

BNP Paribas Fortis: New GSM policy

BNP Paribas Fortis creates 6 profiles that give users what they want, at no extra cost to the company

BNP Paribas Fortis has been developing its mobile communications policies since mobile phones first hit the market – about 15 years. At that time, only top executives had company mobile devices. But the availability, technology and fiscal impact of mobile communications have exploded in only a few short years. By expanding employees' mobile communications profiles from 2 to 6, BNP Paribas Fortis has managed to cut costs while actually improving the ease of use and level of service to employees – for 14,000 cards!



Jan Ponnet, Systems Officer, I&O Telecoms, BNP Paribas Fortis, presented this case story at the BELTUG Member Forum on GSM policy, 15 June 2010

CHALLENGES

Reflecting the flexibility of current technology in a GSM policy

“Our last policy rethink was about 5 years ago”, explains Jan Ponnet. “Then about 2 years ago, issues started coming up with iPhones, smart phones, BlackBerrys etc. Our users wanted more flexibility, but the company shouldn’t pay for the applications. That was our biggest hurdle”. Applications like Ping Ping and premium SMS have exploded, and many more employees have smartphones, for example. These users wanted to be able to use their own phones for business and personal purposes.

The second hurdle was how to create absolutely identical user profiles with the two mobile suppliers BNP Paribas Fortis worked with. “They have technically different systems and billing”, continues Jan. “Finding a solution required us to look at the needs from across the board: HR, the business, the users, IT – and the suppliers. They had to be part of the solution”. The previous policy had serious disadvantages: it was inflexible, there was no combination of BlackBerry and phone, the escape codes didn’t work abroad, and more.

“Rethinking our policy was user driven. There are so many new apps that our employees use. It took a lot of back and forth to create 6 profiles that would meet the needs of the users, suppliers and company.” *Jan Ponnet, Systems Officer, I&O Telecoms, BNP Paribas Fortis*



BNP Paribas Fortis is one of the largest banks in Belgium, with total assets of EUR 496 billion (mid-2009). Part of the BNP Paribas Group, it is organised around 4 core activities: Retail & Private Banking, Corporate & Public Banking, Corporate & Investment Banking and Investment Solutions. BNP Paribas Fortis supports its clients abroad with a pan-European network reinforcing the Group's worldwide positions.

The I&O Telecoms department is responsible for all telecoms related activities. Its responsibilities cover 3 areas: Service Management, Service Operation and Technical Service.

SOLUTIONS

Team work creates 6 profiles that cover all users

The solution was to create 6 new communications profiles: employee or manager --further divided into BlackBerry users or not -- sales mobile and external staff. “We had to first determine how to cover all users. The answer was flexibility—and that had to come from our mobile suppliers, too. We worked very closely, and there was lots of back and forth. We especially owe thanks to the account managers, technical VPN teams and billing support of Proximus and Mobistar”. He continues: “Our users now have the functions they want, at no extra cost to the company. In fact, our costs are down: there's been a 75% reduction in call minutes abroad not to CUGs!”

LESSONS LEARNT

Don't forget the fiscal issues!

Jan highlights that fiscal issues are very important in creating a corporate GSM policy: “Talk to the tax authorities directly! Otherwise, you may spend all your time creating a policy and then have to restart. We worked with them on how to allow BlackBerry usage, which was a very complex issue”.

He also explains how easy it should be for users to benefit from the policy. “We use an Internet template: the employee just puts in the service he wants, data encryption for example. The template goes directly to the provider, who puts it on the subscription. The templates vary for each profile, of course. Simple!