

Italian online bank improves services quality and performance with Cisco datacenter network architecture



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · IW Bank S.P.A
LOCATION · Milan, Italy
INDUSTRY · Financial Services
COMPANY SIZE · 350 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · Rapidly expanding business increasing demand on business systems · IW Bank's business model entirely reliant on web-based electronic services and applications · Competitive advantage requires new services to be deployed quickly
NETWORK SOLUTION · Cisco Data Center Network solution · Cisco Storage Area Networks
BUSINESS VALUE · Ensures mission critical services and application are reliable and available 24/7 · Reduces the time taken to bring new services to market by 20 percent · Helps to improve competitive advantage · Helps make use of data center resources more efficient and cost effective · Provides a secure and scalable platform to support future business growth

IW Bank, a leading online bank in Italy, has deployed a Cisco Data Center Network solution to help improve service and application performance and improve competitive advantage.

Business Challenge

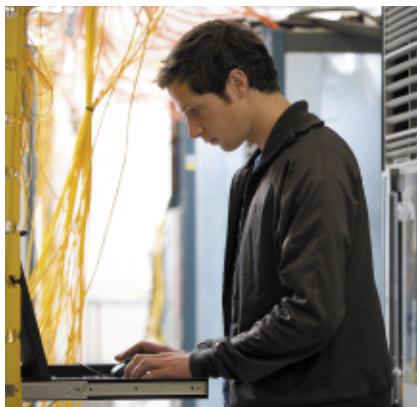
IW Bank S.P.A is part of the UBI Bank Group (Unione Banche Italiane), the fourth largest banking Group in Italy. IW Bank focuses on online financial and banking services which include trading financial instruments, mutual funds, current accounts, credit and debit cards, electronic currency, insurance and personal loans and mortgages. The bank is listed on the Expandi segment of the Italian Stock Exchange. It was set up in 1999 and continues to innovate and expand its product and service portfolio based upon its online business model.

IW Bank is experiencing rapid business growth and in the last few years the bank has grown significantly. This expansion led to the development of new services –such as systems and applications for traders and consumers – and these new services were generating a proliferation of servers and the corresponding need to support these with additional data storage capabilities. The bank needed a more efficient and centralized approach to its IT infrastructure.

IW Bank's previous approach had been to provide IT resources on a departmental basis effectively resulting in a series of data and system 'islands'. This resulted in a situation where information, applications and storage were distributed and largely disconnected. The

objective was to develop a reliable, scalable and integrated architecture that could support the bank's fast business growth. This focused, particularly, on a consolidated, enterprise-wide Storage Area Network (SAN) able to support mission-critical services.

Paolo Lusardi, systems and SAN manager at IW Bank, says, "IW Bank always buys from market leaders and tries to minimize the number of suppliers. As well as its position as a leading foundation network provider, Cisco is also a leading player in data center networking solutions. Choosing Cisco means that IW Bank can realize its strategy to implement an optimized and homogeneous solution across several areas including the network infrastructure and the data center."



Network Solution

IW Bank has deployed a Cisco Data Centre Network solution. This is based upon a Cisco Wide Area Network (WAN) which connects the banks' international locations in France, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium and the UK to its headquarters in Milan, Italy along with Cisco Local Area Networks (LANs) at each location. Within the data center in Milan, IW Bank has deployed Cisco MDS 9500 Series Multilayer Directors which interconnect servers hosting the bank's online services and storage devices to create a Storage Area Network (SAN). IW Bank is using Fibre Channel over IP (FCIP) to improve storage data transmission within its data center and to its other remote locations around Europe. As part of the data center infrastructure, IW Bank has deployed five Cisco Virtual SANs (VSANs) which enable the bank to segment particular types of service and data. By using the Cisco technology, IW Bank has consolidated its SAN architecture which includes a number of devices – servers, storage arrays, tape drives – that have access to the same SAN infrastructure. This means that the cost and provisioning of storage resources becomes more flexible, leading reduced cost thanks to an increased storage capacity utilization factor with the same equipment and increased management efficiencies.

“Even before we had completed the full deployment of the Cisco Data Center Network solution we were starting to see some significant benefits to the business. In particular, Cisco is making it much easier and faster for the bank to set up and deploy new services. The IW Bank business model relies entirely on its online capability and ensuring we can manage existing services efficiently and introduce new ones quickly is key to the business and its competitive advantage.”

Massimo Pavan, Chief Information Officer, IW Bank

Lusardi says, "Cisco has proven to be very timely, efficient and accurate in providing technical support to IW Bank. Cisco also demonstrated a good understanding of the financial market and especially online financial services. Cisco has supported us during the evolution of our data center infrastructure with good advice and competitive pricing."

EMC2 helped IW Bank implement the Cisco SAN solution.

Business Results

The Cisco data center solution is helping IW Bank deliver better services to its customers. The bank offers customers a wide range of services from sophisticated, web-based financial trading systems and analysis tools through to online self-service current account management for consumers. Since the bank has no high street presence, this virtual shop window is its main interaction with customers and Cisco is helping the bank ensure these web services are quickly rolled out, operate efficiently and are available 24/7.



“Even before we had completed the full deployment of the Cisco Data Center Network solution we were starting to see some significant benefits to the business,” says Massimo Pavan, chief information officer at IW Bank. “In particular, Cisco is making it much easier and faster for the bank to set up and deploy new services. The IW Bank business model relies entirely on its online capability and ensuring we can manage existing services efficiently and introduce new ones quickly is key to the business and its competitive advantage.”

The Cisco technology provides IW Bank with a more secure, robust and high performing infrastructure which helps to make application availability and operation more reliable. Cisco VSANs mean the bank can maintain departmental integrity such as separating its financial trader applications from its consumer online banking applications. However, servers and SAN equipment supporting these functions are located in the data center where it is much more cost effective and efficient to provide support and maintenance functions such as security and data back up.

PRODUCT LIST
<p>Routing and Switching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switches <p>Storage Networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco MDS 9500 Series Multilayer Directors

The Cisco VSAN technology makes it quicker and more cost effective to deploy new services to customers because the bank no longer needs to buy and set up separate, dedicated data storage resources every time a new application is needed.

The Cisco VSAN means a new application can utilize existing server and storage resources as if it was using its own, dedicated equipment. IW Bank estimates that it has reduced the time to bring a new service to market by 20 percent.

The Cisco VSAN technology helps to reduce the number of storage devices needed and therefore the number of interconnections making the data center infrastructure much simpler and easier to manage.

Another benefit of the Cisco data center network solution is its ability to expand and support additional application and data storage requirements as IW Bank’s business grows and demand from customers increases.

Lusardi says, “In addition to the business and customer service benefits that we get from Cisco, the technology is also very easy to use. For example, we have been impressed with features like the graphical management interface – the Cisco Fabric Manager – which is a powerful tool used to configure SANs. It is so simple and intuitive you don’t really need to read the full documentation and it means that basic SAN management tasks are now much simpler to do.”



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