

BANQUE
DE LUXEMBOURG

Overview

Country or Region: Luxembourg

Industry: Banking

Customer Profile

Established in 1920, Banque de Luxembourg is part of the French group, Crédit Mutuel. It serves a variety of business customers as well as individual depositors and employs 650 people.

Business Situation

The bank's Lotus Notes-based e-mail system was due for an update. The software was difficult for employees to use and had compatibility problems with other applications and devices.

Solution

Working with its IT partner, Telindus, Banque de Luxembourg deployed beta versions of Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007.

Benefits

- Easy-to-learn, user-friendly interface
- Better integration with other systems
- Anytime, anywhere access to messages
- Flexible platform for future enhancements

Bank Switches from Lotus Notes to Exchange Server, Improves Integration and Usability

“Microsoft devotes a great deal of attention to security features in Exchange Server 2007. As a bank, that puts our mind at ease.”

Stéphane Gérard, IT Operations Manager, Banque de Luxembourg

Banque de Luxembourg is part of the French group, Crédit Mutuel, and provides banking services to individuals and business customers. In early 2006, the company wanted to update its Lotus Notes-based enterprise messaging system. That system had become hard for employees to use and presented compatibility problems with other systems and devices that the bank used. In April 2006, Banque de Luxembourg decided to switch from Lotus Notes to Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007. Working with its IT partner, Telindus, the bank migrated its 650 employees to the new solution and trained them on how to use it. Now, employees can easily access messages anytime, anywhere, and on nearly any device, improving productivity. The new solution also integrates well with the bank's IT environment and provides a flexible platform for adding future enhancements.

“Thanks to the user-friendliness of Outlook 2007, two hours per employee was more than enough for the training sessions. Those who have followed the training program migrate immediately to Outlook 2007.”

Roland Spada, Head of Sales and Business Development for Microsoft Solutions and Services, Telindus

Situation

Banque de Luxembourg is a private bank established in 1920. The bank serves a variety of businesses as well as individual depositors. The company believes that personalized customer service is especially important. Banque de Luxembourg employs 650 people and is part of the French group, Crédit Mutuel.

In early 2006, the company's e-mail system, based on IBM Lotus Notes 6.5, was due for an update, mainly because of an outmoded interface and compatibility problems with the bank's other applications and devices. The bank believed that the Lotus Notes interface was not user-friendly and should be replaced with a solution presenting a more modern look. Also, the company wanted to adopt the latest messaging technologies so that any new solution would not itself become quickly outmoded.

Solution

In April 2006, at the request of its employees, Banque de Luxembourg decided to switch from Lotus Notes to Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007. The bank received a beta version of the software through the Microsoft Rapid Deployment Program (RDP). With the RDP, Microsoft offers customers the chance to test products that are not yet available on the market. These customers also enjoy direct support from Microsoft, can acquire software licenses at attractive rates, and have the opportunity to work with the latest technologies. The bank also chose the Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007 messaging and collaboration client, through which employees would access their Exchange Server 2007 messages and other information.

"The motivation to switch to Outlook 2007 first came from our employees," says Stéphane Gérard, IT Operations Manager at Banque de Luxembourg. "They wanted to

switch to Outlook because many of them also used it at home. Its similarity with other programs in the Microsoft Office system also ensures that employees immediately feel comfortable with it. Additionally, we were looking for more uniformity in our IT systems in order to create more synergy with our French parent company, Crédit Mutuel. Another reason for our decision to go with Exchange Server was the long-term vision that Microsoft brings to several areas of technology: Through its products, Microsoft capitalizes on the latest trends in unified messaging, video conferencing, and more. And Microsoft devotes a great deal of attention to security features in Exchange Server 2007. As a bank, that puts our mind at ease."

In a short period of time, 650 employees would have to switch from the old system to the new, and receive the necessary training to do so competently. In the meantime, all internal and external communication had to continue running without interruption. Banque de Luxembourg chose Telindus as its IT partner to supervise the entire project. "We have been working together with Telindus for some time now and that tends to generate a relationship of trust," says Gérard. "Thanks to its broad experience, Telindus can rightly be considered true experts."

"We have broad-ranging experience in Microsoft projects and migration management with both very large companies and very small ones," adds Roland Spada, Head of Sales and Business Development for Microsoft Solutions and Services at Telindus in Luxembourg. "Our range of services is therefore very complete: We provide the hardware, the software, the training programs both for the customer service desk and the end user, and more. The fact that we understand the business processes for Banque de Luxembourg' is also a big advantage."

