

# THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK

## FASTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION ENHANCES CUSTOMER SERVICE



«We had a clear need to update our approach to storing and accessing correspondence and an aim to make processes quicker to deliver an enhanced service to our customers. SPS has helped us meet these challenges and delivered a solution at short timescales. The disaster recovery elements that SPS has built have also been important to us. We're delighted we chose SPS to support us in this project.»

– Lisa Neary, Payments Lead Operations Manager & BACB

**The Co-operative Bank is rooted in the traditional values of the co-operative movement where customers, ethics and values sit at the heart of business decisions. In 2013, a desire to enhance the customer experience alongside meeting new regulatory requirements, led the bank to look for a new, digital solution for storing and accessing correspondence. The SPS Document Management Solution selected to meet this high profile challenge has delivered results that go well beyond the original goals.**

### The Challenge

The bank had been operating a microfilm system for recording and storing customer and branch correspondence. Although this had been the industry standard and the recommended technology for long term archiving, the desire to enhance the speed of response to customers and the need to meet new compliance requirements from the industry regulators, meant that it was time to look for a new solution.

Under the previous system, correspondence from customers and branches went to one of the bank's four processing centres, where it was registered on the bank's system, processed and then delivered to the bank's Salford facility for filming. Once filmed, the location of the film was saved on the banking system and a copy sent to a second location as a back-up. Hard copies were archived.



## 5 sec

from 5 days to  
5 seconds Access  
is now immediate

Although the process for shipment, filming and archiving meant that there may be a two week gap before enquiries could be handled on new correspondence.

The **co-operative** bank

### About The Co-operative Bank

Headquartered in Manchester The Co-op Bank employees 7,500 people and has 300 branches serving customers across the UK. The Bank was established in 1872 and has achieved a number of firsts.

- First to offer free banking for accounts in credit in 1974
- First clearing bank to offer credit interest on accounts 1982
- First UK fully internet bank when Smile launched in 1999
- First and only UK bank with a customer led ethical policy 1992

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Requests for copies from existing microfilms could take 2-5 days to fulfil, as the film copy required retrieval by the Salford team. Once retrieved it had to be scanned and emailed, faxed or printed and delivered to the requestor. With a strong focus on customer satisfaction, the bank wanted to re-engineer the process and provide faster response times. They also wanted to secure continuity of operations. The existing microfilm operation was reliant on technology, which was both costly and increasingly difficult to maintain; this presented a potential risk of downtime, which the bank wanted to address to meet their own needs and regulatory requirements.

The Bank issued an RFP with a tight timescale in which to select a supplier and implement a suitable solution. After reviewing the responses, SPS was awarded the contract two months later.

### The Solution

The solution proposed by SPS had three main components; a project to convert the microfilm archive, a day forward scanning operation and a web portal based around SPS' Document Management software to provide instant access to all correspondence.

### The Archive

A scanning operation, was set up at the SPS, ISO Certified Document Processing Centre, at Royal Wootton Bassett and work began immediately after the completion of due diligence at the end of July 2014. The 43 million image archive had been scanned, cross-referenced to existing account information and loaded into the Document Management Software by September that year.



**43M**

images have been scanned, cross-referenced and archived

### Day Forward Scanning

The front end of the process remains the same for the day forward activity but correspondence is now delivered to SPS' Document Processing Centre in Salford Quays, Manchester for scanning using Kofax software. All the correspondence is indexed by account number, sort code, PAN number and document type, and then uploaded to the portal within 48 hours, reducing the previous timescale by an average of ten days.

Hard copies of correspondence are now stored for just 28 days prior to secure destruction by SPS. Based on current activity, day forward volumes are expected to run at one million images a year with the flexibility to adapt if that number changes upwards or downwards.

### The Portal

During the archive scanning project, SPS developers built bespoke additions to the document management software to meet the bank's specific requirements around security, access controls and indexing. All images have a unique identifier, are linked to the bank's own systems and hosted in a secure, segregated environment.



**secure**

access from any location or device

The use of cloud technology eliminated the need for changes to users' desktops and SPS provides all the system administration and support.

The new web portal can be accessed by authorised staff from any location or device, and stored images can be found in an average of 5 seconds, using any of the indexing criteria. This means that most customer and branch enquiries can now be completed live on the call, dramatically improving

the customer experience and making call centre staff more productive. The portal is extremely easy to use but a train the trainer approach was used to ensure the teams got any support they needed during the roll out.

### Continuity of Service

This requirement encompassed both day-to-day and long term security, plus disaster recovery to ensure business continuity. The SPS solution provides guaranteed access to the portal during the bank's specified hours, 8.00am to 8.00pm. During the first 3 months of the service, the bank's existing process remained staffed and operational to minimise risk, but the implementation was trouble free and this has now been closed.

Total resilience is assured with software and scanning equipment mirrored at other SPS ISO certified locations, which can be invoked within 2 hours of an incident.

### The Benefits

The bank was looking for a solution that would improve access to correspondence, so that it could provide faster responses and enhanced customer service. It also wanted a solution that provided business continuity, met the new regulatory requirements and could be implemented within a tight deadline. By improving response times and ensuring business continuity within the specified deadline the SPS scanning and hosted archive solution has ensured that the Co-operative Bank is compliant with FCA and PRA regulations.

Times to access existing correspondence have been reduced from five days to five seconds and new images are available within two days, rather than two weeks, making a massive difference to the service accounts holders receive and to the bank's front line teams. The new portal is now being used by over 700 staff and the feedback has been extremely positive. The built in disaster recovery has eliminated the risk of service downtime and the solution has also delivered cost savings by taking out equipment leases property costs and resource charges.