

With an increasingly crowded market place, Netherlands-based Postbank was looking for new ways to keep existing customers sweet, and win market share, while reducing the cost of customer services and transactions. There is now more choice than ever when it comes to selecting a bank and many financial firms have opted for making services available online, so customers can receive information faster and more efficiently.

Postbank has taken a different approach. It recognised that mobile technology was likely to be a killer application for reaching its customer base. As a result, it became the first Dutch bank to introduce m-banking services using SMS. In doing so, it is improving the service it offers customers while reducing costs by sending account information direct to customers' mobile devices.

Postbank found that its systems integrated easily with Fenestrae's mobile solution and therefore altered the existing technology to allow it to send SMS messages. An additional benefit was that the Fenestrae solution met its technical and performance requirements at a lower cost. Moreover, the product architecture was scalable, so able to meet both current and future needs.

Using the SMS function, which forms part of Fenestrae Enterprise Mobility Server (EMS), the bank sends its customers information, such as balance details and recent transactions, as normal text messages. Customers can opt to receive customised



Postbank is introducing m-banking services to its customers

sees as an advantage in terms of cost savings. Subscribers to the SMS service dial a main number from their mobile phone, at which point a central server recognises the customer from the mobile digits. A computer then searches the customer database and extracts the appropriate banking details. In turn, the details are sent to the customer via SMS, securely, within 12 seconds of the initial call. Fenestrae's mobile solution encrypts all SMS messages automatically, allaying any worries customers might have about security. If users have the misfortune of losing their mobile device, or having it stolen, all that is required is a simple phone call to the bank, just like dealing with a stolen or lost credit card.

Since launching the service, Postbank has

market is heading."

"At the outset, we found it was users who were already familiar with SMS that signed up to the service. When text message use boomed a year ago, we saw a huge increase in pay-per-balance services and are well on the way to signing up 100,000 customers before the end of the year," adds Boosman.

Postbank is looking for ways to build on the current SMS offering by extending the solution to deal with inbound messages from customers. It also wants to use SMS as a communication channel with its customers, allowing them to receive, track and trace SMS messages, information about queues at the call centre or even arrange an appointment with a Postbank advisor via SMS.

"As with many other banks worldwide, Postbank still maintains more traditional communication channels, including ATMs and staffed branches. However, the move to expand by using multi-channel technology, such as that included in the Fenestrae software, is driving innovation in service, as well as technology development, which has to be good for the customer and industry as a whole," notes Nick Horslen, vice-president of marketing at Fenestrae. "Compared to other sectors, technology has penetrated the banking industry at an incredibly fast pace. It's those organisations that embrace changes in customer needs that will continue to succeed." ☒

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information, such as notification of salary payment or when a transaction has taken place. They can therefore access bank details at any time on their mobile device, avoiding the need to go to the bank or having to wait for their statement to see a list of transactions, and thus being able to act instantly. The technology has advantages for both sides. While customers can proactively request the latest details about their bank account, the bank can 'push' information to users, such as overdraft alerts or new offerings, to generate extra revenue opportunities.

As a result of this text messaging technology, less account balance calls reach the call centre – something that Postbank

signed up over 75,000 customers, and is actively marketing the service to increase that number. Customer satisfaction is very high and heavy users request as many as 30 SMS messages per month.

"As we were the first Dutch bank to use this service, the pressure was on to make sure it succeeded. SMS messaging has been incredibly popular amongst our current customers, as they can receive information much faster than by more traditional channels, as well as access it wherever they are," explains Christian Boosman, SMS services manager at Postbank. "We recognised the potential of m-banking early, and now others have followed suit, confirming our original feelings about the direction the

POSTBANK

Industry: Financial services

Region: The Netherlands

Solution: Mobility

Partners: Fenestrae