



«Our choice for Alcatel was based upon an open and distributed communication platform supporting IP, while leveraging our legacy Token Ring infrastructure and avoiding costly cabling upgrades required by other competitors. Alcatel's supportive attitude was greatly appreciated, complementing its technical knowledge and expertise; this made us feel much more like a collaborating partner rather than a product buyer.»

Jean Pierre CORDEIRO,
Telecom Director,
Crédit Agricole Pyrénées Gascogne



Crédit Agricole

Bank leader chose to converge voice and data networks onto a single platform to greatly improve client care.

Challenges

- ?? Replacing separate voice and data networks in a mission critical banking environment to reduce costs, operational complexity and streamlining vendor support issues.
- ?? Giving 150 branch locations the same service level quality and voice service functions available at corporate headquarters.

Solution

- ?? An Alcatel VoIP network integrating separate networks, key cost savings in several areas (e.g., cabling, PSTN line cost, staff reduction), simplifying network management and establishing a future-proof platform for evolving applications and technologies..

Benefits

- ?? 46% GSM and PSTN line Cost savings
- ?? Homogeneous voice features upgrade.
- ?? Increased network manageability.

Crédit Agricole Pyrénées Gascogne

The leading French bank in customer accessibility thanks to its decentralized management structure and high-density branch office network, Credit Agricole is the first bank of France with more than 16 million customers. The group is a decentralized having three organizational structures; the parent holding company, 45 regional banks, and reporting into these are 9,000 branch offices.

Crédit Agricole Pyrénées Gascogne is one of the largest regional banks in the CA group and one of the largest financial institutions headquartered in Pau, France (100 millions annual revenue). Through its branch network and Internet banking division (IT budget: 10 millions – Telecom budget: € 2 millions), CA provides its customers with a full range of commercial and individual banking products and services.

With 152 locations and some 1800 people, Crédit Agricole offers the most diverse banking services found anywhere in the Pyrénées/Gascogne region.

Such responsibilities is one of many reasons Crédit Agricole selected a converged voice and data network to improve reliability, manageability and information access of its communication network.

Network aches and pain
Separate voice and data networks are costly and difficult to manage.

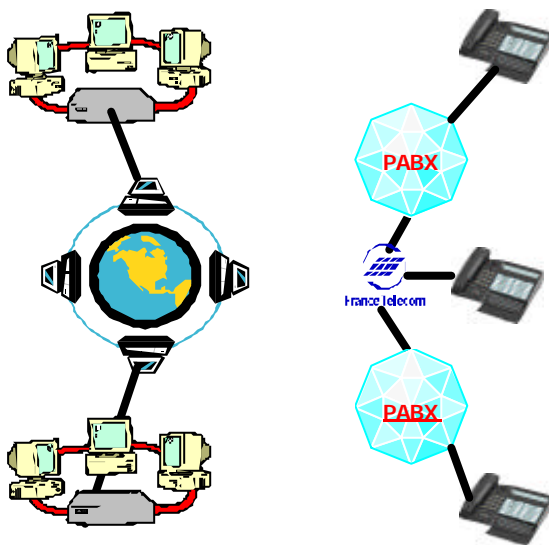
Information technology at Crédit Agricole is essential to efficiently delivering banking service. According to Jean Pierre Cordeiro, Telecom director at Crédit Agricole, "It's important that necessary information is made available when and where it's needed to facilitate business decisions. This means providing a variety of communications services among our several sites and agencies, teams as well as to our clients".

With a communications network playing such a critical role in meeting the needs of clients and staff, it's not difficult to understand why Mr Cordeiro and member IT team found themselves concerned and frustrated with their existing network infrastructure. Because of its steady growth over the last six years, CA sought to create a unified network capable of providing standardized services to all of its branches. Disparate telephony systems needed to be replaced, and essential features such as voice mail, automated attendants, and four-digit dialing needed to be implemented while maintaining branch independence. Crédit Agricole's separate voice and data networks covered 152 sites with disparate voice features making the infrastructure costly and cumbersome to manage and change. The numerous Branch Office-site calls increased the phone subscription fees up to € 305 K and the access line link charges accounted for 11% of the total telecom budget.

"What's more" said Mr Cordeiro, "we found that 30% of our customer calls were abandoned due to discrepancies in voice features levels". These discrepancies were created due to budgetary constraints forcing work around and short cuts that over time

resulted in a complex telecom network of PBXs with different software releases, configurations and delays in change implementation”.

On the data side, discontinued service support for our existing private IP network was in serious jeopardy. It was absolutely necessary to replace our network end-to-end or be without vendor support”.



2 separate networks

“Our goal”, Cordeiro continued, “has been to put in place a common infrastructure for all voice, data and video services provided and then take advantage of converging technologies as industry standards became established and adopted. When we took a

serious look at Alcatel products line, it was obvious that it was not only a nice fit for our organization but ultimately and most importantly would greatly reduce the cost of providing services to our staff and community”.

CA decided to explore Voice over IP (VoIP) as a way of putting excess bandwidth to work, improving operating efficiencies, and reducing operating expenses.

The vendor/Integrator of choice *Alcatel solution delivers more functionality and overall value*

Crédit Agricole launched a comprehensive selection process evaluating Vendors and Integrators to determine the best means of meeting their long-term network objectives. “In the final analysis, Alcatel (and NextiraOne) not only delivered more options than we had asked for, but the company did so with a single server configuration, full end-to-end manageability and a very simple-to-implement network plan”, Cordeiro explained.

The anatomy of a converged voice over IP (VoIP) network *Crédit Agricole and Alcatel partner for an end-to-end network migration.*

To provide the infrastructure and quality of service to support advanced voice communications, Alcatel simplified Crédit Agricole’s network with an open and distributed appliance server platform versus a monolithic closed PBXs architecture.

