

UTB replaces Bankmaster with Sword Apak's core system

United Trust Bank (UTB), a specialist UK-based institution providing a range of secured funding facilities and deposit accounts, has selected Sword Apak's .Net-based Aurius core banking system.

The product, which UTB signed for in early June, will be deployed over a ten-month period, replacing UTB's legacy third party systems which include Misys' Bankmaster and a heavily customised version of Sage's Act CRM system. The latter is integrated with the InVu document management system which will be retained.

UTB, incorporated in 1955, offers asset finance, bridging and development finance on the lending side and a range of deposit products. It had been looking to replace Misys' Bankmaster which had been on a ten-year licence and was due for renewal. William Dobbie, head of IT at UTB, explains that the impending renewal prompted a review of IT systems and processes. 'Bankmaster is quite an old product now; it had its life extended with the addition of Bankmaster Plus, but the bank now requires a fully relational data base environment'

Dobbie has been 'heavily involved' in the Bankmaster user group over the years and was fully aware of Misys' plans to replace Bankmaster. As part of the system search, which was conducted by an in-house team, he spoke to the vendor about using its new Bankfusion solution. UTB also looked at a number of other systems, one of which is believed to be Temenos' T24. 'One of the big issues was scalability,' he comments. 'We found that because we are a relatively small bank with a relatively straightforward product range, a lot of the big systems like Bankfusion may not be readily scalable to the size of environment that we're working in.'

Sword Apak was the only vendor that had the right system flexibility and, importantly, the support of a larger and financially sound parent, says Dobbie (it is owned by France-based Sword Group: see IBS, August 2007, Sword Group buys Apak).

Before signing the contract, Sword Apak staff were on site and reviewing UTB's systems and processes, 'putting the groundwork in place.' 'As soon as the con-

tract was signed, we started the gap analysis,' says Dobbie. 'The initial review indicates that there is nothing significant that would cause us an issue.' The process from now will be mostly around configuring Aurius, and UTB is happy to adapt its processes to fit. 'From my experience of doing this before, the more flexible you are to update internal processes to fit a new IT system, the more successful it's going to be.'

UTB will adopt the Aurius workflow system. Although the bank's InVu document management system has its own workflow process which is used successfully in UTB's deposits department, this will be replaced by the Aurius workflow tool to allow straight-through processing (STP) and adoption of a bank-wide model.

In terms of database, UTB had reviewed its environment a couple of years ago. It made 'a conscious decision' then to go only for Microsoft SQL Server-based applications. It will now extend its SQL database as part of the switch to Aurius. 'It was something we stuck by when looking at vendors,' says Dobbie. He does not anticipate any real obstacles transferring data from Pervasive-based Bankmaster. 'It's something I've done before so it should be quite straightforward.'

The migration to Aurius will largely be a like-for-like exchange in terms of functionality, but UTB will be adding Aurius' internet banking functionality next year, and rebuilding its data warehouse. STP to the payments stage is also something the bank will look at implementing across all parts of the business as part of the move to the new system. Product-wise, on the deposits side, things will go unchanged. In the short- to medium-term, the bank may look to integrate its asset finance system (Sentinel from Anchor Computer Systems) into Aurius, possibly in 2013.

For now, the project will move on from gap analysis and have a preview and configured system available by the end of July with testing starting in September. Go-live is anticipated for spring 2013. Dobbie is hoping that having all data in one place, with common procedures, will speed up reporting and simplify data management ahead of new European reporting requirements.

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