Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa manages a major acquisition

With smarter computing from IBM

Overview

The need

Leading Spanish savings and equity bank Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa (BBK) recently acquired CajaSur, a similar institution of almost the same size as BBK. Managing the merger of the two IT systems represented a significant challenge, with the focus on maximizing use of existing investments while ensuring infrastructure resiliency was maintained.

The solution

In an ongoing project with IBM and the IT company owned by BBK, the company embarked on a journey towards smarter computing. Leveraging sophisticated virtualization technology and highly reliable backup techniques, BBK has ensured that the process of merging CajaSur's infrastructure is painless and cost-efficient.

The benefit

Exploited existing hardware investments to the full, avoiding the cost of purchasing approximately 3,000 desktop computers for new staff, saving over 1 million EURO. The IBM technology has contributed to a 20 percent reduction in IT costs, a saving which is expected to increase as further application development is undertaken.

Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa (BBK) is one of the largest banks in the Basque region of Spain. It is the third-largest savings and equity bank in Spain, as well as the sixth-largest administered-funds savings bank in the country.

Handling business growth

Leading Spanish bank Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa (BBK) recently acquired CajaSur, another Spanish banking institution that is almost as large as BBK. The scale of the acquisition meant that developing an integrated IT infrastructure presented a major challenge.

BBK has been growing steadily for some time, and had experienced issues with handling expanding data volumes as a result. Consequently, the impending merger with CajaSur represented the ideal opportunity to re-engineer its systems, maximize efficiency while boosting flexibility and openness in its IT landscape.

As a banking institution, securing sensitive information is always a priority, and BBK was seeking to guarantee system resiliency by enabling automated backups. Lacking the in-house skills to carry out such a large-scale project, BBK began looking for an implementation partner with the expertise and resources to advise and assist with these goals.

Choosing IBM Global Technology Services

BBK turned to technology specialists from IBM Global Technology Services for help in performing an overall evaluation of its existing IT environment as well as assessing the best way to handle the acquisition of CajaSur.

The main goal of the project was to re-use the existing infrastructure as much as possible, while ensuring optimal performance for the company's workloads. Specifically, CajaSur relied heavily on a custom built Java-based application. IBM proposed leveraging innovative cloud computing techniques to run both the CajaSur application and BBK banking systems side-by-side. This was achieved using a virtualization layer running across all servers supporting BBK and CajaSur's desktop computers, enabling BBK to avoid the significant cost of purchasing new PCs and increasing the administrative burden of managing this infrastructure.

Designed for Data

- Leveraging IBM DB2 for data warehousing, BBK uses the information gathered as a basis for analysis of customer habits and branch performance, designed to optimize the performance of the combined group by exploiting synergies and customer opportunities.

Tuned to the Task

- The IBM System zEnterprise 196 offers superb scalability and flexibility to accommodate the new workloads introduced by the merger with CajaSur. Virtualized IBM BladeCenter HS22 servers can be customized and rolled out quickly to meet growth, optimized for BBK's different workloads.

Managed in the Cloud

- BBK has developed a private cloud solution for employee desktops based on IBM BladeCenter technology with a Microsoft Hyper-V virtualization layer. This enables the company to effectively and efficiently run the CajaSur infrastructure in parallel with its own, ensuring that the acquisition process is handled non-disruptively, while exploiting existing investments to the maximum.

Driving Innovation

- Smarter computing from IBM has made it possible for BBK to manage a large-scale acquisition with minimal disruption to ongoing operation. The new solution supports ongoing growth and ensures that BBK is in the ideal position to explore untapped opportunities.

BBK chose to replace its existing two IBM System z9 Enterprise Class servers with two latest generation IBM zEnterprise 196 mainframe systems, with a number of specialty engines deployed, including IBM System z Integrated Information Processors (zIIPs), Integrated Facility for Linux (IFL) processors and Internal Coupling Facility (ECF) processors. The IBM zIIPs are designed to help free-up general computing capacity and lower overall total cost of computing for select data and transaction processing workloads for business intelligence (BI), ERP and CRM, and select network encryption workloads on the mainframe. By choosing to activate specialty engines, BBK is able to optimize performance for specific workloads, ensuring the right processor characteristics are applied to the appropriate jobs.

Maximizing business resiliency

The IBM Global Technology Services team was also able to work with BBK to design and implement a comprehensive backup and recovery solution, based on a suite of IBM Tivoli software, high-end IBM System Storage DS8800 disk systems and the IBM Virtualization Engine TS7720. Featuring IBM Tivoli Storage Manager, the solution automatically backs up the company's critical business data, ensuring that even in the event of a disaster, BBK can bounce back rapidly and easily.

BBK also leverages IBM Geographically Dispersed Parallel Sysplex (GDPS), an end to end application availability solution that provides the capability to manage remote copy configuration and storage subsystems to perform failure recovery from a single point of control. In addition, the innovative latest generation Hyperswap feature has been activated, enabling BBK to minimize impact to application availability with disruptions measured in seconds rather than hours. The HyperSwap function may be performed even if BBK's primary IBM System Storage disk subsystem is not operational, so can survive such a failure without continuous access to data. Overall, this allows the BBK IT teams to manage the company's two data processing centers as a single resource, despite the 25 km distance between them.

IBM DB2 for z/OS offers data warehousing capabilities, which integrates seamlessly with BBK's analytics software. Using the information gathered by IBM DB2, BBK is able to carry out analysis of customer habits and track performance by branch and location – insights that lead to better business decisions.

Solution Components

Software
- IBM® Tivoli® System Automation
- IBM Tivoli Storage Manager
- IBM Tivoli Provisioning Manager
- IBM Tivoli Monitoring
- IBM Tivoli Composite Application Manager
- IBM WebSphere® Enterprise Service Bus
- IBM WebSphere Application Server
- IBM Information Management System (IMS™)
- IBM DB2®
- IBM Metro Mirror
- IBM z/OS®
- IBM z/VM®
- VMware
- Microsoft Hyper-V

Servers
- IBM zEnterprise™ 196
- IBM BladeCenter® HS22
- IBM System Storage® DS8800
- IBM System Storage TS7720 Virtualization Tape Server

Services
- IBM Global Technology Services
- IBM Software Services

"This project aims to integrate and optimize BBK management systems following the integration of Cajasur, in order to be more efficient and better serve our customers."

—Juan Miguel Abendaño, IT Director, Bilbao Bizkaia Kutxa (BBK)

Optimizing resource utilization with smarter computing from IBM

The solution has made it possible for BBK to exploit existing hardware investments to the full, avoiding the cost of purchasing approximately 3,000 desktop computers for new staff, translating into a saving over 1 million EURO. Furthermore, the IBM technology has contributed to a 20 percent reduction in IT costs, a saving which is expected to increase as further application development is undertaken. Despite the expansion in the IT infrastructure necessitated by the acquisition of CajaSur, the streamlined and easy-to-manage IBM solution has meant BBK has not needed to boost IT staff numbers. Indeed, BBK estimates that the new infrastructure has boosted staff productivity by approximately 30 percent, leading to better service for customers.

The merger with CajaSur has been undertaken with as little disruption to everyday business operations as possible. The IBM solution offers the in-built scalability that enables BBK to approach future growth opportunities with confidence it has the resources in place to handle them.

The IBM backup solution offers superb availability and resiliency for BBK, which results in better service to clients. The company is able to backup double the amount of data in half the time, as compared with the previous solution.

For more information

To learn more about smarter computing from IBM and how we can help you integrate, automate, protect and transform your IT, contact your IBM sales representative or IBM business partner, or visit:
ibm.com/smartercomputing

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