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*Hervé Combey,
Head of Performance Unit
La Banque Postale*

Mainframe Performance Tuning: Uncontrolled growth tamed at French Financial Institution

Background

La Banque Postale offers both its private and business customers affordable banking products and services. With 9.9 million customers and 480 000 companies and associations, La Banque Postale prioritizes the satisfaction of its customers.

In 2008, La Banque Postale Bank faced the challenge of meeting its business challenges and development requirements while keeping the endemic annual growth of its mainframe capacity under control.

With this in mind, La Banque Postale implemented a management program to optimize its performance and significantly reduce its costs.

The program has succeeded in reducing the increase in capacity mainframe to 5% per year, against an average transaction increase of 20% annually.

The Challenge

In 2008, the IT Production Department, in charge of developing and maintaining a technical infrastructure able to support the business challenges of the Group, launched a performance management unit to evaluate the possibilities of optimizing its z/OS mainframes and reduce its running costs.

Over the preceding years, the mainframe capacity of La Banque Postale had grown annually in the order of 15% to 25%, leading to unsustainable budget growth. The objective was to understand the reasons for growth, and reach a position where capacity growth was strictly linked to business activity (new customers, new products etc).

The finding of the performance management team evaluation highlighted the complexity of the exercise and the amount of time that would be required for a purely internal team to deliver, and La Banque Postale opted to enlist the help of CPT Global after extensive market research of third-party performance offerings.

This choice was based upon both the specific 'Risk-Reward' business approach and the worldwide expertise of CPT Global, who apply their acquired experience and methodology from the start.

Today, despite a constant increase of the number of transactions processed, La Banque Postale has managed to reduce the growth of its mainframe consumption to 5% per year, against an annual average of +20% prior to 2008.

A well paced project

In July 2008, CPT Global carried out the first short phase of the engagement analysing the production workload and comparing it to previous customers of CPT Global on a worldwide scale. The 2 weeks long 'discovery stage' identified the first opportunity of a reduction of 80 MIPS, enabling La Banque Postale to calculate the savings possible and build an argument for the validity of the engagement and the relevance of the Risk/Reward contract mode offered by CPT Global. This phase also ensured the commitment of internal experts to perform the necessary groundwork and produce data as required.

The internal discussions bore fruit and a few months later, in early 2009, CPT Global began in-depth analysis. Hervé Combey, in charge of the Management Unit of Performance and responsible for CPT Global's engagement, is delighted with this first phase that enabled him to prove to the General Board of Directors the benefits of external technical support with a risk-free business approach.

The engagement moved to its second phase and following a further two months analysis, CPT Global submitted a list of opportunities to be implemented. These were implemented over the following three months, resulting in a final cost reduction of around 5,000 MIPS against the predicted 3,000 MIPS of potential savings identified originally by CPT Global.

"CPT Global's approach works on both a technical and business level" explains Hervé Combey. *"The engagement was not only carried out thanks to a thorough monitoring and focused methodology - we were seldom asked to respond to highly technically specific questions during Phase I - and La Banque Postale has clearly benefited from a return on its investments"*.

Hervé Combey established that the savings made in one year exceeded one million Euros and if CPT Global's fees in the first year equal the 'success fees' of the savings made, the second year is clearly more financially beneficial for La Banque Postale. "and the same is true for the following years!" declares Hervé Combey. "Indeed, the ethos of CPT Global's approach is to keep the growth of the mainframe capacity under control - and we now have agreed upon an annual fixed rate with them to maintain a continuous optimisation consumption. Only using CPT Global services every other year would be senseless: It is more profitable to keep the budget under control, rather than being faced with a fluctuating situation of repeated growth in capacity, and opportunities that need to be re-evaluated to reach greater optimisation".

A very efficient approach

The high efficiency of CPT Global's approach is due to three key factors:

- CPT's expertise (their positioning on the largest mainframes and their accumulated expertise places them at the forefront of performance tuning for these specific environments),
- The CPT business approach, without risk for the customer and purely based upon the results,
- The CPT methodology methodology used that enables them to accurately monitor and evaluate the savings during each phase of the engagement.

The icing on the cake: the practice and the very high knowledge of these specific environments enable CPT Global experts to discuss with its customers a number of technical options.

"CPT Global's approach in Phase 1 based upon its discovery process enabled La Banque Postale to assess the savings, and convince the Board of Directors of the benefits of the 'success fees' type of contract and to rally an internal team with the required expertise"

"CPT Global's approach is highly efficient thanks to 3 key factors: Their expertise, their business approach, and their methodology"

Hervé Combey
La Banque Postale

About CPT Global Limited

CPT Global is a specialized consultancy with two focus areas. Its Technical Consulting services enhance the control, stability, efficiency and reliability of both mainframe and mid-range platforms, with offerings that include Capacity Planning, Stress and Performance Testing, Data Migration and Configuration Management. Its Management Consulting services review and improve the business processes associated with Information Technology, with offerings that include Program and Project Management, IT Governance Reviews, Strategic Sourcing Strategies and Technology Transition Planning.

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