

# The challenges facing Cairo Amman Bank

How the bank used technology to improve its offering to its customers. An analyst from CR2 writes.

Cairo Amman Bank (CAB), established in Jordan in 1960, is one of the largest banks in Jordan and is the second largest retail bank in Palestine. It has a branch network throughout Jordan and Palestine with 70 branches, three financial consultancy service centres and two brokerages on the stock market. CAB has 56 ATMs in Jordan and a further 11 in Palestine.

The challenges facing the bank involved providing new delivery channels including Internet, mobile and IVR as well as introducing browser-based ATM technologies to banks' established self-service channel. The bank also wanted to integrate and centralise their Jordan and Palestine business operations, grow market share throughout the region and improve customer service across the banks network.

From this base, Cairo Amman Bank embarked on a strategic path to enhance its market share through the delivery of greater customer service and increased coverage throughout the region.

As a major player in the Jordanian market, CAB had a clear objective to be technologically innovative in achieving its business goals.

In June 2004, the bank examined how best they could offer more convenient and efficient services for its growing customer base. At this time CAB already had an existing ATM network connected to the JONET network which facilitated ATM switching and card production.

However, the bank was limited by the restrictions imposed with their existing technology solution including:

- lack of intuitive interface
- lack of automatic software distribution
- no facility to manage the ATM network
- restrictions on deploying their business in Palestine

The bank recognised the need to integrate and use additional delivery channels with the ATM switch, providing complete, seamless delivery architecture for its services across the two regions.

A key requirement for the bank was for a flexible and reliable solution with Arabic language capabilities and a solution that could be integrated seamlessly into their back office systems in Jordan and Palestine, allowing customers to access accounts in either country via any channel.

After a detailed review of CAB's business requirements, the bank decided to implement the multi-channel platform from CR2. The inclusion of channel manager and these specific channels is

currently underway at CAB. The project has been divided into three distinct phases corresponding to the key priorities of the bank and the needs of its customers.

Phase one of the implementation process is split into three sub-phases:

- Replacement of the banks existing ATM and card management solution (complete)
- Implementation of a browser based front-end to their ATMs together with a card issuing system (complete)
- Implementation of a centralised monitoring system (undergoing extensive user acceptance testing)
- CAB selected not only to launch a new ATM application, but also to introduce new self-service ATM terminals throughout its network.

During the first phase of the project, CAB successfully migrated its existing customer card base to CR2's card management system. The bank now issues Visa Electron debit cards which are live in Jordan. This enables CAB to have full control, and in-house capability for the preparation and production of its bank-branded ATM cards and its Visa Electron debit cards.

In the second phase, Internet banking and channel management facilities will be incorporated into CAB's strategic operations. The bank anticipates introducing e-banking retail services such as balance and transaction reporting, inter-account transfers and third party payments including utility bills. They will also launch e-banking corporate services such as cash management, bulk payments and salary payments. Islamic banking services will be introduced on this platform at a future stage.

The final phase of this project, involves the addition of 2-way SMS (short message service) and interactive voice response services (IVR). The solution they chose provides a simple and cost-effective solution that will give CAB customers 24x7 access to pre-selected banking services and account information. It will also facilitate the payment of bills, transfer of funds and ordering of cheque books.

CAB, conscious of the growing mobile phone culture within Jordan and Palestine, will also deploy an SMS solution in order further to build customer relationships and increase customer loyalty. With this system, event triggered notifications can be defined by the account holder to monitor and track account activity. ■