

BBVA Builds the Bank of the Future with Cisco Services

A true strategic partnership accelerates innovation and efficiency across technology architectures.



Summary

Customer name

BBVA

Industry

Financial services

Location

Madrid

Number of employees

132,000

Accelerating digital transformation

Most banks resist change. Not BBVA. In 2007, it recognized the huge disruptions in the financial services sector and launched a daring digital strategy. The digital strategy included everything from new customer experiences and business models, to dramatic changes in the bank's internal culture and operations.

The effort has paid off: BBVA has [doubled its digital sales and achieved record Net Promoter Scores](#) across its international markets. Analyst firm Forrester named BBVA the [best mobile and online bank in the world](#).

Building tomorrow's IT architecture

A transformational approach to IT has been critical to BBVA's success. This approach has been pioneered by BBVA's central architecture team under Ignacio Bernal, Global Head of Architecture and IT Innovation.

"We need to deliver new experiences to our customers, and to transform the way we work to be able to build things at a different speed," says Bernal. "For example, when we want to put a new feature in our mobile app, we need to be able to deliver it in one week or less."

Delivering business value


Luis Sánchez Vidal is on BBVA's private cloud team and sees the value that agile IT adds to the end customer experience: "If we're very quick upgrading our private cloud, it's not for fun; it's to add functionality to our platform that our developers need to make their applications better for our customers. It's a chain of value starting from our IT platforms and ending in better time to market for CX innovations."

From projects to partnerships

Traditional vendor relationships, mediated by RFPs and expressed through standalone, tactical projects, were slowing innovation.

BBVA decided to form new types of strategic partnership with a few key vendors, designed to encourage true collaboration and enable BBVA to bring technologies to market faster. In 2016, BBVA's CEO signed the first partnership agreement, with Cisco.

The partnership covered a range of technologies, including connectivity, collaboration, data center, and security. Cisco® Services provided a dedicated team of enterprise architects, solution architects, and program managers to orchestrate activities.



"Our relationship with Cisco has become the reference for how BBVA aspires to work with its vendors. Cisco is part of our future."

Carmen López Herranz

Global Head of Tech Experience and Workplace, BBVA

Writing the future together

The partnership is more than just a skin-deep commercial agreement; it represents a new way for BBVA and Cisco to work together, erasing the traditional customer-vendor model.

“It’s a complete change in mindset,” says Sánchez. “We’re not working on a project basis, but on achieving the same goals and executing a shared vision, together. With this partnership we can look long term, with a holistic view across technologies.”

“When we talk with Cisco our conversations are not the typical vendor-client conversations,” says Raúl Tomás Tornero, also on the private cloud team. “It’s not about buying mature products; we are working with new technologies, sitting around the table writing the future together.”

These conversations give BBVA early insight into Cisco’s cutting-edge technology innovations. In return, Cisco gets feedback and a deeper understanding of what companies in the financial services sector need.

At any one time there may be dozens of different projects running within BBVA, at various stages from initial investigation through detailed low-level design. It’s a continuous cycle of innovation.

Exceptional people make the difference

One of the things BBVA was looking for from the partnership was an influx of new ideas and experience. As Carmen López Herranz, Global Head of Tech Experience and Workplace, explains, “We know that we need to keep our talent in-house; we can’t outsource the brains. But we know that in areas where we can’t hire the talent, we need to work with companies that have it.”

“Before this partnership I thought Cisco was a hardware company trying to enter the professional services business,” López admits. “But now I can compare the quality of the team and deliverables and methodologies; it’s amazing. And that’s partly because Cisco has a very international perspective, just like we do. Cisco gives us access to the best experts, wherever they may be.”

As Sánchez explains, this is about a true relationship. “We have a real cultural compatibility. In the end, all things are based on personal relationships. It’s not about discounts, it’s about the people.”



“The people from Cisco and BBVA are partners, they are colleagues, they work together ... the magic is there.”

Ignacio Bernal

Global Head of Architecture and IT Innovation



The partnership in action

With the partnership now two years old, its impact is clear. “Our relationship with Cisco has become the reference for how BBVA aspires to work with its vendors,” López says. “We have commercial relationships with lots of other vendors, but we’re not working together in the same way as we do with Cisco. Other vendors are part of our present, but Cisco is part of our future.”

From boardroom to lab, the collaboration is there. “The guys from Cisco are like members of our team, working shoulder to shoulder with us,” says Sánchez. Bernal agrees. “The word that has started to be used a lot is trust. If you look at the relationship that the people from Cisco and BBVA have now, it’s something completely different. Now they are partners, they are colleagues, they work together ... the magic is there.”

“This is what enables us to get the same speed and innovation as the digital players,” López continues. “In this market, it’s not just about being the best, it’s about being the first.”

“This partnership is a very powerful thing for us. It’s very important to have this kind of collaboration, to keep us thinking bigger, in new ways”

Raúl Tomás Tornero
BBVA

The future

“Our focus now is to make the value we’re delivering in IT architectures more tangible to the business,” says López. “Just recently the Cisco team presented the idea of an architecture maturity framework. It’ll help us talk to the rest of the bank about what we’re doing and show them how each initiative gets us closer to our vision.”

“This partnership is a very powerful thing for us,” says Tomás. “It’s very important to have this kind of collaboration, to keep us thinking bigger, in new ways.” Sánchez continues, “What we’ve done is great, but tomorrow there will be another opportunity, and if we don’t take it, someone else will.”

In the end, it’s this drive to keep pushing the boundaries that characterizes the partnership. “I think that we have much more to explore with Cisco,” says López. “This is just the beginning!”

Learn more

To find out more about Cisco Services and how we can transform your business, check out our ebook, [Your Future Faster](#).

Watch the BBVA architecture team talk about the partnership in [this 3-minute video](#).