



ATB Financial reaches new heights of success with SAP and IBM

Providing a full range of financial services across Alberta, Canada, ATB Financial (ATB) employs 5,300 people who serve more than 710,000 customers through 172 branches and 135 agencies.

Established by the Government of Alberta in 1938 to provide Albertans with an alternative source of credit during the Great Depression, ATB today holds assets of CAD 43.1 billion (equivalent to USD 33.1 billion) and has consistently been recognized as one of Canada's best employers.

Maintaining momentum

ATB has expanded to become Alberta's largest financial institution, posting strong results and consistent growth rates even during the global financial crisis.

The organization has achieved this by maintaining a focus on innovation and improvement. However, with

new, surprising competitors entering the market, ATB cannot afford to become complacent.

Peter Meusburger, Chief IT Architect at ATB, explains: "In recent years, threats have emerged from new quarters – companies outside the banking industry have begun offering services such as loans and credit cards, which could potentially erode our revenues and market share.

"Our strategy for success is to keep doing what we do best: raising service levels and adding to our portfolio of products so that we always exceed expectations."

To retain its leading position, ATB must respond better and faster than competitors, which is only possible if its banking systems are up to the task. ATB relies on a suite of SAP® applications, including SAP for Banking, SAP CRM, SAP Payment Engine,

Overview

Challenge

Facing competition from unexpected sources, ATB Financial must continue to deliver ultra-reliable banking services and exciting new products to maintain strong growth rates.

Solution

Choosing IBM technology and services to support critical SAP applications, the organization has the stable, flexible and scalable platform it needs in place to drive innovation, offering a key competitive edge.

Key benefits

ATB Financial achieved its highest ever levels of employee engagement, customer loyalty and profitability in 2014-2015, with highly available, easy-to-manage and responsive IT enabling optimal services.

Business Challenge

Over its 77-year history, ATB Financial has grown steadily to become the largest financial institution in Alberta, Canada. With new competitors emerging constantly from both inside and outside the banking industry, the organization must continue to deliver ultra-reliable banking services and exciting new products to retain its edge over the competition – and keep customers coming back for more.

SAP ERP, SAP Banking Analyzer and more, to drive its operations.

“In 2008, we decided to standardize on SAP applications to support almost all of our business,” says Peter Meusburger.

“Since then, we have built up a solid partnership with SAP. We were the first in North America to deploy SAP for Banking, a risk that has paid off as it helps us to gain deeper insights into customer needs and bring relevant solutions to market quickly. Because SAP solutions play such an integral role in our operations, we make constant uptime an absolute priority.

“The buck stops with the underlying infrastructure,” he states. “To support our critical SAP environment, we need a platform that is flexible enough to adapt to changing market needs, offers sufficient headroom for growth and the creation of new products, and above all provides exceptional resilience.”

Greater efficiency at lower risk

When a fire prompted a datacenter move, ATB decided it was the right time for a server refresh. Working closely with IBM® Global Technology Services®, the organization migrated its SAP applications and IBM DB2®

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Chief IT Architect
ATB Financial

databases to IBM Power® 780 servers running the IBM AIX® operating system.

“We moved from a datacenter in Calgary to a new state-of-the-art IBM facility in Edmonton, giving us more distance between our primary and backup locations to reduce risk,” recalls Peter Meusburger.

“The business case for migrating our SAP systems to the IBM Power 780 platform was a powerful one: it would enable us to consolidate a total of 18

“We can now use built-in features of the IBM Power 780 servers, such as processor pooling and workload prioritization, to boost performance where it matters most.”

Peter Meusburger,

Chief IT Architect
ATB Financial

servers to just seven machines, simplify our environment for much easier management and achieve an expected performance increase of around 30 percent.

“The IBM Global Technology Services team used a range of tools to reduce the effort and risk involved in the migration. We now use the configuration of the environment as a gold standard for the rest of the organization.”

