



Case Study: Standard Chartered

Pooled Resources, Repurposed as Needed

Business Value

- IT flexibility and responsiveness
- Lower costs
- Faster time to market
- Low risk
- High availability

Executive Summary

Standard Chartered PLC selected the Egenera® system for its core retail-banking application, which has the bank's highest classification for business criticality, at 1,200 locations world-wide. With the bank's future in mind, Standard Chartered looked at mainframes, high-end RISC systems, x86 white boxes and blades. Egenera was the only vendor with an integrated solution for virtualization and the I/O fabric, and the only one with customer references and a proven product. Standard Chartered has cut total cost of ownership in half compared to a traditional x86 solution and can now bring a new country online in nine days rather than 45 as estimated for legacy architecture.

Business Challenge

One of the world's most international banks, with operations in more than 50 countries, Standard Chartered PLC selected the Egenera system for its core retail-banking application globally. This application, which runs IBM® WebSphere® and IBM DB2®, has the bank's highest classification for business criticality. Fujitsu Siemens Computers, Egenera's exclusive OEM alliance in EMEA, provided the systems, which it markets as the PRIMERGY BladeFrame® powered by Egenera. Atos Origin, Standard Chartered's IT provider, will implement the Egenera systems and provide ongoing support from its datacenter in Asia.

Egenera's virtualization and effective use of resources—and its customer-reference sites—were key differentiators compared to offerings from other providers. The Egenera solution met the bank's short-term cost-cutting needs while supporting its long-term, strategic vision of flexible and responsive datacenter infrastructure.

"Our IT vision is based on a pool of computing resources that can be repurposed as needed based on business requirements," says Jan Verplancke, CIO, Group Head Technology & Operations, Standard Chartered. "With the bank's future in mind, we looked at mainframes, high-end RISC systems, x86 white boxes and blades. Egenera was the only vendor with an integrated solution for virtualization and the I/O fabric, and the only one with a proven product. Their technology's track record with other world-class customers gave us the financial data we needed to justify the investment and the confidence to deliver on our strategy."

He continues, "At the end of the day, the Egenera system was the lowest cost, lowest risk choice, providing the most flexibility. It's already helping us improve time to market and IT responsiveness, and will ultimately have a positive impact on revenues. Egenera has opened our eyes to a new way of thinking about the datacenter."

"The Egenera platform is not a blade server. It's an enterprise-class system, comparable to high-end RISC platforms, that runs x86 processors and three operating systems."

*Jan Verplancke, CIO
Group Head Technology & Operations
Standard Chartered*

Quantifiable Results

Standard Chartered chose the Egenera system as the platform for its retail-banking application—including Internet, branch and phone-banking functions at 1,200 global locations—based on several criteria:

Cost Savings: Standard Chartered considered deploying its retail-banking application in each office worldwide, including countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the Americas. The sheer number of CPUs required for an in-country approach resulted in prohibitively high hardware and software-licensing costs. On the other hand, standard servers—even clustered white boxes—did not yield sufficient savings to compensate for the high telecommunications costs of a centralized scheme.

“When you look at a virtualized environment, however, you start to get significant benefits that make centralization the right approach,” says Verplancke. “With Egenera, we cut total cost of ownership in half compared to a traditional x86 solution due to superior I/O and performance. We expect that ratio to improve still further as we get more countries up and running and can leverage the system’s repurposing capabilities across time zones.”

This ability to repurpose servers will also lower costs by increasing utilization. “We have RISC platforms running at 100 percent for three to four hours each evening and literally doing nothing the rest of the day,” says Verplancke. “Because of their legacy architecture, which binds a server to a specific application, these machines cannot be repurposed for other tasks. Alternatively, Egenera’s virtualized architecture will enable us to do overnight batch processing on blades that handle transactions during the day.”

High Availability: While needing to lower capital and operational expenses, Standard Chartered cannot afford to compromise reliability. “High resiliency depends, in part, on how often a system fails,” says Verplancke. “But we’re also looking at our ability to recover from a failure. The Egenera platform enables us to recover very rapidly.”

Egenera also enables Standard Chartered to make every application highly available at virtually no cost. The system’s diskless architecture and virtualization capabilities eliminate backup servers, redundant network and storage connections and complex clustering software. The same N+1 approach can be applied at the system level to achieve disaster recovery: Through mirroring, a single platform can back up multiple, geographically dispersed servers.

Time to Market: With Egenera’s virtualization and management technologies, Atos Origin can bring a new country online in nine days rather than 45 as estimated for legacy architecture. In other parts of the world, because Egenera enables a centralized datacenter, the bank no longer needs to establish IT facilities in-country, which can take up to six months. “Now, when we’re deciding whether to open a bank in a given country, technology is not on the critical path,” notes Verplancke.

Flexibility: Standard Chartered also needs to react quickly to changing conditions in existing markets. With Egenera, capacity can be reallocated on demand from a pool of processing resources. “The Egenera system stands alone among x86 platforms in its ability to separate the identity of a server from its capacity,” explains Verplancke. “Now, we can simply store application configurations on our SAN and map them to any blades at any time.”

Egenera’s ability to run Red Hat® Linux®, SUSE® Linux, Microsoft® Windows® and Sun® Solaris™ simultaneously, on both AMD®- and Intel®-based blades, enhances flexibility still further.

A Solution for the Future

“The Egenera platform is not a blade server. It’s an enterprise-class system, comparable to high-end RISC platforms, that runs x86 processors and three operating systems,” concludes Verplancke. “Before Egenera, we were unable to source hardware at the high end of the stack that supported multiple environments. Instead, we were locked into proprietary platforms to meet the requirements of our mission-critical applications. The Egenera system delivers a truly unique combination of resiliency, cost-effectiveness and flexibility ideally suited to our vision for the future.”



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