



Business challenge

To extend the availability of its core banking platform, ERI wanted to add more options to deliver the solution under a cloud-based model.

Transformation

Targeting the private banking market, IBM Business Partner ERI Bancaire enhanced its core banking system to further support a software as a service (SaaS) model. Backed by the public IBM® Cloud™, the platform delivers a browser-based, real-time solution capable of customizing processes and workflows to meet variable business practices and regulations.



Jean-Philippe Bersier
Director for Business Development
IBM Business Partner
ERI Bancaire

Results

Keeps costs low

for users by better aligning infrastructure size with actual and changing demand

Hardens availability

with a cloud-based platform that aligns with industry security guidelines

Simplifies delivery

and support through a unified provisioning contract

ERI Bancaire

Private banking meets the public cloud

ERI develops real-time banking solutions for the global financial industry and is present in Geneva, London, Lugano, Luxembourg, Paris, Singapore and Zurich. Its flagship offering, the OLYMPIC Banking System, is utilized by over 300 banks and financial institutions spread across 60 nations worldwide.

“You have your bank on your phone, so our customers can’t be down for days or even hours. The infrastructure must be bulletproof.”

—Jean-Philippe Bersier, Director for Business Development, IBM Business Partner ERI Bancaire

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Adapt to the size of the organization

There are few industries as heavily regulated as banking. At nearly each level of government, stretching from the regional to international, frequently updated regulations govern not only how finances are managed but also how the underlying information that reflects these accounts should be handled.

And while these ever-evolving expectations can be daunting, large international banks typically have the budgets to throw at these challenges. However, other—often independent—financial firms must be more creative and innovative while pursuing compliance.

“We primarily serve the private banking industry,” explains Jean-Philippe Bersier, Director for Business Development at IBM Business Partner ERI, “which by definition are frequently small companies—50, 100 or even more than 500 users. They need the same flexibility as the larger banks. They face the same compliance and security requirements, but they feel greater cost pressures, which is forcing them to reconsider how they support critical systems.”

In response, ERI worked with IBM to bring its landmark OLYMPIC Banking System into the IBM Cloud as a way of extending this solution as a SaaS model.

“Years ago,” adds Bersier, “a cloud approach for a banking system wouldn’t even be on the agenda. But now, the cloud is becoming extremely important for most banks. The large retail banks already have a cloud strategy, which focuses on private clouds, but a lot of our customers do not have the bandwidth to afford a private cloud. They can only move forward with a public cloud.”

Going public

To extend its public cloud offering for its OLYMPIC Banking System, ERI held discussions with its longtime ally, IBM.

“We’ve been a partner with IBM for over 30 years,” recounts Bersier. “It was in an IBM building that the first presentations of our OLYMPIC Banking System to potential customers took place. And more than 90 percent of our clients rely on IBM.”

Together with its partner, ERI developed a prototype of its flagship solution that could operate in the public IBM Cloud and that incorporated the IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service to manage containers. The prototype was tested at the IBM Cloud facility in Frankfurt, Germany.

As such, ERI offers its OLYMPIC Banking System under a cloud-supported SaaS model in conjunction with IBM. The solution provides users with a browser-based, real-time core banking system that can deliver multi-country and

multi-jurisdiction support. And the native processes and workflows of the tool can be readily customized to accommodate the specific requirements of the bank or region.

Further, the IBM Cloud is serving as a development engine for ERI’s offerings, delivering access to additional services that could be easily integrated together with the OLYMPIC Banking System. “We are doing some interesting prototypes of Watson in natural language understanding and other Artificial Intelligence areas,” adds Bersier. “We are convinced those areas will strongly develop in the coming years, with AI components embedded in many different banking processes.”

And to simplify deployments for this cloud-based offering, the firm intends to operate under an Embedded Solutions Agreement (ESA). “We already have an ESA for the on-prem version,” clarifies Bersier, “which covers the IBM software—DB2, WebSphere—that we use. Now we have added the IBM Cloud component as well.”

He continues: “That the ESA lets us embed these components in OLYMPIC Banking System is a great value. Our clients don’t have to sign multiple agreements or deal with multiple procurement headaches. It’s a one-stop shop, which is very appealing to the smaller businesses that are part of the ecosystem that we are targeting.”

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Fort IBM

With its OLYMPIC Banking System offering available in the cloud, ERI is excited about the potential for its customers.

“There is a big value in the elasticity and flexibility of the cloud,” explains Bersier. “Banks have to pay particular attention to end of month, quarter and year closures. It’s their busiest time. And with a classical structure, they would have to size for those peaks, which can be challenging for certain firms. But as a SaaS, we can let them adjust the costs of their underlying infrastructure to exactly what they need.”

In addition, the cloud-based platform will offer a resilient architecture that is designed for availability to help eliminate planned or unplanned downtime. “Banking is mobile now,” Bersier elaborates. “You have your bank on your phone, so our

customers can't be down for days or even hours. The infrastructure must be bulletproof."

The SaaS offering will deliver a security-rich platform that will encourage potential clients to consider a cloud-based approach. "In the banking world, the IBM logo still has quite the appeal," adds Bersier. "When we have these cloud discussions, there are a lot of questions: 'Where is the data physically located? Who can access it?'" Working with IBM answers a lot of those concerns."

The IBM Cloud site in Frankfurt offers the IBM Cloud Addendum for the Financial Services Sector. This addendum aligns the cloud management processes for this site with the data security, storage and retention requirements established by the European Banking Authority (EBA) as well as the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA). And compliance with these standards offers an attractive package to potential ERI clients.

"No banks can afford the amount of energy, money and resources that IBM puts into protecting data," adds Bersier. "Their data centers today are better protected than Fort Knox. And that's why I'm convinced that more and more banks will turn to the cloud for their infrastructure."

He concludes, adding, "IBM is a fantastic accelerator and risk mitigator."

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Solution components

- IBM® Cloud™
- IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service

Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solutions featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

To learn more about its banking solutions and what ERI Bancaire can do for you, please visit: [ERI](#)

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