

HP customer case study: Banco Espírito Santo upgrades to Itanium for greater scalability in line with business needs.

Industry: Financial Services

Banco Espírito Santo finds a powerful new way to generate effective business intelligence



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Objective:

Banco Espírito Santo (BES), one of Portugal's top three banks, found that its four year-old HP Superdome could not keep pace with the increased size and number of business critical, financial reports being requested by 3,000 users.

Approach:

- BES decided to upgrade the HP Superdome from 32-bit PA-RISC to 64-bit Integrity.
- It migrated its MicroStrategy business intelligence platform from the traditional Windows environment to HP-UX on 64-bit.
- To streamline its credit scoring environment it has also successfully migrated to a new infrastructure that uses Superdome with IBM WebSphere MQ v6.0.

IT improvements:

- Upgrading was a more cost-effective solution than replacement and the ongoing ability to scale makes it a high value solution.
- Performance and scalability of the HP Superdome were important factors.
- The bank needed to have confidence in the stability and reliability of this crucial system and believed that HP Superdome would provide this.

Business benefits:

- This upgrade was the most efficient way to align the bank's IT with its business needs, providing it with the agility to meet the challenges of its market.
- Bank staff now have all the reports they need to support their daily decision making and the bank has confidence in the HP Superdome's reliability and scalability.

One of the oldest banks in Portugal, Banco Espírito Santo (BES) is now the third largest financial institution in the country with 1.6 million customers, 600 branches, 7,000 employees and a most recent turnover of €280m.

This general purpose bank has many activities including retail and investment banking, asset management, leasing, sales finance, brokerage, insurance, factoring and venture capital.

It also has a vision to become one of the most efficient banks in Iberia and that means maintaining comprehensive and readily available customer data and business intelligence. To run these crucial functions, BES chose an HP Superdome but with intense growth in the demand for large and more numerous reports, the four-year-old machine was becoming overworked and unstable.

Having originally used the Superdome for corporate data warehousing, BES then added a credit scoring environment with Fair Isaac's Blaze application running more than 30 credit scoring models, providing notes to the branch network in real-time.

It has successfully migrated to a new credit scoring infrastructure that uses Superdome with IBM WebSphere MQ v6.0, which now supports HP-UX 11iV2 and achieves similar levels of functionality to those previously available on HP-UX 11i1 PA-RISC systems. WebSphere enables users to integrate their applications reliably and consistently, allowing them to leverage their existing software and hardware assets more effectively.

At BES, this message-oriented middleware, used with Integrity, has brought a whole new environment for credit scoring by enabling the bank to get information direct from the mainframe and data warehouse then build it into vital credit ratings. It

Customer solution at a glance

Primary hardware

- HP Integrity Superdome 64-bit running HP-UX

Primary software

- MicroStrategy business intelligence
- Blaze credit scoring from Fair Isaac

HP Services

- Ongoing support

increases the speed of report generation and supports Basel II compliance.

"After intensive WebSphere MQ tests on HP-UX 11i V2 during the IBM Software Beta program, we are successfully running WebSphere MQ V6 on our new Itanium2 based HP Integrity Superdome Server," said Luis Madruga, technical consultant (infrastructure and distributed systems) at BES. "The latest WebSphere MQ V6 release on HP Integrity Server increased system resiliency and business flexibility which helps our bank to simplify and optimise our transaction processing infrastructure 24 hours a day."

BES also provides crucial business intelligence reports to its branches using the Web and Report Service elements of the MicroStrategy platform.

Under pressure

"We had been experiencing 90 per cent constant usage of CPU which is very dangerous," said Artur Guterres, head of information management at BES. "We were getting throughput problems in producing reports because of the times the batches were taking to prepare. We could also foresee further increases in usage to enable the bank to comply with the requirements of Basel II and because we were taking on more companies in our group."

When these memory and performance issues started to affect the daily efficiency of the business critical financial data reporting to its 3,000 users, a solution had to be found and it was decided to increase capacity, speed and scalability by upgrading the HP Superdome from PA-RISC to Itanium2 on Integrity Superdome, and by migrating MicroStrategy from its traditional Windows environment to HP-UX on 64-bit.

"Business intelligence, data warehousing and credit scoring information is practically mission critical to the operation of the bank and its branches," added Guterres. "The branches are used to getting instant and relevant information regarding objectives and

commercial rankings. This makes them more competitive so if the system does not get actualised one day, we have big problems.

Scalable and fast

"As well as the operational credit scoring, by the end of the year, the data warehouse will hold all of the information for all of the companies within the BES group in one consolidated version. It will have the profitability model, an ABC cost model, run-off models in terms of risk. We have a couple of tools for managing daily commercial activity including cost control, budgeting control and management, and incentive systems for all the commercial areas. Basically, a single point of information for the whole company is provided from this data warehouse on the Superdome.

"We also decided to change MicroStrategy from Windows to HP-UX because Windows 32-bit had scalability limits in terms of capacity. We needed much more capacity for MicroStrategy because our users were being very demanding in terms of reports. They execute 4,000 reports a day through self-service and we had to move to 64-bit to achieve the scalability needed to produce many more and much more powerful reports."

BES was also upgrading from MicroStrategy Business Intelligence Platform7 to version 8.

"The problems we were previously facing have now gone away," added Guterres. "We are able to generate large reports much more quickly and efficiently because the sizing of the system is a better match for the requirements of the bank. We have set up a system that gives users the power of self-service, requesting reports over our internal WAN, direct from the Superdome.

"The HP Superdome is a very stable system which provides us with the confidence and reliability we need in a bank."

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