The infrastructure is managed by IBM Strategic Outsourcing Services and hosted in a world-class service

center with the latest enterprise-level technology, helping ATB achieve optimal IT performance. By taking advantage of the Capacity on Demand feature for IBM Power Systems™, the organization can optimize utilization of resources and remove barriers to growth.

“Before, we had to keep some server resources aside for use when we wanted to make updates, for example,” says Peter Meusburger.

“Capacity on Demand has changed all that, enabling us to activate dormant resources only when we need them, translating into a faster return on investment, greater operational efficiency and pain-free scaling.”

Flexibility alongside rock-solid stability

ATB has gained unprecedented control and visibility of its server environment, enabling it to provision resources faster and more dynamically than ever before. As a result, the organization’s IT team can respond better to requests from the business, which, in turn, means it can adapt faster to changing market conditions and demand for new products.

“We can now use built-in features

Solution

ATB Financial runs the business-critical SAP applications with IBM DB2 at the center of its banking systems on IBM Power 780 servers, hosted in an IBM datacenter and managed by IBM Global Technology Services. With a stable, flexible platform that it can rely on, the organization has the tools to drive innovation.

Key Solution Components

Industry

Banking

Applications

SAP® Bank Analyzer, SAP Business Warehouse, SAP Customer Relationship Management, SAP ERP, SAP for Banking, SAP Payment Engine, SAP Process Integration

Hardware

IBM® Power® 780

Software

IBM AIX®, IBM DB2® for Linux, UNIX and Windows, IBM PowerHA®, IBM PowerVM® Enterprise Edition

Services

IBM Global Technology Services® - IBM Integrated Technology Services and IBM Strategic Outsourcing Services

of the IBM Power 780 servers, such as processor pooling and workload prioritization, to boost performance where it matters most,” says Peter Meusburger.

“Equipped with a much more granular view of our IT landscape, we can evaluate when and how to scale to meet future demand, rather than being caught by surprise. Ultimately, this means that we can serve the business, and therefore our customers, better.”

Using IBM solutions, ATB protects its critical SAP environment against downtime. Peter Meusburger elaborates: “The combination of IBM PowerHA® software and the IBM DB2 HADR [high availability disaster recovery] feature enables us to take a clustered approach to high availability that prevents interruptions to our services.

“We chose IBM DB2 HADR because is an easy-to-use data replication feature that provides a high availability solution for both partial and complete site failures, and integrates seamlessly with our SAP solutions.

“And the best part is that it comes as part of the IBM DB2 solution, with no additional licensing costs. In our

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Chief IT Architect

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experience, IBM solutions are always exceptionally stable, but it helps to have those extra precautions to ensure that our most vital systems – our SAP landscape – never go down.”

Platform for success

ATB’s recent record performance results show that the organization has

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made the right strategic decisions – among them, its technology choices. “In 2014-2015, ATB achieved its highest ever levels of employee engagement, customer loyalty and profitability, so it is clear that we are doing something right!” says Peter Meusburger.

“Without the technology in place to support the many initiatives that made this possible, we would not have achieved these successes.”

By enabling reliable, fast responses to customer and market demands, the IBM solutions are helping ATB

retain its reputation as a leader in the industry. With the headroom to support future demands, they are also removing barriers to the organization's continued expansion.

Peter Meusburger concludes: “IBM solutions are the right choice for our essential SAP environment because they are helping us become a truly agile organization that can rise to the current and future challenges in our industry.

“We expect our current IBM platform to accommodate our growth targets for at least the next three years, and to lay the ideal foundation for the launch of new products and services.”

Business Benefits

- **Supported ATB Financial in achieving its highest ever levels of employee engagement, customer loyalty and profitability in 2014-2015**
 - **Ultra-available, highly responsive banking systems help to optimize existing services**
 - **Scalable, flexible infrastructure offers the headroom for growth needed to support the launch of new products**
 - **Consolidated 18 servers to just seven machines, alongside an expected performance increase of around 30 percent**
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