



Rabobank Gains Return on Investment With Citrix

Solution Overview

Company

With over 450 branches, Rabobank Nederland is one of the largest retail banks in the Netherlands. A leading provider of personal and business banking services to the Dutch market, the bank offers a variety of account, loan and mortgage services to customers throughout the country.

Challenge

Rabobank needed to provide its branch office employees and mobile staff with secure and reliable access to mission-critical applications. It also needed a solution to address the problem of high volume network traffic that was adversely affecting the performance of the applications.

Solution

Rabobank implemented Citrix MetaFrame™ with Microsoft Windows Terminal Server software. TEQ Nederland a Citrix Authorized Learning Centre (CALC) worked closely with the bank to test and implement the solution.

Benefits

MetaFrame has provided users with high-performance and reliable access to applications anytime, anywhere. In addition, Rabobank can better predict the cost of ownership of its IT system and ensure secure information access.

Rabobank Nederland is one of the largest retail banks in the Netherlands, with over 450 branches throughout the country. Operating in a climate of intense competition and rapid market change, the bank recognises the importance of organisational flexibility to provide the highest level of service to its customers. When quite literally time is money, its banking executives must have fast access to mission-critical information regardless of where they are.

Yet Rabobank's employees in its branch offices and mobile executives on the road had difficulty accessing the high-performance banking applications and business data that were vital to business success. To ensure speedy and reliable information access anytime, anywhere, Rabobank implemented a new application server computing infrastructure comprised of Citrix® MetaFrame™ and Microsoft® Windows® NT Server 4.0, Terminal Server Edition software.

The Challenge: Rapid Application Access for Remote Operations

Although Rabobank Nederland's central IT department provided installation advice and supplied core applications to company's branch offices, local branches were also able to install any applications they saw necessary. As a result, Rabobank was running a mix of approximately 200 line-of-business and productivity applications across servers in every branch office.

Although suitable for some of the smaller applications, the network was far too slow for applications requiring larger quantities of information from the banks' Sybase databases. Employees working at remote customer sites were often unable to get the information they needed while on-site and therefore had to download everything they needed before leaving the office.

Branch office employees frequently found it impossible to log-on due to the network traffic. There was a great deal of frustration from both the users who depended on the applications to do their jobs, and the IT staff who were called upon to help resolve these issues.

"It was a difficult time," remembers Peter Tegelaar, head of IT services at the Aalsmeer branch of Rabobank. "In some instances, the response time that we got from our applications was embarrassing, because users were sitting in front of their screens with nothing happening — it was taking too much time to do anything."

Implementing MetaFrame Application Server Software

In 1995, Tegelaar went in search of a new computing solution and discovered Citrix application server software. Says Tegelaar, "We recognised that Citrix software would give us the centralised management capabilities and bandwidth-independent performance we needed to run our network more effectively and economically. Users could access the applications as easily as if they were running locally."

An initial pilot in Rabobank's Aalsmeer branch was set up with the help of TEQ Nederland, a Citrix Authorized Learning Centre (CALC). Citrix software enabled more than 40 users to access any application from Rabobank Aalsmeer's local branch when working at home or at Rabobank Aalsmeer's sub-offices.

The pilot project implemented at Rabobank's Aalsmeer office proved to be so successful that that now 225 of Rabobank Nederland's branch offices have installed Citrix MetaFrame software to offer their staff unlimited access to applications.



Now everything computes.™

“The Citrix solution was the answer to our problems — a secure system that gave us fast, easy and reliable access to all the information that we needed, whenever and wherever we needed it.”

—Peter Tegelaar, head of IT services, Rabobank Aalsmeer

Location-Independent Working for a Competitive Advantage

A great advantage of its Citrix application server computing solution is that the bank's advisors can now do business anywhere. Some users can access bandwidth-intensive applications over a wireless GSM link. Tegelaar gives an example: “A mortgage advisor goes to his client for a consultation and takes his laptop and printer with him. He links up to the central Citrix system via his mobile telephone connected to his laptop. He can then provide a consultation, access the most current market data, and print out an offer on the spot. This gives us a significant time-to-market advantage, which helps to keep us ahead of our competitors.”

Improved IT Support and Security

The system is also extremely secure. The bank's advisors dial-in to the server running Citrix MetaFrame software. To ensure security, the servers call back with a pass code that allows the users access to their profiles. Because all the applications are running remotely, there is no potentially sensitive client information stored on the laptop. If the equipment is stolen or misplaced, the confidential information that the advisors rely on will not be open to prying eyes. Explains Tegelaar, “It was the answer to our problems — a secure system that gave us fast, easy and reliable access to all the information that we needed, whenever and wherever we needed it.”

“The bank's directors need to access the MetaFrame servers at all times, so that whether they're on the road or at home they can always work as if they were in the office.”

—Peter Tegelaar, head of IT services, Rabobank Aalsmeer

Citrix MetaFrame software also allowed Tegelaar to plan his IT expenditures much more effectively. “The centralised model ensures that our IT costs are more predictable because there is less risk of downtime and we can upgrade our applications far more easily. MetaFrame with Windows Terminal Server has given us greater control over our network and we have made a noticeable cost saving.”

A Mounting Interest in the Solution

Meanwhile, Tegelaar has been continually demonstrating to others how the new IT system works. “Various big consultancies and recruitment agencies have expressed interest in this approach, as their employees are often out of the office or working from home,” Tegelaar observes. He has also seen a high level of interest from the bank's executive staff. “I've had several requests from the bank's directors to be allowed access to the Citrix servers, so that when they are on the road or at home they can work in the same way as if they were in the office.”

Solution Detail

About MetaFrame

Citrix MetaFrame application server software is enabling organisations to achieve “Digital Independence”™ from the cost and complexity of traditional computing by transforming the way they deploy, manage and access applications. MetaFrame extends the functionality of Microsoft Windows NT Server 4.0, Terminal Server Edition and Microsoft Windows® 2000 Servers by providing enterprise management and Web-enablement of applications, and access from any location or device, over any network connection — from wireless to Web.

Applications Deployed

Over 200 applications, including:

- Microsoft Office 97
- Tasktimer, scheduling programme
- Custom applications, including CEA (Centraal Elektronisch Archief), Impalaa 2000, OLI (Online Client Information) and Rapido
- Eicon Gateway, emulation software
- Access 320 Emulations
- Raboweb, Rabobank's own intranet

Networking Environment

- Over 225 Citrix MetaFrame and WinFrame servers, including Compaq* Proliant 1600 servers with 450MHz processors, 256MB of RAM, 9GB hard disks
- Windows NT Server 4.0, Terminal Server Edition
- UTP, ISDN, GSM cellular connections
- Toshiba Notebooks and variety of PCs

**Compaq Computer Corporation is a Premier Plus member of the Citrix Business Alliance program, a growing coalition of industry-leading companies from across the technology spectrum who are working closely with Citrix to broaden the scope and effectiveness of enterprise application server computing solutions.*

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