

Case Study

First Citizens Bank

»The Fujitsu team had the experience and expertise necessary to transform the IT environment for our Investment Services line of business. Without their project management capability, my team would have been pushed to the limit. Their Project Management methodology was well aligned to ours and this synergy brought us the required success.«

Princess Adams, Program Manager, First Citizens Bank



The customer

First Citizens Bank
Location: Caribbean
Industry: Financial Services
Founded: 1993
Number of employees: 1,800
Website: www.firstcitizenstt.com



The challenge

Faced with an unreliable data center whose lease had nearly expired, First Citizens Bank Investment Services wanted to find a new platform to support its business critical banking applications. It needed a partner with both the IT expertise and the project management capability to handle the task.

The solution

Using Fujitsu's proprietary project management methodology and templates, the bank migrated 20 applications to the Fujitsu Cloud platform, hosted in its Tier 3 data center in Barataria.

The customer

First Citizens is one of the leading financial services groups in Trinidad & Tobago, offering a full range of retail, corporate and merchant banking services as well as asset management, trustee and brokerage services. In 2009, First Citizens acquired Caribbean Money Market Brokers Limited (now rebranded as First Citizens Investment Services Limited), the largest full service securities trading company in the Caribbean, with offices in Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent and St. Lucia. In January 2012 the Group ventured into the Central American market and opened a representative office in Costa Rica, which is expected to propel the First Citizens brand abroad.

The challenge

First Citizens Investment Services was using legacy servers and storage at a data center facility to support its applications, including Temenos T24, a complete front- to back-office, CRM and product lifecycle management software platform that powers core banking operations. However, the existing data center presented challenges due to an unreliable power supply and insufficient Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) capability. This led to regular downtime which the company could not afford. In addition, the lease on the data center was coming to an end, leading the bank to explore different options.

The bank analyzed the costs of setting up and equipping a new data center and compared it to the Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) model. It quickly became clear that it would be much more cost-effective to go with a managed services approach. However, project managing such an ambitious migration exercise was also a challenge. It needed a partner with proven management expertise in order to minimize risk and ensure a seamless and timely transition.

"The initial challenge was actually understanding the concept and what we were trying to accomplish. On a local level, the idea of implementing managed services was not mature so we needed a partner with global scope that could pull in international talent," explains Princess Adams, Program Manager, First Citizens Bank. "Fujitsu has both the only Tier 3 data center in the region and the global reach that gives us an exceptional well of project management experience on which to draw."

The benefit

- Fujitsu's project management capability reduced the burden on the bank's internal team, ensuring they could focus on other areas of the business
- The IT team at First Citizens has freed up 20 percent more time as a result of handing hardware management to Fujitsu, enabling it to focus on innovation and internal customer support
- The bank expects IT costs to be reduced by 12 percent over six years
- New services can be provisioned in hours rather than weeks, accelerating time to market and making the bank more responsive to changing market demands

First Citizens and Fujitsu dedicated time agreeing the contract and the scope of the project, using Fujitsu's proprietary methodology and project management templates. "We wanted to nail down the schedule from the outset to ensure our objectives could have been achieved in the agreed timeframe," adds Adams.

The solution

Fujitsu has a regional Caribbean project management team dedicated to focusing on mission critical projects to meet the demands of its customers whilst ensuring that the customers' objectives are met professionally and profitably. The groundwork stage forms the most important part of its project cycle. This stage helped establish First Citizens' objectives to ensure project delivery was focused on meeting these objectives while eliminating errors and project blunders.

The First Citizens and Fujitsu collaboration ensured the expeditious migration of all 20 applications to its data center in Barataria. Central to this undertaking were the ongoing workshops and technical sessions which ensured the management of the project progressed smoothly. First Citizens also benefited from Fujitsu professionals brought in from outside the region.

"Through our strictly defined process, we were able to implement the migration on time and with minimal disruption to the business," adds Adams. "The ability to bring in specialists from EMEA also made a critical improvement to the project management agenda."

The scope of the project encompassed a huge range of responsibilities from design documentation to system assurance verification as well as the physical installation of switches, servers and storage – all of which had to be strictly managed within the agreed framework. It also involved Fujitsu managing key third parties including VMware, Checkpoint and NetApp.

Products and services

- Fujitsu Infrastructure as a Service
- Fujitsu Project Management

"The implementation took place in three phases: installation, configuration and application migration," says Adams. "Fujitsu's tightly controlled management enables this to happen seamlessly."

The benefit

Now, First Citizens can securely access its business critical applications 24/7 via a fiber connection. Because they are hosted within the Fujitsu data center, availability and reliability have improved and the company no longer has to spend hours firefighting hardware issues. And the faster time to market which comes with rapid application provisioning is giving the bank the opportunity to innovate further.

"We worked really well with the Fujitsu team who provided the experience and expertise necessary to transform the IT environment for our Investment Services line of business," continues Adams. "Without their project management capability, my team would have been pushed to the limit. Their Project Management methodology was well aligned to ours and this synergy brought us the required success."

With the new cloud platform in place, First Citizens expects to reduce its IT spend by 12 percent over a six year period. Such has been the success of this project that the bank has signaled its willingness to look at other projects where Fujitsu might add value.

Conclusion

This project marks the first local cloud implementation for financial services in the Caribbean and stands out as a trendsetter in the region. It demonstrates that using the IaaS approach can deliver cost-savings without compromising on performance and also showcases the importance of a well-defined and executed project management vision.

"At First Citizens we have a very robust and effective Project Management methodology and team supported by a team of technical experts. It was critical for us to partner with an organization whose expertise and methodology aligns well with ours. Fujitsu was able to provide professional project management expertise that was intrinsic to the successful fulfillment of this ambitious program."

Princess Adams, Program Manager, First Citizens Bank

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