



SNS BANK MIGRATES TO JBOSS ENTERPRISE PLATFORM

FAST FACTS

Industry: Financial Services

Challenge: SNS Bank's IT systems handle 500,000 daily transactions produced by various applications on 3,300 workstations. The bank's front-end system was reaching its technical and economical limit and was reducing the opportunity for innovation and scalability within the organization. The SNS IT team, responsible for cost savings, looked for a solution that was flexible, stable, and scalable.

Solution: Software: JBoss Application Server
Hardware: 8 IBM X-series servers

Benefits:

- SNS Bank was able to rapidly deploy its new system onto 3,300 workstations in nine months.
- The bank experienced reduced licensing costs and overall cost savings after migrating to JBoss solutions. SNS Bank also experienced a reduction in hardware demands following the implementation of its new system.
- Increased stability and reliability of the organization's production platform was enjoyed following its migration.

BACKGROUND:

SNS Bank was established in 1817 and is one of the top five banks in the Netherlands with over 3,300 employees in 150 offices. It's a part of SNS REAAL, a Dutch service provider specialising in insurance and banking, and provides consultation for private and business customers looking for smart solutions to broaden their financial possibilities.

SNS IT is a 300-person branch of SNS Bank that's in charge of the entire IT infrastructure and determines the overall IT strategy including the development, monitoring, and maintenance of the bank's IT systems. SNS IT ensures the uptime and availability of the systems connected to more 3,000 workstations, producing over 500,000 transactions on a daily basis.

CHALLENGE:

SNS Bank processed transactions on proprietary back-office systems and operated its front-end SNS Administration System (SAS) based on Pascal before its migration. The SAS front-end was approaching its economical and technical limits and was holding the bank back from driving innovation and the initiation of new projects because costs were too high. The Pascal-based front-end of the SAS application was showing limitations too - it only supported 16-bit and was difficult to run in newer environments.

In 2001, project manager Marcel Schmidt and the department Architecture of SNS IT were asked to come up with ideas to innovate the IT infrastructure and find a solution that would provide cost savings and ROI in less than one year. The solution needed to be stable and flexible too.



SOLUTION:

The SNS IT Team defined the limitations of its old system and the requirements necessary in its new system and concluded that a Java-based application server would fit the organizational needs and team best. The SNS IT Team, made up of Java specialists, tested a number of solutions for reliability, performance, and stress and ultimately determined that the JBoss Application Server would fit best.

In choosing JBoss solutions, cost was a decisive factor. The bank would achieve significant savings in terms of licensing costs with JBoss' open source model. With the SNS IT team's extensive Java and open source knowledge, a solid basis of trust was developed within the organisation for the basis of Implementation of the Java migration and the JBoss Application Server took SNS Bank only nine months. During this time, the SNS IT team distributed the new Java-based SAS front-end to all 3,300 workstations. With JBoss solutions, SNS Bank was able to move to eight slim and affordable IBM X-series servers with Linux operating systems in the production environment.

BENEFITS:

Key advantages of the JBoss Application Server solution include its valuable reliability and stability. Since implementing JBoss solutions, the SNS IT team has had no problems with its JBoss Application Server. "We tested the JBoss Application Server extensively and then migrated it into our production environment. It has operated exactly as we had expected, which is very important for a financial institution like ours," said Schmidt. "In the last three years, we had less than five support tickets. Our team is able to guarantee extremely high levels of availability as well as significant savings on time spent fixing interruptions within the systems."

The JBoss Application Server enables the SNS IT team to efficiently expand its IT infrastructure. Today, 3,300 workstations are equipped with various Java applications through the JBoss Application Server. Due to the recent acquisition of Regiobank, it's very likely that hundreds of workstations will be added to the bank's IT system in the near future. The flexibility and scalability of the Java environment allows SNS IT to add more PCs to the current IT infrastructure without the need for any additional budget.

One of the biggest motivators for SNS Bank to migrate to a new solution was to have a platform on which new projects could be developed without a need for a budget increase. SNS Bank has enjoyed significant cost savings by migrating to JBoss solutions and can now allocate funds toward new innovative projects. "By choosing an open source environment based on JBoss solutions, we managed to save at least €200,000 at the SAS front-end alone," said Schmidt. "On top, we now run seven additional Java applications on JBoss. We are happy to have experienced such drastic savings on licenses. With our previous environment, licensing costs were already rising to a couple of hundred thousand euros. The cost savings we have experienced since our JBoss migration have subsequently allowed us to develop new initiatives without extra budget."

"The success of JBoss solutions in our organisation was without doubt 'the big bang.' The SNS IT team, as well as the rest of the organization, has embraced open source thanks to the in-house knowledge and dedication of the community," said Schmidt. "We are currently looking to deploy a full service-oriented architecture (SOA) environment and will use the JBoss jBPM framework to further benefit from open source and Java at the SNS Bank."

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