—without the expertise and commitment of Vega Solutions."

For More Information

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www.microsoft.com

For more information about Vega Solutions products and services or visit the website at:

www.vegasolutions.co.uk

For more information about Investec Bank (Channel Islands) products and services or visit the website at:

www.investec-ci.com

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to:

www.microsoft.com/servers/default.mspx

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft BizTalk Server
 - Microsoft BizTalk Accelerator for SWIFT
 - Microsoft SQL Server

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Document published October 2010

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