

Twelve years payment traffic development at BCV

Over the past ten years, the payment traffic sector has undergone some major changes, mostly as a result of the increase in Internet payment orders, resulting in important consequences for banks' organization and systems. At the Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (BCV) the number of processed orders has doubled since April 1999, while the number of full-time employees assigned to these activities was reduced to one-third.

At the time of CLEARIT's first issue, outgoing payment traffic was mostly based on customer orders submitted in paper form and divided into one of three categories:

- Standardized, postcard-sized payment notifications, labeled TOP orders at BCV and introduced in 1993, which could be digitalized and processed automatically.
- Hand-written orders, submitted in any kind of paper format and processed manually.
- Phone orders (BCV-Phone) that required new manual data entry by the bank.

Approximately 25% of the global ordering volume was submitted via the Internet. Somewhat fewer than the equivalent of 60 full-time staff were responsible for the order processing in the payment traffic department. They were divided into four services, plus Swiss and foreign transfers. Over time, processes and systems evolved. Versatility was of great importance within the team. Along with the technical evolution, the standardizing of new forms that could be digitalized was also encouraged, and character recognition software solutions were substantially improved. New functions were integrated into the BCV-net online bank platform, making it more attractive.

Beyond that, customers were encouraged to switch to this system by attractive pricing. Marketing efforts advanced the sale of service packages where payments submitted via the Internet were processed for free, with the exception of foreign transfers not containing SEPA characteristics. All these varied efforts were successful, since now more than three of four orders are submitted via the Internet, automatic payments included. Even though the number of processed orders has practically doubled, the number of full-time units of processing payments requiring manual intervention has decreased. Today, about 18 full-time jobs are dedicated to the processing of payment orders.

The fact that for two years now BCV has experienced the stabilizing of paper-trail work bears special mention. At the

same time, the BCV-net platform keeps steadily evolving. With the introduction of a mobile application by the end of 2011, customers will at first be able to move funds between their own accounts from their smartphone, and later have access to all BCV-net functions.

It will be interesting to analyze the evolutionary path of payment options in twelve years and six months – when the 100th issue of CLEARIT will be published. <

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Evolution of the payment order volumes and the number of full-time employees
(Numbers available since 2001).

