BNP Paribas Cuts the Costs of Customer Correspondence with Cincom Eloquence®

BNP Paribas

Situation:

BNP Paribas is a European banking and financial services group based in Paris. It operates in Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg as well as other countries around the world. Employing 200,000 people, BNP Paribas provides retail, corporate and investment-banking services.

Producing customer documents quickly when required is essential. But when the process is inefficient and doesn't meet corporate standards, it's time to make changes. By implementing Cincom Eloquence for customer communications, BNP Paribas has simplified document creation, improved quality and lowered mailing costs.

Staff used to rely on a transactional mail application and Microsoft® Word to create real-time correspondence. Although it was a flexible combination, that flexibility proved to be a disadvantage. Users frequently deviated from corporate standards when drafting letters by adding a personal touch or using the company name and logos inconsistently. Localized printing of small volumes was also proving to be costly in comparison to utilizing centralized resources.

Project Scope and Requirements

A new business project called Procope was set up to resolve these issues. Its goal was driven by a simple question: How might production and delivery savings be made for ad hoc mail pieces created in real time? The project also had to satisfy 95 percent of user requirements.

Recurrent annual cost savings of over

1 Million

Volume:
- Generating over 250,000 documents per month
- 30,000 front- and back-office users across 2,000 branches and 2,400 network agencies
- 3,000 simultaneous users

Situation:

Replace the existing communication system with a single platform for creating and managing real-time customer correspondence.

Impacts:
- A 50 percent reduction in the number of templates from 1,300 to 650
- A 33 percent reduction in the cost of each document
- Recurrent annual cost savings of over €1 million
- Conveys a positive image of the organization

Integrations:
- BNP Paribas web portal
- Proprietary information systems
- Proprietary archiving system
- Agency network

Applications:
- Customer correspondence
- Loan documentation
- Account-related correspondence and notifications
- Insurance policies
- Quotations for finance products
- Share-related documentation
- Targeted customer promotions
- Litigation documentation

"We carried out an analysis of the relevant existing processes and examined every method used," says Didier Caupain, Project Manager at BNP Paribas. Although document quality was an important factor, the project team concentrated on the potential cost savings to be made from significant changes in document production. It proved to be an attractive argument for convincing the decision-makers.

"Accentuating the idea of cost control was all powerful; we went from 60 Euro cents to 40 cents per mail piece—a savings of over 33 percent."

— Didier Caupain, Project Manager, BNP Paribas

Bespoke IT development also had to end by putting the ownership back into the hands of business users. Documents would be standardized for on-demand use with unique approved templates for each business department. In addition, greater use of centralized printing would lower mailing costs by taking advantage of postal discounts.

Improved ease of use was an important consideration if the current system was to be replaced by a single software solution; it had to help guide users through letter composition while capturing customer or prospect data with minimal manual input. A new system would reduce errors and production costs, allowing salespeople to focus on their main responsibilities.

Once these business requirements had been passed to the company's IT team, there was a competitive evaluation involving five major document-composition vendors. Each system was carefully scrutinized during a proof-of-concept stage.

Ease of Use

Cincom's document generation engine, Cincom Eloquence, was at the top of the list when measured against the tough evaluation criteria. It's intuitive interface allows users to design and manage templates with minimal IT help, which accelerates time-to-market for communications and enables IT resources to focus on higher-value tasks. It combines a web portal, a document-composition engine and an ability to integrate with business systems to access customer data.

BNP had a preference for Unix, yet Eloquence's ease of use based on a Microsoft Word-based interface, proved to be an overriding strength.

"Cincom Eloquence offered a very light client and allowed us to manage the whole ad hoc mail life cycle, from design to production, without IT as an intermediary," says Caupain.

The fast implementation by project and IT teams working together took a rigorous approach to improving customer service. Firstly, a number of staff went to Cincom for training. Existing templates were then closely examined when setting up the new document-composition environment with a template library. Many old templates were discarded, and others were automated for batch processing.

"We were able to reuse a lot of existing materials and then proceeded to streamline them," says Caupain.

Branding Consistency

Group branding was strictly followed for template designs, which were approved by the appropriate business stakeholders. The templates are able to reuse components through a single shared repository. This ensures adherence to corporate standards along with access to different letter closures or signatures. Information from customer databases is automatically integrated while also allowing for controlled manual input.

Reduced document costs by

33%

Empowering the Business User

Cincom Eloquence now allows business users to create new templates with no need to ask for IT resources. Access to templates is by role, with branch staff only seeing the ones relevant to their business needs. Because their usage matches business processes and thanks to the intuitive interface, staff were able to begin using the system quickly with minimal formal training.

