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Press release from Integer

Bespoke IT allows Integer to beat banks on service

Integer, the new home loan provider with a private bank offering, has designed a custom IT system that allows it to approve a home loan eight hours after receiving supporting documents from the applicant. In contrast, the big four banks take an average of five days to approve a home loan application.

According to Craig Beney, MD of Integer, the Integer IT systems were developed to provide customers with an excellent, fast service that would differentiate it from the service offered by the big four banks. "From the onset, our vision for Integer was to be a home loan provider who offered customers a blue chip service which knocked the socks off the shoddy service SA customers have been used to. Our entire IT system was designed to ensure we could offer this kind of service."

"Securitisation and offering of home loans are all about accurate pricing. So in order to offer a blue chip service, our IT system had to allow us to analyse and price risk speedily and accurately. Our system does this fast and well."

Henk van der Merwe, Integer's head of Strategic Application Development says Integer identified IT as a strategic rather than a support function and prioritised it from day one. "Integer believes that annual IT spend should equal annual salary spend. It is an aggressive approach, but one that is working for us."

Integer initially approached van der Merwe in October 2005 to make the IT system an integral part of Integer's fast and sleek service offering. Henk, who comes from a business intelligence background and has been in consulting for six years, is essentially a Hyperion expert and within a month of meeting, Beney accepted an offer to move from Switzerland to Cape Town.

Van der Merwe explains that his passion for the Hyperion system is because it lends itself to so much more than just a database and Client Relationship Management tool, but that it has the ability to factor in security and risk probability as well. "These factors are essential when trying to achieve the shorter turnover time that Integer promises clients".

Van der Merwe explained that Integer's IT back-end uses Hyperion Essbase, in a very different way from how its developers intended it. "It forms the back-end of our entire system and does all our calculations – it can be compared to Microsoft Excel on steroids. It takes 15 seconds to calculate a client's full amortisation profile over 240 months. We use it to analyse information in a very fundamental way which allows us to accurately and quickly assess risk."

The middle part of Integer's IT system is called Baartnet and is managed and hosted remotely by EMID in Pretoria. It hosts all Integer's client accounts and functions as a CRM and workflow tool. Baartnet has been customised to talk to Hyperion Essbase so that it can manage the complexity of Integer's linked transactional accounts, the capital

deferment and skip-a-month homeloan products and the requirements of the National Credit Act.

Integer's front end is called Babelfish and allows Integer to talk to the world - customers, mortgage originators and staff. Joh Kruger, Integer's Head of .Net development, says the name comes from Douglas Adam's Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. "In Adam's universe everyone talks different languages. Babelfish is the little fish you put in your ear which allows you to understand everyone. Our Babelfish does exactly that - it allows the client to access us in a very friendly and usable way. "

Craig says Integer's IT system complements their business. "It assists fundamentally in ensuring we have the speed and accuracy that allows us to practically deliver on our service promise."

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