



Business challenge

To expand its market share in Lebanon and the EMEA region, BLOM BANK realized it needed to embrace the omnichannel digital banking trend without compromising on data availability or efficiency.

Transformation

BLOM BANK chose fully encrypted IBM DS8870 storage solutions, deployed in a high-availability configuration, boosting operational resilience and enabling growth, efficiency and business continuity.



Antoine Lawandos
AGM and CIO

Business benefits

99.9999%

critical systems data availability enables reliable services

Facilitates

a smooth evolution into the whirling digital era

Secures

sensitive data and boosts IT performance and efficiency

BLOM BANK S.A.L.

Driving rapid expansion for banking services in the EMEA region with no time for downtime

BLOM BANK is a leading Lebanese bank, which offers retail, commercial, corporate, private, and investment banking services. Operating in 13 countries in the EMEA with 257 branches, the bank has assets of USD 28.93 billion and the highest rate of return on average equity at 15.2 percent.

“The IBM DS8870 solutions help us evolve our services quickly without compromising on quality.”

—Antoine Lawandos, AGM/CIO,
BLOM BANK

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Embracing the omnichannel revolution

As a leading Lebanese bank that has repeatedly been selected as the “Best Bank in Lebanon” by recognized regional and international institutions, BLOM BANK has built up a solid track record of profitability and growth in Lebanon and the EMEA region, while following a conservative strategy that includes prudent risk management. The balancing act between attaining high profitability margins and making calculated moves and measured decisions has paid off, as illustrated by the bank’s low operational costs and cost-to-income (CI) ratio at 37.03 percent.



To maintain this winning approach while providing innovative products and services to customers and staying at the forefront of technology, BLOM BANK realized that it needed to fully engage with the omnichannel digital banking trend. Achieving this without compromising service quality would require the bank to find a stable technology partner, who could offer a technology mix that would enable growth, efficiency and service continuity as BLOM BANK evolves.

Setting up a robust and stable IT backbone

BLOM BANK implemented IBM DS8870 storage solutions as the backbone for its three-site data

center replication strategy, which links the bank's primary, high availability and remote disaster recovery data centers. To ensure local and remote data replication under a constrained link bandwidth, the bank collaborated with IBM to implement local synchronous replication using IBM Metro Mirror, and remote asynchronous replication enabled by IBM Global Mirror and Metro Global Mirror technologies.

Antoine Lawandos, AGM and CIO at BLOM BANK, remarks: "The IBM DS8870 was the natural choice for us: it delivers three times the performance of our previous storage solution and enables us to secure

sensitive data while at rest. By configuring our data centers for high availability, we have been able to minimize our RTO and reduce our RPO to around 1 second at the remote site, enabling unprecedented continuity of service while being at Tier 7 – the highest level in the multi-site availability hierarchy."

The storage solution also integrates seamlessly with the rest of the bank's IT infrastructure, which includes servers based on IBM® POWER8® processors and IBM DB2® solutions that support its core banking application; and a virtual desktop infrastructure solution supported by IBM Storwize® V7000 storage.

Smooth growth and evolution

Offering BLOM BANK a robust and stable backbone for its mission-critical applications, the IBM DS8870 is helping the bank expand its reach in Lebanon and the EMEA region, while retaining its focus on prudent risk management and preserving its low CI ratio.

Antoine Lawandos explains: "Using the virtualized IBM storage solutions, we have built a private cloud that enables us to provision IT resources with exceptional speed and flexibility. Having this ability is key to fully engage in the omnichannel banking trend. We can now quickly introduce innovative products to our customers

across multiple channels without compromising on service quality or limiting our agility as an organization.

"The IBM solutions provide us with 99.9999 percent data availability for critical systems, and enable reliable services through a stable and secure backbone," adds Antoine Lawandos. He concludes: "As a result, we can quickly evolve to compete in today's whirling digital era, are more confident than ever in the safety of our data, and have boosted performance, and efficiency, and achieved significant operational savings. Armed with IBM solutions, we believe that we are better-equipped to act on our strategy to become an even bigger player within the international market."

Solution components

- IBM® DB2®
- IBM DS8870
- IBM Global Mirror
- IBM i
- IBM Metro Global Mirror
- IBM Metro Mirror
- IBM Power® S814
- IBM Storwize® V7000

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Take the next step

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