High-Reliability Hitachi Storage Provides a Foundation for Innovative Financial Services at Alior Bank

Alior Bank is one of the most innovative financial institutions in the Polish market. In just a year, the company launched 3 strategic products. One of these was Alior Sync (now T-Mobile Usługi Bankowe provided by Alior Bank), a next-generation online bank. In order to accommodate such dynamic development and its new automated services, which are required by customers to be available 24/7, Alior Bank needed to modernize its previous storage infrastructure. The bank introduced Hitachi Unified Storage VM and Hitachi Unified Storage 130 to ensure high data availability and maintain an attractive cost-performance ratio.

Alior Bank S.A. launched its operations in 2008. At the moment, it is one of the key financial institutions in the Polish banking market. In December 2012, the bank made its debut at the Warsaw Stock Exchange with the biggest IPO among private companies since the beginning of the Exchange, worth about PLN 2.1 billion in total. In March 2014, less than 18 months since its stock market launch, the bank was included in the WIG20 index, which comprises the 20 biggest companies listed at the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

The institution’s operations are characterized by a dynamic increase of new customers. As of the end of 2013, Alior Bank had 2.12 million customers, which is 42% more than the year before. In 2012, this increase reached 50% year over year. Such a dynamic growth was achieved by setting high quality standards and delivering products that combine the principles of traditional banking with innovative solutions.

From our point of view, data availability is the key factor. Since we started using Hitachi Data Systems solutions more than 6 years ago, we have never experienced any failures in our storage infrastructure. Hitachi reliability gives it a clear competitive edge.

Bernard Grzywna
Director of the IT Maintenance Department at Alior Bank S.A.
The Challenge for IT: Keep Pace With Business Innovation

In 2012, Alior Bank launched 3 strategic services. In June 2012, the bank introduced Alior Sync, a next-generation online bank with functionalities unique in the Polish market. Within 18 months of the launch, the online solution was used by more than 300,000 customers. A month later, Alior Bank launched the first online currency exchange. Over a single year, the platform was used to make more than half a million transactions. Also in the second half of 2012, Alior implemented the Online Credit Process, the world’s only solution of this type that makes it possible for customers to get a loan entirely online. In 2014, the bank entered into a strategic agreement with telecommunications operator T-Mobile. This move resulted in Alior Sync being rebranded in May 2014 to T-Mobile Usługi Bankowe provided by Alior Bank.

The dynamic development of highly innovative banking products and services is a major challenge for Alior Bank’s IT department. IT specialists are responsible for the development and maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) services that provide the basis for the bank’s business platforms.

“Based on launching innovative products and services, the bank’s strategy has major consequences for the day-to-day work of the IT department. This approach also needs to be reflected in our IT solutions,” said Director of the IT Maintenance Department at Alior Bank S.A., Bernard Grzywna.

Alior Bank has been cooperating with Hitachi Data Systems since 2008. At this time, the bank purchased and implemented 2 enterprise-class Hitachi Universal Storage Platform V systems. As it grew its storage infrastructure, the bank implemented a number of midrange Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 2000 models. After several years, when it became necessary to provide additional capacity, the bank decided to purchase new systems, rather than upgrading the older models. Deputy Director of the IT Maintenance Department at Alior Bank, Tomasz Fryc explains that current Hitachi products ensure high performance and convenient options for expansion of storage systems in the future.

“We decided to continue our cooperation with Hitachi Data Systems for many reasons. First of all, we are very happy with the solutions that we have been using for several years now. Our feelings are confirmed by positive references from financial institutions, worldwide. HDS storage is characterized by a very favorable cost-quality ratio. In addition, Hitachi cooperates in Poland with systems integrator Wasko, a company that we also worked with during previous implementation projects carried out at our bank,” said Fryc.

As with the first HDS implementation, Wasko was involved in the entire process. The company prepared a technical design and an implementation plan. It also prepared a plan to migrate data...
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