

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. Flexible, scalable, and secure, WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized BI platform – permeates every level of the extended enterprise through a simple and intuitive user experience.

The Co-Operative Bank

Snapshot

Organization

The Co-Operative Bank is the only UK high street bank with an ethical policy that gives customers a say in how their money is used. It has over 100 outlets in the UK and more than 3 million customer accounts.

The Challenge

Provide a tool that can produce fast, accurate, easy-to-read reports for distribution via email to 19 business centres across the UK.

Results

With WebFOCUS, processes that used to be done manually or took days to complete can now be automated and take just minutes, meaning that information is now far more accurate at the point of delivery. As a consequence the team's time has also been freed up, allowing them to focus on developing the business rather than routine reporting. Output in the department has increased dramatically and The Co-Operative Bank is investigating other parts of the business where the technology could produce similar results.

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS

WebFOCUS Resource Manager



The ability to provide accurate reporting facilities, both ad-hoc and application based, are fundamental to the service we provide, to both customers and departments within the organisation.

The Co-Operative Bank

UK Bank providing accurate reporting across 19 business centres.

As part of the Co-Operative Group, The Co-Operative Bank can trace its origins back to 1872 and the formation of the Loan and Deposit Department of the Co-Operative Wholesale Society. In 1992 the Bank became the world's first bank to introduce a customer-led ethical policy, and is still the UK's only high street bank to tell its customers who it will and will not do business with. The Co-Operative Bank currently holds over 3 million customer accounts and offers everything from 24-hour banking via call centres, to credit cards and 'green' mortgages. It is also the bank behind smile, the first full Internet bank in the UK.

In 2002 The Co-Operative Group announced the formation of Co-Operative Financial Services Ltd (CFS), bringing The Co-Operative bank under the same strategic leadership as the Co-Operative Insurance Society (CIS).

The Co-Operative Bank positions itself as a 'breath of fresh air' within the UK financial services industry for a number of reasons, not least its commitment to exceptional levels of customer service and unique, broad-ranging product portfolio. In order to maintain such competitive high standards and ensure that all customers have the best possible experience of dealing with the company, it is vital that the business's internal processes are well structured and run smoothly and efficiently.

“We are seeing a remarkable increase in response time against scheduled reports. About 230 reports that used to be run manually are now run automatically and shipped out to clients. This saves staff time, but also means we can run them at ‘off peak’ times, freeing up the mainframe for more timesensitive operations.”

**- Stephen Williams
Business Information Manager
Co-operative Bank**

The Bank is headquartered in Manchester, England, but its operations are run out of 19 regional Corporate business centres across the UK, acting as hubs to manage the Bank’s core corporate customers. It is therefore essential that they have timely access to accurate information that will affect decisions made on both individual accounts and across the wider customer base. Financial information by its very nature changes both frequently and rapidly, and so being able to continuously access and analyse the relevant data is essential if it is to be used effectively.

The ability to provide accurate reporting facilities, both ad-hoc and application based, are fundamental to the service we provide, to both customers and departments within the organisation. Providing staff with accurate and insightful information enables conclusions to be made efficiently and delivers benefits in reducing timescales on decision based activities.

The Co-Operative Bank has actually been an Information Builders customer for more than 20 years, using Information Builders’ FOCUS product to create mainframe reports. As a host-based reporting tool FOCUS worked very successfully for the Bank, allowing a far faster turnaround of information than was previously possible. The system however did not provide a distribution process for the Bank - once created the reports had to be taken off line, sent to be printed and then packed and shipped to the relevant departments. This could take up to five days from running the job to end users receiving the output.

The Bank decided that for greater efficiency it wanted to migrate to using a web-based reporting tool. WebFOCUS provides various methods of delivering information in a timely and efficient manner. The two methodologies utilised comprise of web based applications or Information Builders distribution tool Report Caster. This has considerably reduced manual processing overheads and enabled developers to concentrate on producing business critical information.

Stephen Williams, Business Information Manager at the Co-Operative Bank explains how they came to choose WebFOCUS: “Despite already having Information Builders’ FOCUS product in place, we were under a lot of pressure to move to SAS as they had a strong foothold in other parts of the bank. We decided however that WebFOCUS provided the better solution for us – SAS does not have the scheduling and distribution capability that was so important for us, and it was also never going to be an economic option. We had been working with Information Builders for more than 20 years so I was very confident that they would be able to deliver what we needed.”

The move to WebFOCUS went smoothly, particularly as the teams involved were already familiar with the ‘feel’ and workings of Information Builders’ FOCUS product. The successful transfer was supported by a bespoke training programme designed by Information Builders to provide appropriate and useful knowledge of the enhanced product. WebFOCUS has enabled reports to be delivered directly from the mainframe in real time, in a format that is simple for end users to understand. The solution also allows the reports to be distributed via email to key staff within the Co-Operative Bank’s 19 business centres, giving them easy access to accurate, up-to-date information on a regular basis. Reporting generally falls into two categories; firstly, event based alerts that require immediate attention / action and secondly, general management information.

Many process which would have taken days now takes minutes, and the new emailed format makes the information contained in the reports much clearer. Output in the department has increased dramatically as a result, and it has allowed other projects to take place that might otherwise not have been undertaken. The team previously spent 80 per cent of its time on routine reporting and just 20 per cent on developing new applications – this has now been reversed, giving them far greater opportunities to support the business and enhance the experience of the users of the information.

Not only has WebFOCUS fulfilled its initial objectives, but it has delivered a number of other benefits for the Co-Operative Bank. “We are seeing a remarkable increase in response time against scheduled reports,” says Stephen Williams. “About 230 reports that used to be run manually are now run automatically and shipped out to clients. This saves staff time, but also means we can run them at ‘off peak’ times, freeing up the mainframe for more time-sensitive operations.”

WebFOCUS is also enabling the delivery of a major new project within the Bank called Account Level Profitability (ALP), whereby profitability information is now readily available to Managers and staff within the Corporate business centres in an easily understandable format. This enables them to make better and more informed decisions. WebFOCUS was chosen for this project over Oracle’s Discoverer product, on the basis of its dramatically better performance and far more user-friendly interface.

“We moved to WebFOCUS almost two years ago and it was definitely the right choice for us,” says Stephen. “I think it’s fair to say that the family image that Information Builders projects is in fact a reality – it really does look after its customers and we have been delighted with the results of this implementation. Having seen that WebFOCUS not only works, but works better than anything we have ever seen before, there is definitely potential for rolling it out for use across other areas of the Bank. I think we have the slickest information management and reporting system in the company and I am looking forward to applying what we have learnt here to other projects and departments.”

Find Out More

To find out how our solutions can help your company succeed, talk to an Information Builders representative today.

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