New age learning for a new age bank

IBS Journal sat down with Yes Bank to discuss how it managed to perform a smooth upgrade of its core banking systems

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Yes Bank, India's fourth-largest private sector bank, has steadily built itself a corporate, retail and SME banking portfolio. The bank holds around $14 billion in assets under management, and CIO Anup Purohit believes that the secret to its success is a great marrying of both technology and staff competency.

The bank, which the CIO describes as a "New Age Bank", runs Oracle FSS' Flexcube as its core banking system. "Regarding technology, one the key principles for me is that we have the mentality that we are a technology company," says Purohit. "It's almost incidental that we do banking as well." Luckily, he adds, he has been supported on all sides by the bank's management in adopting a technology-first approach.

For some time after implementation, Yes Bank had opted not to update its version of Flexcube. Instead, the bank had built a series of customisable modules on top of the existing architecture. "With the previous system we had spent more than 2,000 days customising our core," adds Purohit, admitting that in that time the bank could have built two new systems from the ground up. Under his watch, Yes Bank subsequently upgraded its Flexcube system to version 7.6 and scrubbed the customised modules. To streamline the process, Yes Bank partnered with GIEOM, a provider of cloud-based e-learning and change management software. "They understood how the whole process had to go. They documented almost 547 processes, from small to large, all of which were online. Overall, when we were looking at each process, it was either a manual process that turned into a digital method or an entirely digital process."
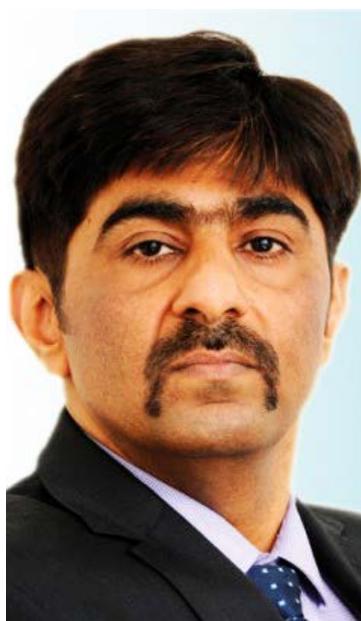
GIEOM played "a fantastic role" in providing a visual model of the processes. "Wherever there was a technological process they provided a simulation that could be viewed on screen." It was easier for Yes Bank to see how it could transfer to the new system, adds the CIO, using "significantly helpful" visualisations for operational staff. "It certainly made my life much simpler," admits Purohit. Yes Bank decided on a relatively small window for deployment. "We formulated a 15-month plan and set aside a seven-month development cycle for the core banking vendor. Then, there were nine months in which we had to do testing, simulation, mock runs and more." Those nine months eventually turned into 12, following some delays. That wasn't much of an issue, says Purohit, since the 18-month implementation time was "far less" than the average for most core banking projects. The bank went live with a big bang and had no major issues, outside of the "usual" teething problems.