Migrating 650 employees from Lotus Notes to Exchange Server requires thorough preparation. "E-mail is an important means of communication for us," says Gérard. "We use it both for internal and external communication and to plan our internal meetings through shared agendas. We used Quest Notes Migrator for Exchange to migrate the users and their mailboxes from Lotus Notes—complete with their agendas, contacts, and appointments—to Exchange Server 2003. Next, we made the change from Exchange Server 2003 to Exchange Server 2007. The migration has proceeded very smoothly and the Quest software ensured a very efficient operation. So far, we haven't lost a single document or appointment."

By August 2006, 10 people from the IT department had migrated to Exchange Server 2003. By the end of September, 70 employees were working with Exchange Server 2003 and Outlook 2007. The bank expects migration for all employees to be complete by mid-December.

Of course, opting for a beta version means things do not always go according to plan. For example, during the migration, the software's technical documentation was not yet complete. And the company experienced odd bugs along with a few technical limitations of the Cluster Continuous Replication (CCR) feature. CCR is a new cluster technology developed by Microsoft that makes redundant the installation of a storage area network (SAN) with shared storage for the cluster. CCR copies all data from one cluster node to another over the local network. The system stores all transactions for quick recovery in the event of a system failure. The Exchange Server installation at Banque de Luxembourg is based on this technology.

Benefits

By deploying Exchange Server 2007 and Outlook 2007, Banque de Luxembourg gains

an enterprise messaging system that is easy for employees to learn and use. Employees can more easily access messages, improving productivity. The new solution also integrates well with the bank's IT environment and provides a flexible platform for adding future enhancements.

Easy-to-Learn, User-Friendly Interface

At the same time the migration was taking place, the bank's employees were trained to use the new solution. "Thanks to the user-friendliness of Outlook 2007, two hours per employee was more than enough for the training sessions," says Spada. "Those who have followed the training program migrate immediately to Outlook 2007. With regard to the teaching approach, we suggested that Banque de Luxembourg begin the migration from the old system while the employees were still in training. That way, they could begin using Outlook 2007 as soon as their training was complete. An internal support desk was also put in place as a backup."

Better Integration with Other Systems

Banque de Luxembourg is satisfied with the transition to Exchange Server 2007 and Outlook 2007, in part because of their superior integration, support for the Active Directory® service, and flexible Exchange Server ActiveSync® technology.

"When we were using Lotus Notes, the synchronization with the managers' PDAs often caused problems," says Gérard. "Now, the use of Exchange Server ActiveSync simplifies synchronizing with other Microsoft applications we use. The number of compatibility problems between different systems will be reduced dramatically because of this integration, and the effort required from the user will be reduced. Exchange Server 2007 also supports push technology, which will help many mobile users receive messages more efficiently. And with the integration with Active Directory, we can now

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delete Notes Directory and thus reduce the complexity of our infrastructure even further.”

Anytime, Anywhere Access to Messages

With the new solution in place, employees can read and respond to messages more conveniently, resulting in improved productivity. “One of the interesting things about Exchange Server 2007 is the potential to access the system at any time, from any place, using almost any device,” says Gérard. “That results in higher productivity and greater user satisfaction. For example, our commercial staff can now respond more rapidly to customer questions and needs because the staff has quick and easy access to relevant information.”

Flexible Platform for Future Enhancements

Banque de Luxembourg is already looking ahead to future enhancements to its IT environment. Soon the company will deploy Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 to complement Exchange Server 2007 and to support a corporate intranet. Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies also make it easy to manage documents electronically and to find documents faster. Additionally, Banque de Luxembourg is considering installing unified messaging, in which voice mail, e-mail, and faxes are accessed through a single inbox.

Would Banque de Luxembourg participate in an RDP project again? “Definitely,” says Gérard, given his positive experiences during the Exchange Server 2007 migration. “First, we have received excellent support from Microsoft Luxembourg and Telindus. Second, our technical personnel were very motivated for the entire duration of the project. And finally, we were able to make a modest contribution to the final version of Outlook 2007. One of our employees discovered an illogical element in the program’s graphical interface. Microsoft promptly adjusted this

element, so in fact we did help a bit in shaping the final product. We’re quite proud of that.”

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