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In today's world the client interface buy or build decision can be a minefield for the unwary. Where to begin? Who are providers? What must one consider? Who can one approach for advice?

One option is to partner with a bank which already possesses an extensive offering and experience in providing client interfaces to its customers. As a part of its "UBS. The Bank for Banks." offering, UBS presents this alternative in the marketplace.

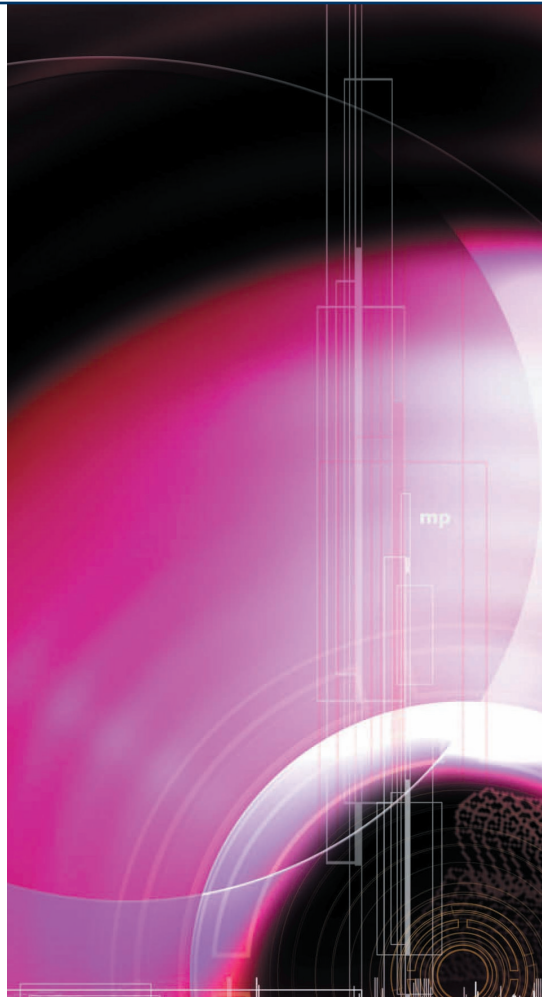
No longer should bank providers be viewed as competitors of other banks in all areas. Sometimes there is a distinct advantage in partnering up with and utilising the strengths of your (potentially already existing) business partner. In this respect, several banks have chosen UBS (and in particular its Global KeyLink Services team) as their partner of choice. Together, they are working on complex projects with the goal of developing an optimal solution to fit these partners' business needs. Projects of this nature include offering CLS third party services or white labelling of other products to the clients of UBS's partners - not just as a service offering but also as integrated client interface solutions.

Clearly, the choice of the right partner for such projects, is critical to the success of the partnership. Based on our clients' feedback, the following five criteria represent the different strengths which they seek, and which thus drive their partner-selection:

- Direct support of clients' core business;
- Access to proven technology, skills and products;
- Provision of consultative expertise to reduce the time-to-market of the service delivered;
- Operational scalability and long term reliability of service;
- Controlled implementation to reduce potential risks.

Today, in most cases, the actual product itself is considered the minimum requirement of service provision. Very often products no longer allow for significant and long-term differentiation among service providers. There has been a

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Partnering with the right partner

high degree of commoditisation, and this extends beyond the realm of CLS third party services. Significant focus should be placed on the relevant expertise and advisory as well as support that come together with the actual products. To this extent, the choice of a partner should favour the following factors:

Substantial expertise and cross-product knowledge

Acting as a consultant, your partner should listen to your requirements and understand your business drivers as well as your challenges. Additionally they should possess substantial cross-product expertise which in turn serves your needs and supports your underlying business goals.

As necessary, your partner will involve relevant experts of its various business areas, should your requirements include a solution beyond the client interface. In such cases, however, your single point of contact for your solution delivery remains the same.

Understanding of your business processes

Beyond the purely CLS-related services, your partner should possess additional experience in advisory and service delivery. This amounts to a wealth of know-how in business processes and thus ensures that the products and solutions delivered will optimally match your business processes and long-term goals.

Education of employees and users concerned

The integration of new services into an operational environment, and their acceptance by employees should be supported by your partner through extensive documentation. Additionally, comprehensive and tailored training classes should be given to satisfy specific education requirements. Finally, your partner should provide access to a global help line where queries and requests are dealt with swiftly.

In search of the elements outlined above, companies in the financial industry should be able to identify a partner with the appropriate mix of strengths which will help them realise their own business potential, and thus rest assured that they are partnering with the right partner. ■

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