Title: Gaining rewards beyond the financial

The British Arab Commercial Bank (BACB), a wholesale bank and leading provider of trade and project finance for Arab markets has been established in London since 1972. BACB's market coverage has expanded in recent years and they continue to build on their successful track record within the Arab Mediterranean region, while also handling business throughout the Gulf.

An Enhanced System Environment

BACB had already adopted virtualisation environments before their relationship with CSG and they had recognised the many benefits, "as well as reducing the number of physical servers, one of the key objectives of the initial project was to provide a highly available platform at the primary data centre and an easy way to recover systems at the DR site" explained Eric Forsyth-Reid, BACB's Head of I.T. "Since then, more systems and services had been added to the IT infrastructure and as a result some services, and ultimately users, were being affected with slow systems and the overall business realised a risk of potential outages".

When CSG were introduced to BACB, they were quick to establish a review of their infrastructure using a powerful auditing and performance analysis tool—the results highlighted a number of potential weaknesses in their current infrastructure. Firstly, BACB's 58 servers, which were monitored over a 12-day period, showed above average disk & CPU utilisation and their memory utilisation was high across 20% of the bank's IT services. Secondly, in their primary and DR site, BACB were running live systems on their disaster recovery site, a result of their IT systems growing over a period of time and the limitations of the current ageing hardware, software and storage platforms. These issues were culminating in their users being affected by slow systems and highlighted where the business ran the risk of facing potentially major outages.

Project summary:

Having already adopted the virtualisation within their IT infrastructure BACB appreciated the benefits delivered, however over time the risks of aging hardware, system outages and slow user response drove BACB to engage with leading virtualisation specialists CSG to embark on reviewing and renewing the infrastructure to bring it up to peak performance and maximise the return on investment,

As a result, CSG provided a system infrastructure designed to deliver Granular Scalability, Optimised Performance and proven Systems Availability.

"Our customers have been proactively contacting BACB to commend us on the vast improvement & difference in our systems being a lot better and faster."

Eric Forcythe-Reid
Head of IT
BACB

The deployed technologies include:

Reduced Downtime and Risk

BACB had a number of key objectives, the first of which was to relocate all live production systems from the DR (DC) to their Head Office in the City of London. Secondly, they required an upgrade of their environment to VMware 5.5 to take advantage of the processor & memory enhancements, allowing all live systems to work from the primary data centre at Head Office. Providing increased storage performance and capacity at both the BACB Head Office and DR site was also a key objective for the project - in order to optimise the system performance.

The migration process needed to be undisruptive to the business, the key to the this was utilising BACB's existing infrastructure where possible, for the migration process to reduce the risk of any downtime, as well as using the existing DR Server hardware to create a test and development virtual environment.

Enterprise-Class Storage Availability

During initial conversations between CSG and BACB, it became apparent that to extend their environment and allow for future growth, the replacement of their current HP Blade and storage platform were necessary.

CSG specified the latest HP Blade Systems, enabling ease of adoption and ongoing management as BACB, being an existing HP Blade user, were familiar with the product. In addition to this, CSG recommended a NetApp storage platform to provide enterprise class storage availability through the application of NetApp's features such as SnapMirror.

CSG also upgraded BACB's existing virtualised server, storage & networking infrastructure to the latest version in order to relocate all production IT systems to BACB's London Head Office, providing a robust DR platform at the BACB Data centre. Additionally, VM & Server upgrades provided headroom to grow their IT compute service.

On Time and On Budget

The completed project solution has now provided a system infrastructure that has been designed to deliver Granular Scalability, Optimised Performance and proven Systems Availability.

"I was very impressed by CSG's plans and the delivery of their plans as they were on time and on budget" stated Eric, BACB's Head of IT. "Our customers have been proactively contacting BACB to commend us on the vast improvement & difference in our system being a lot better and faster."