

Advance7 helps Vanquis Bank remain in credit with its customers

Vanquis Bank Limited (Vanquis Bank), a subsidiary of FTSE 250 company Provident Financial PLC, was launched in 2003 to provide niche credit card services to the UK's underserved market of consumers, including those with limited credit history or lower than average income. Vanquis Bank now has over 100,000 customers.

Like any financial institution, Vanquis Bank has a strong reliance on IT and the networks that support its business. The performance of such systems is vital to Vanquis Bank's successful operations. In particular, customer-facing systems, such as contact centres and eCommerce solutions, are dependent on system reliability and performance issues. Adverse events affecting these systems can potentially cost the bank in terms of revenue, reputation and customer base.

The Challenge

Vanquis Bank has recently moved its London office into larger premises. The bank's IT department chose a client-focused solution to provide access to key business applications and information at the new location that would enable staff to deliver efficient customer service. At first the solution ran effectively but, subsequently, intermittent response-times began to impact on internal users.

For Vanquis Bank, any application or network downtime may affect the service it delivers and user confidence. The bank needed to diagnose and resolve the performance problem before it escalated into a larger issue.

Neil Smith, Vanquis Bank's Head of IT, said, "We formed our own suspicions as to why the network was performing inconsistently - but we needed to prove them. We wanted to be sure, as it made no business sense to throw money at the problem without being confident that it had been correctly

diagnosed. We needed to fix or replace any failing devices quickly, before they further slowed our response times and began to potentially cost us business."

Vanquis Bank referred to Advance7 and their **REACT™** service to find the cause of the problem, and to help resolve the issue and stabilise the system.

Mr Smith continued, "As a supplier with whom I had worked in the past, I believed Advance7 could potentially help us overcome this performance issue, and minimise the impact on business continuity and staff productivity."

The Solution

Advance7 consulted with the Bank's IT support staff to understand the infrastructure set-up and details of the problem. The company then took a snapshot of the IT environment. On processing that snapshot data the company was able to help prove the location and cause of the problem using their Rapid Problem Resolution (RPR) methodology. This method assisted in locating the root of the issue, and helped determine the measures needed to resolve the matter quickly and successfully.

As Mr Smith explains, this method enabled the bank's IT support team to see how the problem was diagnosed, and review the evidence of its root cause.

"With this project Advance7 gave me the insight as to why the problems were occurring; knowledge of how to fix them; action to prevent them from happening again, and recommendations on making our network and systems operate at optimal level."

He added, "As a customer-focused bank we take very seriously the security and reliability of our network. Having Advance7 on board was reassuring - their knowledge in predicting, proving and understanding the fault, and its broader impact on our organisation, is valuable."

The Benefit

Advance7 recommended four possible options to solve the problem, two of which were

favoured by Vanquis Bank. Carrying out these recommendations helped enable the bank to improve end-user productivity with more efficient, reliable and high-performance access to the system.

Additionally, in improving the infrastructure, the bank has also reduced the possibility of further costly IT downtime, delivering systems Mr Smith said, “In an environment like banking, when an IT problem develops we

with the levels of performance and stability required by the business.

need to fix it before it has a domino effect on the network, and exposes the business to significant risk. Our primary aim is always to meet our goal of efficiently providing our customers and staff with the information and service they need.”

He concluded, “Advance7’s approach to problem-solving has assisted us in ensuring that our network and systems perform to meet our set standards.”

Challenge

To solve the performance issues with a key business system.

Solution

By taking a snapshot of the IT environment when the problem occurred, advance7 helped prove its location, cause and the measures required for a resolution.

Business Benefits

The Advance7 solution has helped the Bank continue to meet the needs of the business.

- ✓ Delivered a resolution to the performance issue
- ✓ Helped reduce costly IT downtime and assist the Bank with obtaining proof of the issue, and actions needed to fix the problem and prevent its reoccurrence
- ✓ Helped provide end-user productivity by ensuring reliable access to the system and information.