



CASE STUDY

Raiffeisen Bank International enables mobile, transnational collaboration with Microsoft Office 365

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Business situation: Developing "a new world of work"

Raiffeisen Bank International AG (RBI) is a leading corporate and investment bank based in Austria, with operations across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). In total, around 50,000 employees work at more than 2,400 locations, providing services to 16.6 million clients. RBI's international presence and the ever-increasing collaboration between banks made it necessary to lay strong new technological foundations for building the workplace experience of the future — using Microsoft Office 365.

"In the past, Lotus Notes was used as a group-wide office solution for approximately 50,000 employees in all countries in which RBI is active," explains Wolfgang Hausner, a senior project manager at RBI who spearheaded the Office 365 migration. Lotus Notes provided the required basic functions, but with some significant restrictions. It failed to offer modern modes of communication, and transnational cooperation was virtually unthinkable. And did it offer mobile access to important data or shared editing of documents? Once again, the answer was "no." To put it bluntly, the days of Lotus Notes at RBI were numbered.

"As part of our new strategy, 'A New World of Work,' we wanted to introduce new methods and ways of working. This strategy stems from an initiative by the board of directors to make each individual workplace fit for the future," recalls Hausner. The plan was to introduce a new Office software suite as the foundation for further digitization at the bank, as well as an innovative, collaborative way of working.

RBI's main objective was to improve collaboration across national borders, particularly regarding the subsidiary banks in the CEE region. "We wanted to have fewer attachments being sent back and forth and reduce the number of meetings, while increasing direct collaboration and real-time communication. It was not insignificant that the Office 365 project was given the working title 'Group Collaboration' as part of the 'A New World of Work' strategy," explains Hausner.

Within the banking group, cross-sector collaboration takes place in areas including risk management, compliance and information security. The processes for agreement and approvals were complex, with documents needing to be sent to multiple people for editing at the same time. Feedback always came back individually, followed by the laborious process of consolidating and incorporating all of it.

It was agreed that "A New World of Work" required a standardized platform from which to build upon. Alongside collaboration, mobile empowerment was also at the top of the wish list. The idea was that no matter where an individual was located or what device they were using — whether it be their cell phone on the train, their tablet in the garden or their desktop PC at the office — it should be possible to access data from anywhere and communicate with colleagues. In addition, it was decided that shared editing of documents should be a straightforward process that could take place across international borders.

"Working together in an agile way and creating flat hierarchies requires a different culture and new policies. So, our focus was not only the new technology, but also change management."

– Wolfgang Hausner, Senior Project Manager at RBI

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“Most employees are happy using the new Office suite. Our workforce is especially enamored with the new opportunities offered by using Skype in combination with Outlook.”

– Wolfgang Hausner, Senior Project Manager at RBI

Solution: Embracing the cloud

The decision to use Office 365 was made quickly; as well as facilitating collaboration between employees and branches in different countries, it also functions as an integrated communication system and forms the foundation for a modern workplace. Specific advantages of Office 365 include its secure cloud connection via Microsoft and the fact that all applications — from OneDrive and SharePoint to Planner, Teams and Office Groups — are fully accessible from anywhere, including on mobile devices.

When deciding what direction to take for the migration, the bank decided wholeheartedly in favor of the cloud. “If you want to facilitate collaboration and mobile working, you have to use the cloud,” explains Hausner. “As we were not using any type of exchange system — and therefore there was no possibility of added value from a hybrid model — there was only one decision to make as we saw it, and that was to embrace the cloud.”

Microsoft placed particular focus on European customers. It understood the challenges facing banks and offered appropriate contractual arrangements.

Microsoft implemented the Office 365 pilot project in Kosovo and Albania with the Microsoft Consult team. RBI then brought Avanade on board to assist with implementation in the other countries. “We wanted a consultant that had extensive experience as an implementation partner, who knew the possibilities for innovation and the technology inside and out, and, above all, was aware that a project such as this was about far more than just the technical

implementation. This was a real cultural shift. Some employees had worked with Lotus Notes for more than 20 years,” says Hausner. “This meant that as well as the technical implementation, Avanade also had special responsibility for change management.”

Through close collaboration between Avanade and RBI’s change management team, HR and communications department, the migration course was set. Change agents and change ambassadors were selected to guide employees, show them the new possibilities and encourage them to get on board. They organized telephone conferences — sometimes on a weekly basis — in which interested parties could participate; an initiative that was a lot more popular than anticipated. In addition, the change team took advantage of the opportunity to present “The New World of Work” during regular departmental meetings. Employees could also send any questions they had to a group mailbox.

Training sessions and just-in-time training rounded out the range of support provided by Avanade. “By taking these measures, we ensured that when the ‘big bang’ took place and Outlook went live at the company’s headquarters in Vienna, everything went smoothly. We started implementing the migration on a Friday evening, and by Monday morning it was complete. This meant that around 3,500 users at the home office now had Outlook on their work computers, and they also knew how to use it,” recalls Hausner. “In case of emergency, onsite support teams were on hand to help.”

Results: Fit for the future

The project at RBI was a resounding success. A business case for the migration could be made solely based on the quantitative savings achieved as a result of no longer needing to support certain databases and the reduction in hardware investments. “And that doesn’t even factor in the qualitative improvements, whether in terms of innovation, flexibility for employees or efficiency,” explains Hausner.

“With Office 365, we have laid the foundation for ‘A New World of Work’ and we are fit for the future. Desk sharing, working from home, etc. — all of these things are, to put it simply, possible if you have the right underlying technology,” says Hausner. “What our staff is most enthusiastic about is Skype. With it, you can see at a glance who is in the office or in a meeting, you can chat and if a problem gets too complicated for you to sort out, you can initiate a direct call. If the issue is still too complex, you can activate desktop sharing at the touch of a button, all in one app.”

For RBI, the entire Office 365 suite also enables collaboration across national borders, around the globe — even with external partners and clients. In addition, instead of lengthy review cycles, co-authoring is the order of the day. Once the Office 365 project is fully completed, RBI will have over 50,000 users in 15 countries.

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about the new search functions. Power users — assistants, for example — are excited about features such as conditional formatting for emails, which, among other things, allows incoming emails to be color coded if they are addressed directly to the boss. This means you can easily prioritize emails at a glance,” says Hausner.

One key factor for the success of the project at RBI were the strong advocates on the board of directors, who got the issue onto the agenda and raised it in front of employees. “You can only make a drastic change like this if senior management gets behind it,” explains Hausner.

“Secondly, from the very beginning we viewed the project as a complete change, and not merely a technical implementation. You have to clearly demonstrate the benefits to the employees and show how these benefits will improve their day-to-day work,” he adds.

The important thing to remember is that the real change begins only after the technical migration. After all, the behavior of the users can be changed only when they are actually able to use the tools. For this to happen, you need expert partners on hand to help.

Hausner sums it up: “What has gone down well with Office 365 is the integration of the tools, its mobile accessibility — every tool can also be used from a smartphone — and the way that Outlook and Skype simplify everyday processes. Avanade showed us that, as well as offering technical expertise. They have a lot of experience in the field of change management and the requisite practical knowledge for the implementation. For projects such as this, Avanade is the number one choice.”



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 30,000 professionals in 24 countries. Visit us at www.avanade.com

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