



AboveNet

# BANK ACHIEVES SMOOTH POST-MERGER NETWORK INTEGRATION WITH CIENA AND ABOVENET



## Summary

### Challenges

- Support the merger of two leading corporate and retail banks
- Minimize the impact of the merger on business operations and customer service
- Manage a three-fold increase in demand on the network infrastructure

### Solution

- Ciena's ActivSpan 4200® Advanced Services Platform
- AboveNet fiber optic network
- AboveNet managed service

### Benefits

- Delivers seamless business and operational performance despite a three-fold increase in demand as a result of integration
- Helped consolidate and reduce office and data center real estate
- Increased network capacity from 6 Gb/s to 26 Gb/s
- Reduced new service provisioning from 60 days to as little as five days
- Delivers a scalable, low-latency optical network, supporting development of green data center facilities

Creating value through a merger or acquisition can be challenging even without worrying about the back-office network infrastructure. While merging with another bank that operated in a larger market thousands of miles away, one leading European commercial and retail bank leveraged its network to realize even greater competitive advantage.

The solution was an AboveNet managed service powered by Ciena's cost-efficient, low-latency optical solutions that minimized business disruption and increased capacity from 6 Gb/s to 26 Gb/s while handling a three-fold increase in demand.

### The Challenge

Mergers and acquisitions present huge business continuity and logistical challenges for organizations looking to rationalize operations and assets while ensuring customers continue to receive high-quality service. A leading European commercial and retail bank faced these challenges when it merged with another bank and needed to consolidate the U.S. business operations of both businesses into a single entity.

The combined bank provides numerous services, including corporate, trade, real estate and public finance, as well as treasury and trading activities to a portfolio of corporate, institutional, and bank customers. Both banks had corporate headquarters and administration locations in and around New York City, with similar network architectures and data centers approximately 30-40 miles outside of the city.

While the merger helped the bank acquire valuable new skills and products, maintaining two separate operations was not commercially viable or practical. The bank's strategy was to retain a single headquarters in the World Finance Center and eliminate several duplicate offices. In addition, the bank decided to combine the computing and data center infrastructures into a single consolidated platform to simplify operations and reduce operational costs.

However, the merger and related increase in business resulted in a three-fold rise in demand, which meant the new data network infrastructure had to be able to deliver more bandwidth as well as offer the flexibility to cope with changes and growth associated with the merger.

### **Solution**

The bank had an existing long-term partnership with Ciena, and prior to the merger, Ciena's technology proved highly effective in enabling the bank to develop and manage a data center networking solution for its business operations in the U.S. Because of Ciena's track record and innovative networking products, the bank wanted to continue working with Ciena in developing a solution to meet its post-merger network needs.

The customer set up a data center, accompanied by a comprehensive Disaster Recovery (DR) facility that included a complete office with desks and telephones in addition to data back up and replication. The Ciena technology enabled near synchronous data replication between the headquarters and the DR facility so, in the event of a major incident, the bank could move its entire U.S. headquarters operation to the data center site and resume services to customers within a matter of hours.

To help create a fully managed service, Ciena brought in AboveNet, with which Ciena has partnered to bring data network solutions to many leading financial institutions in the U.S. One of the crucial advantages of this partnership was that AboveNet has an existing fiber optic network footprint in and around New York City's financial district and already manages connections into most of its leading financial institutions and regional data centers. This pre-existing infrastructure made building private fiber optic networks and delivering managed services in the region much faster and more cost-effective.

The bank deployed a 10 Gb/s optical network, managed by AboveNet, based on Ciena's 4200. The network connects the New York headquarters with the data and "lights out" center outside the city. In addition, the network also interlinks



a new data center on Staten Island, where it merged with the existing network of the acquired bank—enabling its assets and connections to be utilized by the new business.

### **Benefits**

The 4200 was chosen both because it was well-suited to support network operations during the merger, but also—and perhaps most importantly—because it allowed the customer to set up and provision new services quickly and cost-effectively, helping manage the fast changing and unpredictable scenarios that stem from merger situations. The bank needed to deploy a variety of different applications across its network—such as trading systems, voice communications, data, and storage. Depending on the application, each one of these applications required a different network service, such as Fibre Channel or Gigabit Ethernet.

The 4200's FlexiPort technology, which includes the industry's only fully programmable optical port, enables the bank to provision different services across the network quickly, eliminating the need to add hardware each time a new service is deployed. Instead, each service can be programmed into the network on demand, as dictated by the network requirements.

For example, following the integration of staff from the acquired bank into the head office, the business experienced an increase in voice traffic over its network. Ciena's technology allows the bank to increase network capacity quickly, for little extra cost, without having to deploy new hardware. Furthermore, individual service integrity remains protected so critical business data—like that used for automated trading systems—is not affected by other traffic on the network. This ability to provision network capacity quickly also means the bank can be very responsive to business needs by deploying

new services faster. In fact, setting up new services over the Ciena-powered network takes as few as five days, compared with 60 days for comparable solutions.

In addition to fast service provisioning, Ciena's technology allows the bank to handle different types of service. The merger resulted in multiple legacy systems, such as different data storage platforms. The 4200's flexible, multiservice capability enabled support of these different platforms on a single network.

In addition, the Ciena technology offers the high performance and low latency ideal for the financial services market, where deals and trades are won and lost on microsecond timing. The solution also significantly increased the network's overall capacity—from 6 Gb/s to 26 Gb/s, with the flexibility to scale up to 40 Gb/s. This means that financial applications, such as automated trading systems requiring microsecond response time to send and receive trading data, can continue operating

without disruption and at exemplary latency, despite the significant increase in bandwidth demand on the network.

The new network also helps the bank consolidate resources and infrastructure, enabling the company to cut costs while increasing operations and the scale of the business.

The Ciena technology also provides the bank with other important benefits, such as enabling the business to develop green data center facilities. In addition to offering best-in-class power consumption, the Ciena solution at the bank optimized network traffic by packing up to 78 percent more services on a single wavelength compared to competing solutions. This increase helps achieve a dramatic reduction in energy demand and, consequently, cost. The small footprint of Ciena's products also means they take up less space in the data center, further reducing costs.

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