

Experts in innovation

The global economic crisis has resulted in banks seeking to drive growth through technical innovation that does not necessarily demand extensive capital investment. Herwig Evenepoel, infrastructure services division manager at **BTR Services**, explains why knowledge and experience are more important than ever when it comes to choosing a solutions provider.



The collapse of Lehman Brothers and the subsequent breakdown of Merrill Lynch caused mayhem in the global finance industry. Banks turned to outsourcing in the hope that it would help keep them afloat, but recovery has been slow.

Today, when it comes to optimising business and ICT processes, Herwig Evenepoel, BTR Services' infrastructure services division manager, believes that knowledge and expertise are more critical than ever if banks are to progress – it's not the purchase of hardware or software but investing in people that leads to success.

"If you look at the struggles banks experience today, it is clear that this is essential," says Evenepoel. "If businesses are reorganising then they'll want fewer people so they can reduce expenses. However, while there is a lot of cost cutting, there is also the challenge of growing the business and leaving the survival mode behind.

"Customers want to know that they will be supported whenever they are faced with challenges. We are able to support our clients through a great understanding of innovative data centre technologies and an array of services."

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Exclusive finance services

Belgium-based ICT company BTR Services specialises exclusively in banking and insurance, offering process-driven banking solutions based on consultancy services, third-party solutions and a suite of proprietary products developed in-house.

"We celebrated our fifth birthday last year," Evenepoel notes. "The business started with only ten staff, but today we have 125 people and we're bigger than we were before the financial crisis.

"We deal exclusively with the finance sector because it's essential to have real focus; if you're looking to serve an array of industries then it's extremely difficult to attain the required level of specialisation. You must have real knowledge of how a bank actually functions." BTR's delivery model is testament to this nuanced, specialised approach. While external flexible staffing is popular with banks and insurance companies, Evenepoel explains that its managed staffing model builds and manages teams with specific knowledge and experience.

"Of course we're still working on flexible staffing as this is the baseline of the business, but we're also developing managed services because we're seeing shifts within the market," says Evenepoel. "We work together with our clients, offering services that enable them to do more while removing the hassle. With managed services, we take the inconvenience out of planning and finding the necessary resources for complex projects."

Assess, design, implement, maintain

BTR Services offers a low-risk alternative in which Red Hat Enterprise Linux successfully replaces traditional UNIX workloads across the enterprise. Red Hat, which is the world's leading open source technology solutions provider, makes this innovative technology consumable in an enterprise environment.

"Ten years ago, the idea that a bank would use open source was unbelievable and now they do," says Evenepoel.

"At BTR Services, together with our architects, we have developed our Information Management Framework in order to implement and support open source solutions in large data centres."

BTR Services' ADIM methodology has been designed to provide full flexibility in migration planning, lowering the risk and cost of the initial investment.

"We started with a technical focus two years ago," recalls Evenepoel, "and realised that we needed a framework as it's much more than just an operating system – if you're going to implement this in a data centre then you need more. That's why we are using ADIM – assessment, design, implementation and maintenance."

The company's expertise is built around a focused set of business domains, technical platforms, software packages and international methodology standards.

"Essentially, the company is looking at how it can reduce banks' costs while offering a premium service," concludes Evenepoel. "BTR Services aims to be a player at both the architectural and implementation levels." ■

Further information

BTR Services
www.btr-services.be

