

Delivering Seamless Service

**An Interview with Howard Boville,
Head of Global Banking, Trading Systems and Radianz, BT Global Banking & Financial Markets**

EDITORS' NOTE Howard Boville has worked in BT's financial services business for more than 10 years. He is a member of the BT Global Banking & Financial Markets leadership team and sits on a number of industry panels. Before joining BT, he held senior sales and marketing roles at a number of ICT companies. He earned his M.B.A. at the University of Leeds.



COMPANY BRIEF BT Global Banking & Financial Markets is a unit of BT Global Services (www.globalservices.bt.com) designed specifically to serve institutions across all financial services markets. Responding to the industry pressures of cost reduction, compliance, and global competition, its vision is to help customers improve client management and grow business cost-efficiently and effectively through the application of networked IT services. With some 2,000 business, technology, service, and support professionals around the world dedicated purely to financial services clients, BT Global Banking & Financial Markets processes more than 20 million credit and debit card transactions over its network per day, connects a global community of 14,000 sites of financial services firms, serves more than 60,000 traders in more than 50 countries across 800 customer sites, and supports \$38 billion of transactions settled every day.

Given your focus on the financial services market, how severely were you impacted by the economic crisis, and is the market coming back today?

During the past 24-month period, there has been a significant transformation within the ecosystem of financial services, which includes the investment banking community, retail banks, insurance, and payments. Like many of BT's multinational clients across other sectors, we've seen banking and financial services firms shifting from a CapEx to an OpEx model for their communications needs. Rather than tying up capital in communications infrastructure, they are looking to outsource more of their non-core functions, like their networked information technology needs, to partners like BT. And cloud computing, which supports an OpEx versus CapEx model, is also gaining traction. Of course, this trend plays to BT's core strengths of providing networked IT services, backed by our

25 years' experience to the financial services sector.

In terms of the overall market, we are seeing it bounce back. Areas that took the biggest hit at the start of the downturn are showing uplift.

In terms of the global landscape, are there stronger opportunities in the U.S. or in emerging markets?

Both. The emerging markets offer very good growth potential, but present an additional level of complexity. If you're looking at 16 emerging markets, for example, you're dealing with 16 different currencies, 16 different sets of regulations, and 16 different languages. The U.S. is, of course, a key market for us, with so many multinational corporations headquartered here or having major operations here.

Bottom line, our growth potential is based on our ability to help customers achieve their growth objectives as well as to secure new customers that can benefit from our robust portfolio of products and services specifically designed for the financial services marketplace. If we can help our customers grow regardless of which market they are in, we will succeed.

As a global organization, what are the key differences between doing business in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world?

While regulatory and operating environments vary from country to country, and business cultures also differ, for the most part, businesses want and need the same things from us: fast, reliable, resilient, and secure connectivity and solutions with an eye towards cost efficiency and optimized performance. They want advanced technologies and applications that help them keep a competitive edge. And they want us to help them provide superior service to their customers.

How broad is the range of financial institutions you serve?

Our customers range from small hedge funds to the world's largest banks, brokers, exchanges, investment managers, and data vendors. We interlink the world's largest secure financial services community. Tens of thousands of financial traders around the world depend on BT's voice and data communications solutions every second of the 24/7 trading day. Billions of financial transactions are completed securely

and successfully every day due to the services that BT provides to this sector internationally.

You're now a stand-alone unit within BT Global Services. How close is the coordination among BT's Global Service segments?

From a service perspective in Global Banking & Financial Markets, our leadership team is focused on global collaboration, so we have Tokyo working with Frankfurt working with London working with New York, and we put a lot of effort into making sure folks are talking to each other. Delivering seamless service on a global basis is a strong differentiator that BT has relative to the competition.

The benefit of an industry-specific vertical focus is that you can create and share in-depth knowledge both within your own sector and across to others. For example, BT has some really great, talented people working in the pharmaceutical space, and like the banking and financial services sector, that is a heavily regulated environment. There are some knowledge-based tools that those folks use that we can benefit from and we can also share externally with our financial services clients so they can benefit as well. And in terms of innovation, working with colleagues in a different industry area will spark different points of inspiration that you would never consider, so we all benefit from that – especially our customers.

Is it tough to keep up with all the technology when what is new today is often obsolete tomorrow?

Technology does evolve, but if you step back and look at the broader picture and the waves of progress and innovation, you see a pattern emerge. For example, the mainframe computer fundamentally helped streamline business processes and reduce the number of hands required to do things. You then got computing power down to the desktop, and that vastly improved productivity at the individual level. The current wave we're going through is cloud computing, which helps businesses reduce investment and risk while increasing flexibility and functionality. With cloud computing, companies don't own the infrastructure involved. It's the electricity model – you don't need to own a power grid to use electricity, just as you don't need to own a communications network to use the services it provides. Let the experts like BT manage the network and applications so you can focus on what your business does best. And that is when technology becomes the most useful – when it no longer seems to be a difficult thing. ●