WebSphere® software

Raiffeisen equips itself for the future with WebSphere MQ.

Overview

■ **Challenge**

Integrate disparate banking applications and prepare IT environment for future needs

■ **Solution: Integrating Stage**

Central communications platform, or "banking bus," based on IBM WebSphere® MQ and IBM WebSphere MQ Integrator

■ **Business Benefits**

Banking processes can be readily automated and simplified, reducing manual tasks for 800 to 900 employees and increasing time available for customer counseling; automating business processes speeds up execution of customer orders and provides better customer service

■ **Business Partner**

Systor AG

Raiffeisen's "banking bus," based on IBM WebSphere technology, is a Web-based central platform integrating an assortment of decentralized banking applications.

The Raiffeisen Group (Raiffeisen)—the third largest banking group in Switzerland—has grown enormously in recent years. Today, its 1,300 branches serve 2 million customers and manage 82 billion Swiss francs (US$54.7 billion) in customer funds.

Because the group is structured as a network of independent institutions, its IT environment is not only decentralized but very heterogeneous. Rapid growth in off-balance sheet activities has resulted in a sharp increase in demands for integration. For this reason, Raiffeisen decided to develop a platform that would integrate many of the carefully designed custom applications used in the individual branches.

> *"IBM is a leader in integration, and it guarantees long-term support."*
>
> *—Martin Frick, Head of Project and IT Architecture, Raiffeisen Group*

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Key Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere MQ, Version 5.2
- IBM WebSphere MQ Integrator,
  Version 2.1

Servers

- IBM @**server** zSeries™

> "*In the world of finance,
> the WebSphere MQ
> messaging platform
> is the standard for
> integration solutions.*"
>
> – *Martin Frick*

To achieve this goal, Raiffeisen implemented a "banking bus" that forms the central communications platform. While reducing complexity, this banking bus offers a standardized and transparent interface between the various applications. Raiffeisen plans to optimize its business processes and then to further automate centrally managed securities trading operations. "The banking bus has substantially improved the integration of the distributed systems in the branches and centralized securities trading," summarizes Martin Frick, head of project and IT architecture, who is in charge of this project at the Raiffeisen Group.

The first production implementation of WebSphere MQ Integrator on zSeries

Two segments of the overall banking bus have so far been completed. The main one is the enterprise application integration (EAI) platform from IBM, which uses IBM WebSphere MQ, Version 5.2 as the transport system and IBM WebSphere MQ Integrator, Version 2.1 as the message broker to integrate the various applications.

Using this structure, the bank has already automated its securities settlement applications. Entries from securities trades and position management information are automatically sent to the decentralized applications over the banking bus. This has significantly accelerated and streamlined securities trading—a direct benefit for Raiffeisen customers.

To implement this all-encompassing project, Raiffeisen has been working closely with IBM Business Partner Systor AG, whose core competency is system integration in the financial industry. "IBM is a leader in integration," notes Frick in explaining the decision, "and it guarantees long-term support." Choosing WebSphere MQ and WebSphere MQ Integrator to integrate applications was an easy decision to make, as Frick explains: "In the world of finance, the WebSphere MQ messaging platform is the standard for integration solutions." WebSphere MQ Integrator serves as the connecting link between individual applications and assures problem-free data exchange.

Before tackling the WebSphere MQ solution, however, the bank had to overcome a hurdle. Given the volume of data to be handled, Raiffeisen insisted on a mainframe strategy. But when this project began, WebSphere MQ Integrator was not yet available for the IBM @server zSeries. That's why the banking group decided on a transitional solution, to get the project underway. Raiffeisen first developed the banking bus on a UNIX® platform, and with the support of IBM, it migrated to the zSeries host platform at the same time.

After a successful migration and extensive testing, the bank carried out the conversion of the banking bus to the host platform. "There were absolutely no operational problems," says Frick, most likely because any "teething problems" had been identified and resolved during testing. "Raiffeisen was the first organization to use WebSphere MQ Integrator in production on the IBM @server zSeries mainframe—further testament to the banking group's innovativeness in the financial services industry," Frick says.
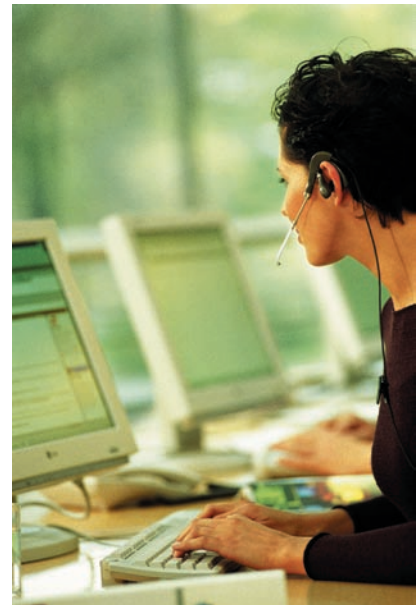
Modernization that benefits the customers

The banking bus provides Raiffeisen with concrete commercial benefits. Processes can now be readily automated and simplified, relieving between 800 and 900 employees from tedious administrative chores and enabling them to concentrate on advising customers. By automating business processes, moreover, the bank can provide faster customer service. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Frick treats IT as a strategic factor in the Raiffeisen Group's success. "Its importance is emphasized by the financially significant banking bus project," he notes.

Nevertheless, today's achievements do not mean that the redesign is complete. The next phase involves expanding Raiffeisen's service offerings—an objective that Frick says would be impossible to achieve without the banking bus. In the future, customers should be able to check their assets at any office and perform transactions directly online. In offering this service, Frick and his team are confident that Raiffeisen can depend on the reliability and availability of the zSeries server and the WebSphere MQ messaging platform.

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–Martin Frick

Using IBM WebSphere MQ and WebSphere MQ Integrator, the Raiffeisen "banking bus" has enabled the banking group to automate business processes and provide faster customer service.

For more information

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Raiffeisen Group, visit:
www.raiffeisen.ch

For more information about Systor, visit:
www.systor.com