

Better service for banking customers

Digital processing of financial transactions at Berliner Sparkasse based on Adobe LiveCycle ES facilitates routine processes

Berliner Sparkasse

www.berliner-sparkasse.de



In cooperation with

SOFTPRO GmbH
www.softpro.de

Customer

One of Germany's major savings banks. A subsidiary of Landesbank Berlin AG, a long-standing banking institution founded in 1818.

Challenge

- Elimination of as many paper-based processes as possible.
- Embedding of electronic signatures into existing workflows.

Solution

- Electronic signatures on electronic form templates provided by Adobe LiveCycle ES.

Benefits

- More time for consulting, effective relief of routine tasks.
- Reduction of media conversion errors.
- Automatic archiving.
- Reduction of costs and errors through the elimination of paper-based forms.

Applied Products

- Adobe® LiveCycle® Rights Management Enterprise Suite
- Adobe® Reader®
- Adobe® Flex®
- SOFTPRO SignPad eSignio & SignDoc

Recently, the Sparkasse Group launched the „Mission Finanzcheck“ offer, in which it invited its customers and interested parties across Germany to have their personal financial situation examined by an on-site consultant or through an intuitive online financial check. The applied tool – an interactive Rich Internet Application (RIA) based on Adobe Flex – offered much more than conventional brochures and online forms. An animated introduction explained on the PC the handling and aim of the offer, while an acoustic commentary conveyed the impression of a personal consultation. After entering specific personal data, customers themselves determined the focus of the consultation with a few clicks of the mouse, immediately receiving individual financial planning recommendations. It was found that online consulting reduces the time of subsequent consulting meetings by up to 30 percent and draws customers' attention to additional financial products and services.

To maintain the initial „wow“ effect of such offers for as long as possible, the processes initiated in the customer portal must not end up on hold on the desk of a clerk, but be immediately and automatically linked to the backend systems. To ensure this, it is important that business processes are no longer paper-based. Based on independent research findings, manually completed forms on average contain 25 to 80 errors. Internal processing and subsequent corrections take up resources while follow-up inquiries anger customers – all of which can be avoided through digitized processing. Interested parties who want to, for example, open an account following the Sparkasse online financial check now benefit from the integrated processes – from initial consulting to the actual transaction.

More efficiency without paper

At Sparkasse Berlin the introduction of electronic signatures was identified as a key step for the reduction of paper-based processes. One in two residents of Berlin trust Sparkasse Berlin when opening their first checking account. Accordingly, signing is a very frequent process in the various branches of the bank. In addition to opening and changing of checking accounts, signatures are also needed for standing orders and savings accounts.

Sparkasse Berlin largely eliminated paper from the internal handling of these processes. This is made possible by the SOFTPRO SignPad eSignio. When customers sign on its display, the signature is immediately digitized. The Software SOFTPRO SignDoc in conjunction with Adobe LiveCycle technology then integrates the signature into the content of the documents to create a so-called „advanced electronic signature,“ which ensures the authenticity and integrity of the electronic documents. Only customers receive a paper copy of the signed document for their records, while the digitally signed documents are moved directly to the electronic archive.

Security for electronic documents

Next to an image of the signature, a signed contract also contains biometric characteristics that are captured during the signing process, as well as details concerning the time, place and print details. Immediately following the signature, this data is turned by Adobe's digital signature technology into an integral part of the document.



„Our employee just clicks on a button in the electronic form to open a capturing window for the signature. Upon signing, the customer receives a print out. The system passes the electronic document on and checks it for completeness. This efficiently relieves our employees of routine tasks, allowing them to spend more time with customers, where every minute really counts. In addition, we could minimize the waiting time of our customers.“

Bodo Stüwe,
Project manager Berliner Sparkasse

Further information at

<http://www.adobe.com/financial/>

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The long way to the implementation of „Model P“

In 2004, Sparkassen Finanzgruppe has already begun implementing paperless processes in its deposit and sales business activities. Internally, the project is known as „Model P“. The migration of the paper-based forms to electronic forms was implemented by Deutscher Sparkassen Verlag, the publishing house of the Sparkasse banks. To-date already 850 electronic templates are available in the PDFplusX format. They are made available via the Adobe LiveCycle document server and processed in Adobe Reader.

However, when it came to signatures, the process continued to rely on paper as the main „data carrier.“ If customers wanted to, for example, open a new account, their data was initially entered into the corresponding electronic form on the PC and printed out subsequently. Scanning, error elimination, recapturing data and archiving of the documents was therefore very time-consuming and costly. Specialists refer to this time and cost-intensive jump from electronic processes and documents to paper a „cross-media discrepancy.“ Studies project the savings potential of the migration to paperless documents to be one to two Euros per document. Therefore, the purchase cost of the hardware and the software is returned within a very short time from the point of the introduction of the system.

Shorter waiting periods for customers

The implementation of this continuous digital workflow reduced the processing time, significantly boosting customer satisfaction. Project manager Bodo Stüwe explained: „Our employee just clicks on a button in the electronic form to open a capturing window for the signature. Upon signing, the customer receives a print out. The system passes the electronic document on and checks it for completeness. This efficiently relieves our employees of routine tasks, allowing them to spend more time with customers, where every minute really counts. In addition, we could minimize the waiting time of our customers.“

The new system also pays off for the bank, as Joachim Wangnet, responsible for customer relations during the rollout of the electronic signature project at the Berliner Sparkasse, explained: „We were able to substantially reduce the amount of paper used for new contracts and eliminate cross-media discrepancies.“

Added security as a side effect

In addition to issues such as comfort and efficiency, the greatest possible security for bank customers continues to be a key consideration. The implementation of electronic signatures introduced a positive side effect in this regard, said Karsten Sprenger of Bankenservice GmbH, the IT service provider of Berliner Sparkasse. „The quality of the stored signatures has considerably improved and the expenses for scanning, indexing and allocation of rights have been eliminated. In addition, any attempts of remittance slips fraud can be detected more efficiently and at lower cost.“