

VP Bank – standardized and efficient Raising the Service-Bus Performance



Reference study WebSphere Message Broker and Tivoli OMEGAMON XE



The customer: VP Bank

The VP Bank is a Liechtenstein private bank with customer assets of almost CHF 40 billion. The finance institute employs over 800 people worldwide in several locations, amongst others in the British virgin Islands, in Luxemburg, Zurich, Moscow, Singapore, Dubai und Hong Kong. Despite the challenging general conditions and the difficult economic climate, the VP Bank was able to extend its international ranking as the



top asset manager. In the first half of 2009 alone it was able to register a 13.7% growth in customer assets of CHF 4.8 billion. Growth is a strategic objective for the VP Bank - but not at any price: longevity and independence are central aspects of the company's strategy.

„The Nexus Service Platform offers a high degree of stability and flexibility and is maintenance-friendly in the long term“.

Leo Vogt, Project Leader Nexus, VP Bank

Highlights

- **Rational implementation:** Through the involvement of experienced experts from the [Business Solution Group – Technology Innovation](#), a stable, reliable and maintenance-friendly solution based on the existing infrastructure was implemented within just six months.
- **Efficiency thanks to homogenization and virtualization:** The same virtual systems are operated on the same hardware at all locations, which significantly increases the efficiency and flexibility. The combination of the software components is also largely identical everywhere.
- **Smooth transition:** Thanks to the virtualization, the new infrastructure could be built up in parallel to the old. A temporary connection of the old systems to the new platform made a smooth replacement possible.
- **Manifold usage:** The new service platform does not just offer flexible messaging, but also safe file transfer – the messaging acts as a transport rail. This was realized with the help of an upgraded and modified in-house development instead of with new products requiring a license.

The challenge

The VP Bank's service center is located in Triesen (Liechtenstein). This is where the back office is operated. Outstations with their own IT are distributed throughout the world in Zurich, Luxemburg, Singapore and on the British Virgin Islands. To connect all these locations with the back office, VP Bank operates a messaging platform based on IBM WebSphere MQ. As its replacement by a new version was pending, the transport layer could be extended in the course of the update to an efficient service bus. This extension was implemented with [IBM WebSphere Message Broker](#).

The aim of the „Nexus Service Platform“ project was to simplify the connection of the systems and applications distributed throughout the world, amongst others Avaloq, with a flexible and central integration platform. The connections needed to be secure and transparent for the applications. In addition to pure point-to-point messaging, opportunities for dynamic routing, dynamic transformation etc. could now also be offered.

The undertaking was to be carried out with the greatest possible efficiency, and not just in terms of project run time. The aim was to keep costs in general as low as possible. This did not just apply to the hardware, software licenses and project expenditure, but also to the operation costs for the new infrastructure. In so doing, neither the operational security nor the performance of the new service platform could be compromised.

Pragmatic approach leads to success

- **Efficiency thanks to experience:** The participation of the software provider IBM and of the experienced external partner Business Solution Group – Technology Innovation made the successful Proof of Concept possible in a short space of time.
- **Standardization:** The same software components and virtualized operating systems on identical hardware are operated at all locations.
- **Reduction of complexity:** Only production was completely setup. Development and staging remain limited to the Liechtenstein location, which is entirely sufficient for the test environments.
- **Stability, reliability, flexibility:** The robust, loosely linked solution allows for the autonomous operation of the data centers at the various locations.

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The solution

The project „Service Platform Nexus“ was started in February 2008 and designed for a term of just six months. Thanks to the pragmatic approach, the new infrastructure could be started up according to plan in August 2008.

The existing transport layer [IBM WebSphere MQ](#) was used as a basis for the solution. IBM WebSphere Message Broker was evaluated as a performance increasing extension of the service platform. Monitoring was via [IBM Tivoli OMEGAMON XE](#). An existing solution for the file transfer via messaging was improved and adapted to the new platform.

The central „Common Service Platform“ (CSP) with the back office as a Booking Center connects the five outstations in Liechtenstein (logically separated from the CSP), Zurich, the British Virgin Islands, Singapore and Luxemburg in a star-shaped topology. As these act largely independently, a Message Broker is operated at each location.

Thanks to virtualization, the new service platform could be setup in parallel to the existing infrastructure, before it took over the productive function through a streamlined switchover.