

AT BANK CIAL IN BASEL, SUNGARD'S MINT GATEWAY HAS BEEN A RELIABLE PARTNER FOR ROGER BUSER. HE BELIEVES BOTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION – HE'S SURE THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN HIS DOOR BEING OPEN AND HIS SYSTEMS BEING UP



“FOR SYSTEMS TO WORK WELL, WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE ALWAYS SHARING INFORMATION”



Working at Bank Cial, the 95-year-old universal Swiss bank, gives Roger Buser a big-picture view of the lifeblood of his organization – technology. Based in Basel, Roger works as a project manager in Cial's Banking Systems Competence Center (BSCC), serving the headquarters and five other branches in Switzerland.

The main business of the bank is private banking and credit and commercial banking. The BSCC runs all its systems centrally, including all of the banking applications, trading systems and the integration application. Roger says working with these technologies is one of the most rewarding aspects of his job. “At the Center, we manage modern, sophisticated systems in a high-standard hardware environment. I really like working in such an environment, rather than one where we would have to keep old systems up and running. Because we are a smaller bank, we have an overview of how the whole bank works, rather than having only a partial view of a very specific area, which often is the case at the larger institutions.”

Roger firmly believes that projects are easier to manage when he knows the people involved and the department, and he clearly enjoys having the opportunity to work directly with colleagues from across the bank. The door to the office he shares with the head of BSCC is always open, he says, so that any information any member

of the Center has can be readily shared with colleagues. “For systems to work well, we need to ensure that we are always sharing information – not only about the systems, but also about different parts of the bank's overall business.”

SERVICE EVERY DAY

Roger's working day begins with a check on the systems to make sure they are running properly and will run all day. Because the Center is responsible for the banking systems, its team of seven also act as a service desk for colleagues in other departments. “If there are requests or incidents concerning any banking application, key people will contact us. The ITIL-based processes provide us with a structured procedure to manage and resolve these concerns as best practice demands.” ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) is a consistent set of documentation of best practice for IT service management and is used by many hundreds of organizations worldwide.

In addition to these tasks, the Center also is charged with running a wide variety of projects. Prioritizing resources for these

projects is a constant challenge, says Roger, particularly as there sometimes seem to be “too many projects”. “We always have a lot under way, and we cannot realize them all at the same time.”

SWIFT CHANGES

Among these projects was the migration of the bank's SWIFT FIN traffic on to SWIFTNet, an IP-based network that promises greater interactivity than was previously available over the old X.25 SWIFT network, as well as more services such as bulk file transfer and real-time cash reporting. The migration to SWIFTNet has been a considerable undertaking for SWIFT's 7,500 members, implemented over a two-year time frame. At present, Bank Cial is assessing the additional services that are available on SWIFTNet, including FileAct and InterAct (a service that can be used in conjunction with FileAct and offers file transfers for closed user groups on the SWIFT network). It is also considering whether to use messages based on the Financial Information eXchange (FIX) protocol. FIX is a messaging standard developed by the securities industry for the real-time electronic exchange of securities transactions.

SunGard's MINT was used as the platform for migration to SWIFTNet and all the bank's SWIFT FIN messages are now sent over the new network via MINT. One of Roger's roles is MINT project manager, and he has been working with the application since installation began in 1998. “We use MINT as a gateway for networks such as EuroSIC, which provides a direct link into the real-time gross settlement systems of the euro countries, SIC [the Swiss electronic interbank payment system], SECOM [settlement instructions for Swiss and international securities transactions] and SWIFT. MINT also provides an interface to our host application,” he explains. “MINT gets data from our host system and sends it out over the networks,

HOME LIFE

HOME: Münchenstein. “It is very close to Basel, but is also in the countryside.”

FAMILY: Married with two children, a girl of nine and a boy of seven.

COMMUTE: “20–25 minutes by scooter, but in the winter I take a tram – a little longer, but warmer.”

PASTIMES: “I try to spend most of my spare time with the family, although I do some sports. Plus, I am a season-ticket holder at our football team, FC Basel.”

EDUCATION: Apprenticeship at a Swiss business school, an IT degree and a management degree.

VACATION: “The U.S., particularly Disneyworld, and the Swiss Alps for skiing.”

WORK LIFE

BUSINESS HOURS: “We have to make sure to be present during official office times. It's important to provide our service to the whole bank to guarantee full system availability. Sometimes I come in early, sometimes I stay back late.”

WEEKENDS: “When new applications or releases are being installed I will work on the weekend or into the evening. We also have additional maintenance weekends.”

OFFICE: “I share an office with the head of the BSCC team, but the door is always open as we need to share information with other people in the team.”

DESK SPACE: “I feel I am very organized, although some people might wonder what I have on my desk. I try to make sure all the bunches of paper are stacked neatly before I leave work for the day.”

PERSONAL ORGANIZATION: “It might be old-fashioned, but I prefer a paper-based organizer.”

CORPORATE CULTURE: “Most of the doors here are open. It is a smaller bank and we all know each other, which is a good atmosphere to work in.”

and all incoming messages go through MINT into the host system. MINT acts as our gateway to all the financial networks we use.”

The many projects Roger juggles on a daily basis aside, his main task is always to ensure that all systems are up and running and the bank is connected to the outside world via the many different networks it uses. “For us, MINT has proved to be a very stable system and we are very happy that it is. We have a standby site that provides a synchronized database that we can bring up if the main site goes down, but fortunately so far we have never needed that.”

THE SUNGARD SOLUTION: MINT

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