

UBS AG



The largest Swiss Bank combines electronic banking and teleworking, new business models and new workforms. UBS AG had originally developed and implemented their REMAX (Remote Access System) for communication with the outside world, with their clients in electronic banking. Today, the system is being expanded to also make it usable for telework. Telework as a new workform comes into being in parallel with the internal expansion of E-Commerce. This case study describes how at UBS AG, E-Commerce and telework gradually merge and combine with each other.

1. Company name and function

UBS AG

UBS AG is a publicly traded, shareholder driven company incorporated under Swiss law with head offices in Zurich and Basel, a global, integrated investment services firm and the leading bank in Switzerland. It is regarded as the largest asset managers worldwide. UBS offers a full range of products and services to a diverse client base. Its core competencies lie in the areas of global private banking, investment banking, private and corporate clients, institutional asset management, trading in securities and foreign exchange, risk management, research, retail and commercial banking. In 1999, the group employed 49,000 people worldwide, 33,000 of them in Switzerland. Their international presence is complemented by a rapidly growing multichannel electronic delivery strategy.

2. Short description of the initiative

Originally, REMAX was a pure technology project. Its aim was to enable a selected circle of employees to access Email and to communicate even when away from the bank and outside bank opening hours. In the course of time, after it became apparent what could be done with this technology, the project developed into a teleworking project. According to UBS' opinion both the business model and the workform must go together. The work model had to be adapted to the continuous, round-the-clock business as demanded by clients. Today REMAX already functions, and even more so will in the future (NEW-MAX), externally to allow contact with clients and business partners, as well as internally, as a workform for employees, and so represents a combined form of E-business and E-work.

REMAX came into being around 1993. In parallel to Email, which employees in the front office were using, a solution was needed for the back office and round-the-clock system servicing. This now allowed authorised UBS employees to supply immediate and individual answers to urgent client requests from home via the mailbox, for example at the weekend. It was the goal, thanks to REMAX and call centres, to be able to offer clients continuous service, 7 x 24 hours per week, by a variety of channels. At the same time, bank employees were to have access to the system at all times to answer queries, at home or on the road – be it in Zurich, London, New York, or Singapore; the global remote access operating system was to be available around the world and round-the-clock. The most important application areas are:

- *scheduling*, an application for electronic agendas, appointments and work planning, individually or in working groups;
- *communication*, access via the Swisscom ISDN to their own Email or the UBS mail server and all mail addressees of the UBS AG;
- *UBS Intranet*, access via the Worldwide Web to a network with 300,000 files, where all bank data (eg directions, work processes, product documentations, technical description etc) are stored.

The main target groups as REMAX users are: 1. IT-Support, Network Support (around 1,200 people), who constantly and from wherever, including home, have to provide support and advisory services for other users; 2. Management (around 250 to 300 people): senior management, section and department managers with leadership responsibility.

3. **Innovative aspects of the project**

The further development (NEWMAX) enables the realisation of the vision to create functional dial-up connections with high security standards (Smartcard) to access sensitive data in the UBS group. In contrast to the active regular user, the occasional user who only wants to access his mailbox sporadically does not require the whole complex and expensive infrastructure with card reader and Smartcard. There will accordingly be a range of equipment developed to various standards depending on the security level, including some more simple “light versions” with restricted access, ie without access to sensitive data.

With REMAX, the IT section did not simply want to provide a service. In addition, a business plan was set up and the number of users predicted; invest-

ments were made; around one year was spent on developmental work. This is why cost transparency was called for and a corresponding return on investment was expected. From the beginning it was planned that for each user (of the now 3,000) fixed and variable costs (per online minute) had to be charged to their respective cost centre. This provides cost transparency and finances the freephone number and the support services. Costs are much higher in the UBS than with external telecommunication providers. However, the extra value offered and the higher security levels demanded and provided in the banking business are important.

There was some reticence in the beginning and some resistance. Users travelling abroad had technological problems. However, thanks to training and an adequate support organisation, these could be overcome.