Delivering Flexibility on the Desktop

The first area of the organization to use Cincom Eloquence was the international trade back office. Other back-office departments soon followed including finance and litigation. Front-office staff and agency managers were then introduced.

A link to the BNP Paribas web portal was placed on each user's desktop. This allows the printing of normal mail associated with their login profile.

Letter templates are populated automatically from mainframe information and/or controlled input with no free-form typing allowed. Management controls are in place for tasks such as specific content selection or letter approval with a recorded audit trail. Letters are previewed in PDF before being printed locally or, preferably, sent for less-expensive central printing. The latter includes sorting, grouping, enveloping and delivery to the post office.

The system now offers great flexibility for all types of users. For example, non-office-based advisers producing letters select the appropriate branch address from a customized list. Small targeted mailings may now be made without asking IT for assistance.

"An advisor can send 400 letters in one click. Previously this task required a day's work," says Caupain.
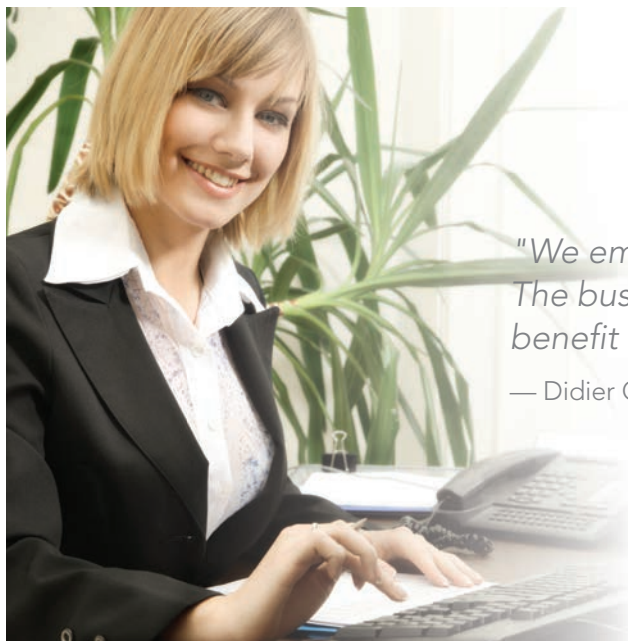
Deployed Nationwide

Thanks to Cincom Eloquence, customer-facing staff in France has a rapid standard process for creating on-demand correspondence, which includes pre-approved and secure content and layout as well as automated input. This has allowed them to focus on selling.

The benefits range from improved document quality to reduced postal costs for on-demand and batch communications. An increasing number of documents are printed centrally, which helps with economy of scale and satisfies environmental concerns. Higher standards for personalized communications are also good for the organization's image.

BNP Paribas is using Cincom Eloquence for retail and private group operations. Employees numbering 30,000 rely on it for customer communications across 2,000 branches. It's also used by the organization's 2,400 network and 10 litigation agencies. The total volumes are impressive: 250,000 documents are sent per month based on 650 templates—a positive 50 percent reduction from the original 1,300.

Each business has been able to reuse existing data repositories and now controls its document designs and templates. This allows for rapid changes for marketing or regulatory requirements. Monitoring shows that users no longer rely on Microsoft Word for these tasks.

"There is no intervention of IT during the life cycle of a template or a document. The business is able to validate the use of templates and specify who is responsible for them," says Caupain.

A rapid return on investment for Cincom Eloquence of less than 18 months has underlined the achievements of faster, less-complex document creation, centralized printing and reduced postage costs.

The close co-operation between the project team, various businesses and the IT department was fully supported by Cincom's expertise. "The Cincom team was reactive and ready to help at all times," says Caupain.

"We emphasized process automation and ease of use. The business teams understood very quickly how they could benefit from this tool rather than using Microsoft Word."

— Didier Caupain, Project Manager, BNP Paribas

Reduced Costs, Enhanced Customer Loyalty—Today and in the Future

It is important for businesses to maximize every customer interaction, whether that be on paper, via email, SMS text message or on the web. With the right approach, personalized, multi-channel communications can be the basis of a strategy to drive growth through customer retention and customer advocacy. It is crucial that businesses develop their customer communications capabilities and platforms as a key element of their overall strategies. With Cincom, you'll gain the end-to-end capabilities that you need to design and execute a strategic roadmap in the most cost-effective manner. Talk to us to discover how you can communicate in a unified voice in coordinated ways to create a connected customer experience—the kind of experience that fuels customer loyalty and profitable growth.

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