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Sergei Mednov, CIO of Alfa-Bank

Business Profile

Company Name:
Alfa-Bank

Headquarters:
Moscow, Russia

Industry:
Banking

Employees:
7,000

Revenue:
\$181 Million (US) annually

Business Environment:

- Founded in 1990, Alfa-Bank is one of Russia's largest privately owned banks
- Operates in every key sector of the financial service industry including corporate banking, retail banking, investment banking, trade finance, insurance and asset management
- Combines a thorough knowledge of the specific characteristics of the Russian market with the very highest Western standards
- Operates a network of 205 branches, including subsidiary banks in Russia, Kazakhstan and the Netherlands
- In addition to banking, Alfa-Bank has regulated FSA and NASD brokerage subsidiaries located in London (UK) and New York (USA)

Implementation Team:
Vision Solutions
IBM Russia

Vision Solutions Product:
MIMIX® HA for i5/OS™

Critical Issue

At the end of every business day, Alfa-Bank must perform "end of day" procedures for their banking application. During this time, bank customers cannot access their accounts, conduct transactions or use services across delivery channels such as internet banking or ATM machines. With plans for expansion across multiple time zones within Russia, Alfa-Bank needed to completely eliminate its IT downtime and achieve nonstop business continuity.

Results

- 24/7 business continuity across all time zones.
- Around the clock customer access to ATMs, internet banking and transactions.
- Continuous protection and availability of critical financial data.
- Security and flexibility for testing new applications, performing upgrades and system maintenance.
- Proven HA solution compatibility with applications and hardware.
- Fast, trouble-free implementation.

Technologies

- MIMIX® HA for i5/OS™
- Production Machine: IBM® System i™ Model 595 server
- Remote Backup Machine: IBM® System i™ Model 570 server
- Misys Equation banking software, including 24x7 Continuous Processing Facility

Business Challenge

Alfa-Bank is one of the biggest and most reputable banks in Russia, heading the list of the "best IT banks in Russia" for three consecutive years. The bank has ATMs, internet banking and advanced delivery channels across many locations and many time zones, all available 24/7 to meet the evolving demands of Russian consumers.

Application downtime for 'end of day' tasks was a direct obstacle to Alfa-Bank's ability to provide continuous services to its customers. System downtime was required to perform backups, install new hardware and software, and conduct other maintenance work. The bank also faced the threat of unexpected hardware failures and power outages that would occasionally bring systems offline.

Alfa-Bank needed a high availability solution that could eliminate all these instances of downtime and keep its customers satisfied. But with critical applications and financial data at stake, the bank insisted on very rigorous requirements for such a solution. One that would have a proven track record of success and reliability in protecting both its Misys application and banking environments in general—and be easy to implement and manage.



Solution

Alfa-Bank evaluated the full spectrum of information availability solutions in order to find the best fit for their stringent criteria. After careful consideration, they selected the MIMIX high availability solution from Vision Solutions. Vision worked with its longtime business partner IBM Russia to provide fast, expert implementation services for the solution.



Alexander Kazakov, Deputy Dept. Manager, Sergey Mednov, CIO, Victor Alferov, Dept. Manager

“Our IT team found that MIMIX is easily implemented, has a proven integration with our chosen banking environment and is easy to manage day to day,” said Sergei Mednov, CIO of Alfa-Bank. “This gives us a total trusted solution. Vision Solutions and IBM are highly respected, especially within the banking industry, which is why we ultimately selected this leading combination.”

MIMIX provides advanced protection for important applications and data on a switch-ready backup server in the event of unplanned downtime such as a power failure. In addition, MIMIX eliminates costly planned downtime caused by routine server maintenance or application upgrades by easily switching users to the backup server where they can continue working. Critical business applications and data are protected and always accessible.

More importantly, MIMIX had proven itself by protecting banks and financial services systems across the globe for many years, including Misys banking solutions. Vision and Misys jointly designed a special solution for the Misys Equation application, called 24x7 Continuous Processing Facility, that protects it from any kind of downtime, including application-specific “end of day” processing (EOD). This solution was implemented at Alfa Bank.

MIMIX is an extremely effective counterpart to Misys solutions. It keeps the powerful capabilities of Misys applications performing nonstop, even during essential reconciliation tasks.

With the MIMIX solution in place, Alfa-Bank has virtually eliminated its IT downtime. End of day tasks are now performed transparently with no interruptions to customer transactions or delivery channels, such as ATMs or internet banking. Unexpected system outages are no longer a threat because MIMIX keeps a real-time backup version of applications and data protected and available around the clock.

Alfa-Bank can now assure customers they will always have access to their accounts and transactions 24/7.

“We liked the fact that Vision Solutions and IBM have been partners for many years, and were able to pull this project together as a team rather than involve hardware, software, services and support separately,” said Mr. Mednov. “The results are spectacular.”



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- ◆ Disaster Recovery
- ◆ Systems and Data Management
- ◆