



BUILDING A BRIDGE TO EFFECTIVE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Badenia opts for gentle migration to service-oriented Java architecture

Since 1996, the Deutsche Bausparkasse (German Home Loan Bank) Badenia has amassed more than 35 million documents in its archive – a substantial volume to manage! As of 2007 and continuing until 2011, the Karlsruhe-based financial services provider is migrating the system used to manage these documents from Microsoft Visual Basic to a service-oriented Java architecture. Badenia chose not to go for a “big bang”, but rather to build an effective bridge between the two IT worlds.

► THE STARTING SITUATION

Badenia’s document management system BADOK, which builds on Visual Basic and also includes an inbox and file solution, was adapted time and again over the years to meet the financial service provider’s changing challenges and processes. Moving such a massive system with its many millions of documents forward can’t be done from one day to the next, just by flipping a switch in the IT department –

particularly when the change is a fundamental one.

But because Microsoft won’t continue to support the Visual Basic technology in the long run, a migration became unavoidable. Badenia was faced with several questions at the same time:

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Oliver Kühn

Team Leader for Central Services, Deutsche Bausparkasse Badenia

- Which future-oriented programming language should they turn to – .NET or Java?
- Should the future archive be managed using standard or customized software?
- Should one go for a big bang or a soft migration?

Together with CENIT’s ECM experts, Badenia gained clarity on these matters. As Oliver Kühn, Team Leader for Central Services in Badenia’s Department for Informatics, Operations and Development, explains the decision: “It quickly became obvious to us that disengaging from the evolved solution in a big bang would be quite impossible”.

► THE PROJECT

Nor was there an alternative to a tailor-made solution, because no standard software is capable of fulfilling the wide range of BADOK’s functionalities. The decision fell in favour of Java because the required know-how was already available

at Badenia. And thus the stage was set for a soft migration to a new IT world.

The guarantee for project success turned out to be a so-called bridge technology, by which Visual Basic is called up as a connector from Java – and, of course, vice versa. “The bridge technology allows us to integrate the old world into the new”, explains Oliver Kühn. “In that way, we didn’t have to switch to Java at one go, but could instead proceed step by step via the bridge technology”.

Right from the beginning of this sizable project, which was slated for a total runtime of four years, the sheer complexity



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BADENIA

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of the previously used DMS solution proved to be a tough nut to crack. BADOK had 13 years of Badenia service on its back, and the functionalities that had been integrated during this long history couldn't be gauged in full detail when the migration began. Many depths were only plumbed during the course of the crossover, but of course all the functions still had to be available to the new system from the outset.

The performance levels of such a DMS behemoth place high demands on the project team. And thus the IT experts from Badenia and CENIT were kept busy optimizing and re-optimizing.

► CENIT AS A PARTNER

"Despite these initial challenges", Oliver Kühn remembers, "we were able to precisely hit the target of 7 months until the first handshake between the two systems".

CENIT has been closely integrated into this large-scale project from the beginning. "No matter whether the issue at hand was developing a new strategic architecture or making recommendations on concrete technical implementation – the people from CENIT convinced us at every juncture with their first-class competence and their deep process understanding," says Oliver Kühn. Monitoring functions are handled by IBM FileNet System Monitor. In addition, CENIT conducts regular system audits of all infrastructure topics.

From the first day on, user-side acceptance played a major role in all the IT changes involved in this DMS migration. During

the entire process thus far, Badenia's staff have not registered a fracture. "We managed to keep performance at such a constant level that the changeover went off virtually unnoticed", Oliver Kühn recalls happily. No wonder that the users are just as content with the new application as they were with the old. The smooth transition made special training sessions unnecessary. For Badenia's technical departments, there has been no change whatsoever in terms of work procedures, let alone in terms of performance. Thus a first milestone was reached. The next step involved the implementa-

► DEUTSCHE BAUSPARKASSE BADENIA AG

Deutsche Bausparkasse (German Home Loan Bank) Badenia, headquartered in Karlsruhe, is a member of the Generali Deutschland Group and has numbered among Germany's large private home loan banks for many years. With over 75 years of experience in the fields of home loans and financing, Badenia is a high-performing, competent partner for customers who want to realize their dream of a self-owned home or wish to modernize and improve their property.

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tion of an integrated inbox. This further bridge to the new IT world has already been completed successfully. Currently, the electronic file is tackled. Thus, the mutual, cross-board enterprise information management (EIM) strategy is consistently pursued.



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