



Case studies

BankBoston receives 100% return on IT service relationship



Maximizing return on investment

Superior service performance

Summary of services

When BankBoston opened its doors in 1784 as America's first and only chartered bank, attracting and retaining customers wasn't an issue. Today, however, the financial landscape is fraught with thousands of institutions fighting for the same clientele. BankBoston, the nation's 15th largest bank-holding company with assets exceeding \$64 billion, needed to differentiate itself from the pack while building on its already stellar customer service reputation.

BankBoston's help-desk function and central site systems management are integral parts of its corporate mission, which is "to exceed the expectations of its customers." The bank's challenge was to efficiently, cost-effectively and seamlessly provide help-desk service and support to its large retail bank system. While BankBoston decided to staff the help desk internally, it realized that it needed an outside vendor to provide rapid response to service equipment at the bank's retail locations.

"Rolling out new teller and platform applications after having invested millions in our new IT infrastructure meant we needed a vendor that could complement our help-desk support and provide end-to-end maintenance services for both hardware and software, regardless of manufacturer," says Tom Courtney, director of technology, support and delivery services for BankBoston.

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Maximizing return on investment

BankBoston chose to work together with IBM. "We were impressed with IBM's comprehensive proposal and their aggressive, innovative solutions to our problems," recalls Courtney. "Having worked with IBM in the past, we were confident they would successfully implement their plan, thus ensuring the reliability of the new technology and helping us maximize our return on investment."

IBM was already supporting the entire branch network when BankBoston underwent a merger, expanding its retail locations from 300 to 475. "IBM had been managing the rollout and supporting 300 retail locations," says Courtney. "But the merger dramatically changed the dynamics. The network now consisted of 1,000 servers and 5,000 clients."

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— Eileen Ruane, project manager, BankBoston

As a result, BankBoston established a centralized help desk for its retail locations. "One help desk now handles phone calls from all locations," explains BankBoston project manager Eileen Ruane. "Calls are logged into our system and immediately linked to IBM where each call is assigned to a field technician who is dispatched to resolve the problem. IBM gives us a single point of contact for reporting service requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Under a customized, comprehensive maintenance agreement with IBM, BankBoston classifies calls as either Severity 1 or Severity 2. Severity 1 means an entire location is down and IBM will fix the problem within three hours. Severity 2 indicates a single user is down, requiring IBM to fix the problem within five hours.

"Our 475 locations needed immediate technical access and fast turnaround," says Ruane. "We realized we couldn't do it alone. That's another reason we chose IBM - their commitment to customer service and their willingness to 'own' our problem."

Superior service performance

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An independent party tracks IBM's service quality by conducting approximately 200 telephone surveys each month. The survey rates IBM technicians on promptness, courtesy, helpfulness, timeliness and the ability to resolve problems on the initial visit. Monthly reports track the results.

"In March 1996 we were all new to the process, yet IBM technicians handled 101 calls and received a 95 percent satisfaction rating," says Ruane. "One year later, monthly call volume had skyrocketed, with IBM responding to 753 calls and receiving a 99 percent satisfaction rating. That's outstanding!"

"The BankBoston and IBM relationship works because we're all committed to the same goals," says Courtney. "Whether it's a location outage or an individual PC outage, the reliability of our technology investments is ensured with IBM. And our retail employees are more than satisfied - they know they'll be back in operation quickly."

Summary of services

IBM supplied an electronic link that allowed technicians to be dispatched immediately to any of BankBoston's 475 locations. Hardware and software maintenance was provided by IBM/Technology Service Solutions, an IBM Business Partner specializing in on-site support service with a three- or five-hour fix on equipment and software.