

SEB Bank

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

"SYBASE IQ OFFERS THE BANK AN INFORMATION PLATFORM THAT POSITIONS IT TO BENEFIT IN A VERY COMPETITIVE MARKET. WE CAN ANALYZE CUSTOMER NEEDS, IDENTIFY NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES, MAXIMIZE CROSS-SELLING AND, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, KEEP OUR CUSTOMERS SATISFIED."

— GUSTAV SEIER, HEAD OF THE IT DATA HANDLING DEPARTMENT OF SEB BANK.

DOMAIN

- Banking

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS TECHNOLOGY?

- Compression ratio of 68% for the data gathered in 10 years
- Very fast pre-defined queries and reports
- An improved understanding of the customers' needs
- Optimization of marketing and cross-selling opportunities
- Lowered cost of ownership as there is no need for a separate administrator for this system only

SYBASE TECHNOLOGY

- Sybase IQ
- PowerDesigner



EVEN NOW, TEN YEARS ON, GUSTAV SEIER, THE HEAD OF THE IT DATA HANDLING DEPARTMENT AT SEB BANK (LEFT), AND ANALYST TIIT PIKARO CONFIRM THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SYBASE IQ WAS NOT ONLY THE BEST BUT ALSO THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE DATA WAREHOUSE CHOICE FOR A LEADING ESTONIAN RETAIL BANK.

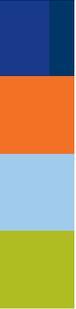
As a leading Estonian retail bank, SEB Bank realized already more than ten years ago the need for the efficient analysis and reporting of business information in order to be able to increase its market share cost-effectively. It is specifically for that reason that the bank started to use the Sybase IQ data warehouse that answers queries and produces reports at an impressive speed. The bank can now analyze the customers' needs more easily than before, discover new marketing opportunities, offer better services to the customers, and be in conformity with regulatory requirements.

Similarly to other large organisations, the bank often had to struggle for obtaining accurate business information before implementing Sybase IQ. There were several systems of primary data and a huge variety of tools for business analysis at use within the organisation. It was difficult to obtain data and the analysis of the information was inefficient and expensive.

COST EFFECTIVE BUSINESS ANALYSIS

More than a decade ago, SEB Bank made a decision to change the core of its information system and to build a data warehouse that would be able to provide the whole organisation with data quickly and from a sole source.

Gustav Seier, the head of the IT data handling department of SEB Bank says his team had studied various systems and



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had decided in favour of Sybase IQ. "Sybase specialists helped us to run the pilot project; the system left a good impression and the people were very enthusiastic," he recalls. "We saw the capability of Sybase IQ to produce reports and answer queries at an impressive speed, while not less important was its scalability in order to meet future needs. Surprisingly, it was not only the best but also the most cost effective solution. We continue to feel amazed at our foresightedness and having taken the right decision at the time."

EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH-SPEED PERFORMANCE

One of the challenges of introducing the new system was to speed up the production of analysis and reports. To maximize the performance, the bank decided to store data in its simplest possible form and avoid aggregation wherever possible. Sybase IQ architecture enables high speed information retrieval even from disaggregated data, and the bank is very pleased with its performance and flexibility.

"Well, we cannot foresee all the query types that users will need," Seier admits. "Sybase IQ's opportunities for writing quick queries and creating and deleting indexes have a significant effect."

Seier refers to the data warehouse as the main means for transforming data into business information in accordance with the set of business rules of the bank.

Every night, business information is deposited from seven source systems of the bank operating system into Sybase IQ's data warehouse.

Thus, inter alia, the data on leasing, treasury, asset management and accounting reaches the warehouse. The entire code necessary for data unpacking, transferring and loading was written exclusively by the experienced IT team of the bank.

Sybase IQ enables to compress the data of the software so efficiently that the amount of saveable data is considerably smaller than the source data. "In other systems, the volume of indexes grows explosively. Thus, at one point, index servicing takes so long that the system will fail to cope with it," explains Seier. "With Sybase IQ this problem never occurs."

There is more than a terabyte of data in the warehouse; nevertheless, Sybase IQ can save disc space considerably and keep data recording costs low without slowing down the speed of queries. Around 4-4.5 gigabytes of data are uploaded into the system every day while the volume of the warehouse increases only by an average of 500 megabytes.

Seier is optimistic about the volume increase rate. "A proper data warehouse is considered to start from a data volume of more than a terabyte; consequently, we have grown out of the toddler stage," he smiles. In the biggest data table, there are 3.14 billion rows. If an idea to print out this base occurred to anyone, the result would be a pile of paper about four kilometres high.

HELPING TO STAY SUCCESSFUL

Around 200 people, including branch managers, analysts and office managers use Sybase IQ regularly. The data warehouse has proved to be reliable and efficient in storing and processing the bank data, and the reports are available sooner than expected. "The speed of ad hoc queries depends on the user's skill; but, as a rule it takes less than 10 seconds to process a query," says Seier. "If a query takes longer to complete, the person at the computer gets impatient. In this case, the query should be checked for errors."

Like all other businesses, SEB Bank needs to keep an eye on costs and is satisfied with the low cost of ownership of Sybase IQ. As the system functions faultlessly and the data warehouse does not need extra management, the bank does not have to employ a separate database administrator for that purpose. Sayer says that the bank only has had to restore the Sybase IQ data warehouse from backup once in 10 years and that happened because of a total blackout. The main task for the people in Seier's team is to ensure data quality and to design new complex queries.

Sybase IQ helps SEB bank to cope with fast changing banking and business regulations effectively, the latest example being the recent increase in value-added tax (VAT) from 18 to 20 percent. "Estonian economy is changing rapidly," says Seier,

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SYBASE[®]



"Sybase IQ offers the bank an information platform that positions it to benefit in a very competitive market. We can analyze customer needs, identify new market opportunities, maximize cross-selling and, most important of all, keep our customers satisfied."

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Gustav Seier believes that SEB Bank made the right decision by implementing Sybase IQ. "If we had to rebuild the data warehouse from the scratch, we would still stick to our decision to use Sybase IQ," he claims. "We have had an excellent relationship with Sybase from the introduction up to product support; whenever we have any questions, they are always answered. The life of the bank keeps changing constantly, but there is one thing we do not intend to change; and that is reliance on Sybase products."

"It is seldom that we see a company that actually ensures the results it promises," concludes Seier. "Sybase is one of the kind – it delivers on its promises."