

# A bank improves efficiency by streamlining applications portfolio

*IBM Rational software helps cut supported applications from 600 to just 147*

---

## Overview

### The need

This bank continually strives to improve efficiency and agility. It sought to gain a clearer picture of all the applications it was supporting to minimize redundancy and lower costs.

### The solution

The bank used IBM Rational Focal Point software to develop an overview of its current technology roadmap and identify dependencies between applications.

### The benefit

The bank reduced the number of service level agreements (SLAs) it maintains from 17 to four and cut the number of supported applications from 600 to 147, increasing IT department productivity.

---

This bank in North America has four main areas of focus: monetary policy, currency, financial systems and funds management.

## Becoming more proactive in challenging times

After the 2008 global economic recession, the bank decided it was more important than ever to improve its overall efficiency and agility, along with its ability to analyze data and make accurate forecasts. “We want to get a better understanding of how to create models and analyze data so that we can better predict events like 2008,” says the assistant director, portfolio management.

To accomplish these goals, the bank first needed a comprehensive picture of its technology roadmap. It realized that although its primary focus must remain on monetary policy, financial analysis and financial systems, it must put equal focus on its IT environment to improve the alignment between IT and business needs. The bank launched a strategic application portfolio management initiative.

## IBM Rational applications aid portfolio management, enterprise architecture

To support this initiative, the bank implemented IBM Rational® Focal Point™ software to create a comprehensive picture of its existing technology roadmap. Rational Focal Point software not only provides the portfolio management capabilities the bank needed, but it also integrates easily with IBM Rational System Architect software, which the bank was considering for its enterprise architecture requirements. A Rational



---

*“Rational Focal Point is now the repository for data on hardware, from the wiring on the floor and the air-conditioning requirements, all the way up to the business functions. And we’ve established a lot of the interconnections.”*

—Assistant director, portfolio management

---

software demonstration helped convince users that it met their needs. According to the assistant director, “When we gave the demonstration of how the Rational Focal Point software worked, our architects looked at us and said, ‘We want that instead of our existing tool. Can we trade?’”

Implementing the Rational application required little time. The bank began the project in December 2010. It took just a few weeks to make the software operational and a few more weeks to import data about applications. By February, the portfolio management team had tangible results for the business lines to use in annual planning.

The bank learned that it had approximately 600 supported applications, including technology services, as well as thousands of unsupported applications. Identifying what it had enabled the bank to decide more strategically which applications to keep and support. “We went through a process of rationalizing, finding the key applications that were impacting the budget in terms of ongoing support costs and identifying redundant sets of applications. And then we selected certain platforms and certain applications that we could remove,” says the assistant director.

### **Streamlining operations, improving efficiency**

The bank decreased the number of service level agreements (SLAs) it maintained from 17 to just four, leading to a dramatic increase in IT staff productivity. The solution also allowed the bank to identify redundant applications and retire them, cutting the number of supported applications to 147.

Rational Focal Point software also became a repository for data that was previously scattered throughout the bank. In the past, staff members collected data in spreadsheets and documents; now they use Rational Focal Point software to centralize the information. “The application is now the repository for data on hardware, from the wiring on the floor and the air-conditioning requirements, all the way up to the business functions. And we’ve established a lot of the interconnections,” says the assistant director. Rational Focal Point software enables the bank to map data, establishing links between an application and its function and infrastructure, including the physical and virtual infrastructures.

---

## Solution components

### Software

- IBM Rational® Focal Point™
- 

*“The lines of business are seeing immediate value from Rational Focal Point software because it helps them engage in conversations about SLA levels and change management.”*

—Assistant director, portfolio management

---

Identifying its existing applications helped the bank improve the quality of the applications it kept. For example, the bank had approximately 10 CRM applications running separately and requiring individual support. After uncovering the redundancy, the bank consolidated them into a single tool that increased capabilities and improved quality.

## Facilitating greater collaboration and visibility

The Rational software facilitated greater collaboration between the bank enterprise architects and its application portfolio management team. The two teams now work together to build capability models that link to applications using information available in Rational Focal Point software.

The Rational application also offers greater visibility that supports long-term planning, including development of roadmaps, budgets and change management plans. Rational Focal Point software provides an overview of the application portfolio from a business standpoint, including financial aspects, and enables the bank to deal with each transition option as a business case.

The software’s value is apparent throughout the bank. “The lines of business are seeing immediate value from Rational Focal Point software because it helps them engage in conversations about SLA levels and change management. It also helps them look at their own budgetary processes in the changes that are occurring on the roadmap,” says the assistant director.

The application portfolio management initiative and the Rational software have become so essential to the bank’s operations that new hires must demonstrate knowledge of application portfolio management practices. And the bank ties results of the application portfolio management initiative to the performance agreements of key employees. The bank plans to upgrade to the latest release of Rational Focal Point software soon to take advantage of new features such as dashboards. “I’m excited about what we can do with the Rational applications,” says the assistant director.

## For more information

To learn more about how IBM Rational software can help you, contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit: [ibm.com/rational](http://ibm.com/rational)

Additionally, IBM Global Financing can help you acquire the IT solutions that your business needs in the most cost-effective and strategic way possible. We'll partner with credit qualified clients to customize an IT financing solution to suit your business goals, enable effective cash management, and improve your total cost of ownership. IBM Global Financing is your smartest choice to fund critical IT investments and propel your business forward. For more information, visit: [ibm.com/financing](http://ibm.com/financing)



---

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2011

IBM Corporation  
Software Group  
Route 100  
Somers, NY 10589  
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America  
December 2011

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, Focal Point, and Rational are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation, registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at [ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml](http://ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml)

Other company, product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others. The information contained in this documentation is provided for informational purposes only. While efforts were made to verify the completeness and accuracy of the information contained in this documentation, it is provided "as is" without warranty of any kind, express or implied. In addition, this information is based on IBM's current product plans and strategy, which are subject to change by IBM without notice. IBM shall not be responsible for any damages arising out of the use of, or otherwise related to, this documentation or any other documentation. Nothing contained in this documentation is intended to, nor shall have the effect of, creating any warranties or representations from IBM (or its suppliers or licensors), or altering the terms and conditions of the applicable license agreement governing the use of IBM software.

This case study illustrates how one IBM customer uses IBM products. There is no guarantee of comparable results. References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.



Please Recycle