The Alcatel OmniPCX Communication server supports a wide spectrum of leading application and telephony features over IP networks and traditional time division multiplexed (TDM) networks for slower IP transformation projects requiring support of existing PBX platforms.

Crédit Agricole chose a fast IP transformation path resulting in seamless network integration, simplified network management, greater flexibility in feature deployment, and reduced costs for supporting its users across multiple branches and remote access locations.

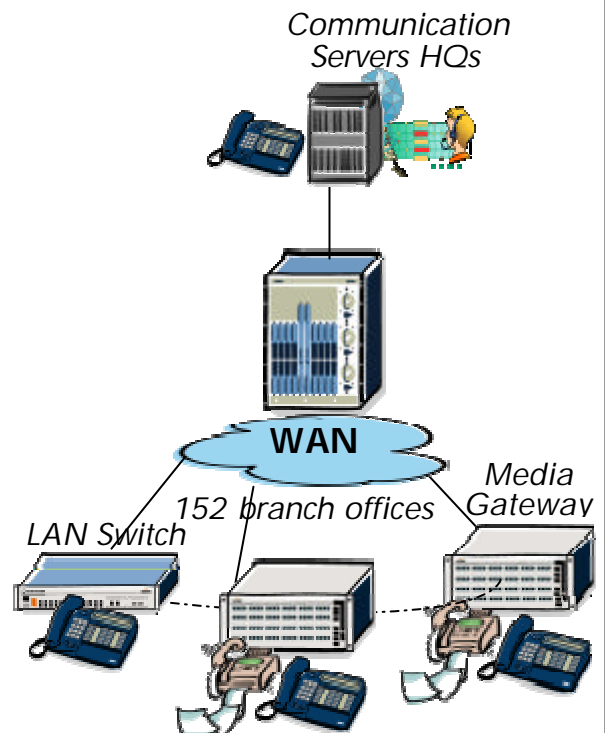
With more than 1,800 telephone nodes on its network Crédit Agricole is also migrating its voice mail functionality to the latest converged voice and data technology available.

Results

With the deployment currently in progress, CA has begun to realize the following voice and data convergence benefits. Operating expense reductions

- ?? Streamlined, any to any corporate communications.
- ?? Full bandwidth utilization of the data network.
- ?? Standardization of voice mail and Auto Attendant services across the network.
- ?? Independent operation of business-critical telephony systems at each branch.
- ?? Cost-effective centralized management of 152 branches from the central site eliminating the need for third-party managers

- ?? Replacement of costly dial-up connections with cost-effective connections over the corporate WAN
- ?? Reductions in station-to-station long distance charges



**Abundant network benefits
 Converged voice and IP network puts
 Crédit Agricole Telecom in control,
 impress users with advanced
 functionality, and prepares for the future**

During Crédit Agricole one-year deployment process, many benefits of the Alcatel solution emerged. Cordeiro says Crédit Agricole continues to discover new advantages.

“Our biggest benefit was the immediate feeling and realization that we – our IT staff – are now in control of the network” said Cordeiro. The network is easy to implement, configure, manage / administer and recover. “The management of a single converged voice and data network is freeing so much of our time. We used to fight fires and do crisis management. Now we are actually able to be proactive”.

The project results were as follows:
The investment payback was 18 months.
The project costs and benefits were as follows (in euros):

	Before	After
Access Line Subscriptions	€ 305 K	€ 214 K
Communications HQ/Sites	€ 107 K	€ 0 K <i>Free</i>
Communications Fixed/Mobile	€ 229 K	€ 153 K <i>Centralized Gateway</i>
Communications Other	€ 732 K	€ 610 K <i>Site to site communication</i>
TOTAL	€ 1373 K	€ 977 K

Equipment related costs	
Hardware:	€ 350 K
Software:	€ 122 K
Consultancy	
Installation & support:	€ 218 K
Communication charges	€ 0 K
Staff costs, system admin	€ 80 K
Maintenance & MACs:	€ 70 K
	€ 690 K
Total investment:	(€ 5 K/ site).

“Centralize the PSTN access lines for the decentralized outgoing calls ” that was the main cost benefit said Cordeiro.

VoIP Communications Costs	€ 396 K
Communications costs without VoIP	€ 735 K
Savings	46.04%

Mr Cordeiro cites other important benefits in addition to substantial savings in costs over the original solution:

Integrated infrastructure. The solution lets Crédit Agricole operate a converged voice and data network and manage it as one ‘flat’ network. It will make possible the delivery of integrated services, and positions Crédit Agricole to fully leverage next-generation applications such as unified messaging, mobility, centralized directories and other emerging services.

Ease of administration. The network management solutions make monitoring, troubleshooting, managing configurations “a true networking lifesaver” says Cordeiro.

Effective, satisfied users. “I have people lined up and waiting for some of the applications our new network makes possible” said Cordeiro.

November 2002 Telecom costs

€396 K Annually !

Convergence project Pre-requisite

The key success factor cited by Cordeiro was the obligation to succeed data/voice teams convergence before the network convergence. The organization needs to control and be sure of its data network. A network managed by a third party is not trustworthy.

It is also necessary to invest patience and communicate with the users.

- ?? Project ROI: 18 months
- ?? Project investments: € 600 K
- ?? Savings: € 400 K annually
- ?? Providers: Alcatel/NextiraOne

For further information see www.alcatel.com

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At a glance

- ?? Crédit Agricole Pyrénées Gascogne.
- ?? Pau, France.
- ?? www.credit-agricole.fr
- ?? 152 sites.
- ?? 1 800 employees.
- ?? Provides banking services.
- ?? Aims to be France's leading banking services.