

# Banca Popolare boosts speed and reliability of business intelligence

HP Integrity servers and Microsoft® SQL Server 2005 help leading Italian bank accelerate decision-making, reduce costs



**Banca  
Popolare di Vicenza**

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Stefano Buccino, U.O. ICT Manager, Business Organization Department,  
Banca Popolare di Vicenza

HP customer case  
study: Banca  
Popolare di Vicenza

Industry: financial  
services

## Objective

Banca Popolare di Vicenza faced growing demand for business intelligence (BI) in the face of ongoing mergers and acquisitions, requiring a BI infrastructure with greater performance, scalability, and availability.

## Approach

Banca Popolare extended its existing HP infrastructure with additional HP Integrity servers. The bank also upgraded from Microsoft Windows® Server 2003 to Windows Server 2008, and from Microsoft SQL Server 2000 to SQL Server 2005.

## IT improvements

- Increased application performance with lower energy demand
- Improved query response times
- Improved utilization of server resources
- Reduced management time and cost
- Enabled cost-effective server scalability

## Business outcomes

- Accelerated decision-making with more timely and detailed intelligence
- Enabled cost-effective business expansion
- Extended breadth and depth of business intelligence to thousands of business users enterprise-wide
- Reduced total cost of ownership
- Improved customer satisfaction through quick and accurate responsiveness to customer inquiries



## Driving better decision-making

Established in 1866, Banca Popolare de Vicenza has grown over the past century and a half to become the dominant bank in Vicenza, and the leading mutual bank of the Veneto in northern Italy. Like most organizations in the financial services industry today, Banca Popolare must manage huge volumes of complex, sensitive, and time-critical data while meeting the stringent demands of customers, shareholders, and investors. To do so, the company developed a custom business intelligence (BI) solution to leverage its growing data more effectively and enable better-informed decision-making. Powering this BI solution is an adaptive infrastructure built on HP Integrity servers and the Microsoft Windows operating environment.

“We used the combination of Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition, SQL Server 2000, and HP servers powered by the Intel® Itanium® processor to create a highly effective business intelligence system.”

Moreno Vendramin, Developer,  
Servizi Bancari

The bank's IT subsidiary, Servizi Bancari, runs the HP and Microsoft infrastructure and ensures that IT services continually adapt to meet the changing needs of Banca Popolare's growing network of branches and banking professionals. For several years, the BI infrastructure has consisted of HP Integrity rx5670 Servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and Microsoft SQL Server 2000, both part of Microsoft Windows Server System integrated server software.

This solution brought dramatic performance advantages to Banca Popolare compared to its previous IBM mainframe infrastructure—reducing query response times from 20 minutes to just two seconds and enabling more sophisticated data analysis.

Moreno Vendramin, developer, Servizi Bancari, says: “We used the combination of Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition, SQL Server 2000, and HP servers powered by the Intel® Itanium® processor to create a highly effective business intelligence system. The need for a flexible system that could handle data quickly and reliably was key to choosing the combined solution. We believe that it guarantees the enterprise level security and scalability needed for Banca Popolare's mission-critical data.”

As demand for business intelligence continued to grow, and as the bank engaged in additional mergers and acquisitions, the need for greater performance, scalability, and availability from its infrastructure became clear.

#### Taking business intelligence to the next level

Today, business intelligence is an integral part of Banca Popolare's daily operations, and with nearly 5,000 business users across multiple branches and subsidiaries, demand for customized reports has increased steadily.

Since 2003, the types of reports made available to bank professionals have grown to more than 4,000 with the number of report requests increasing steadily over the past few years. For example, in 2006, there were 1,750,000 accesses to reports; in 2007 over 1,900,000 accesses; and in just the first six months of 2008, over 1,350,000 accesses.

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*“This surge in report requests is a clear indication of how vital our business intelligence system is to the operation of the bank. It is also critical that our bank professionals get answers to their queries quickly to be more responsive to customer needs and decisive when addressing both business challenges and opportunities. For this, we rely on the most advanced technology available to drive our business intelligence.”*

Stefano Buccino, Banca Popolare's U.O. ICT Manager for the Business Organization Department

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Recognizing the need to support a more pervasive and mission-critical business intelligence environment, Banca Popolare called upon its IT organization at Servizi Bancari to take the BI infrastructure to the next level. The solution: upgrade to Microsoft Windows Server 2008 and SQL Server 2005 with a powerful new computing platform built on mission-critical HP Integrity rx3600 Servers.

The Integrity rx3600 is a next-generation Integrity server featuring a new architecture that delivers significantly expanded computing capabilities. Its virtualization and scalability features make it an ideal choice for workload consolidation in Windows environments, with enterprise-class availability that delivers predictable performance to meet Banca Popolare's critical needs for responsive business intelligence.

HP Services worked with Servizi Bancari to migrate the bank's SQL Server 2000 database to the new SQL Server 2005 platform and optimized the Integrity servers to deliver maximum performance. With their breadth of expertise, HP Services consultants enabled Servizi Bancari to migrate faster and with confidence that the solution is deployed for maximum sustainability. In addition, HP Services trained the IT staff on the new solution, allowing for greater self-support long term.

With the unique flexible capacity of Integrity servers, Servizi Bancari was able to assure the bank of having reliable high performance even as the BI workload continued to increase, while maintaining an energy-efficient, easy-to-manage footprint in its data center.

"The combination of SQL Server 2005 running on the Integrity rx3600 has improved query response times even further," reports Servizi Bancari's Vendramin. "In fact, with the new Integrity rx3600, we have not only increased performance, we have also reduced our power and cooling demands. It's a very powerful, yet energy-efficient system. And the scalability of the Integrity architecture will support Banca Popolare's ongoing growth expectations, allowing us to seamlessly and cost-effectively increase capacity as the bank engages in additional acquisitions."

### **Maximizing the value of information enterprise-wide**

By enhancing its business intelligence solution with a new HP Integrity and Microsoft SQL Server infrastructure, Banca Popolare now benefits from even more advanced analytical capabilities, maintaining the high performance to produce results in seconds. For example, the status of current accounts, loans, and insurance can be reviewed and their values correlated instantly with data relating to budget forecasts. This capability allows bank professionals to uncover valuable insights and obtain answers to important questions in virtually real time—driving better decision-making, higher customer satisfaction, and improved business outcomes.

"Our staff is very happy with the new solution," says Banca Popolare's Buccino. "HP Integrity servers and Microsoft SQL Server 2005 put a treasure trove of data at our fingertips. And because of the multi-dimensional structure of the database, we're able to take maximum advantage of the increased performance and scalability that Integrity servers offer. This is increasing our utilization, reducing costs, and providing greater room for us to grow."

Vendramin explains: "The multi-dimensional structure of SQL Server 2005 with Analysis Services guarantees a more integrated, detailed analytical tool, with greater flexibility, faster response times, and more compact archiving. Millions of records are loaded each year, and comparisons made on an annual basis require two years of data to be held online. The Integrity server with SQL Server 2005 enables us to complete these comparisons much faster now, which allows bank executives to identify and act on trends more quickly and with greater assurance."

## Customer solution at a glance

### Primary applications

- In-house developed business intelligence application

### Primary hardware

- Five HP Integrity rx3600 Servers with Intel Itanium processors
- HP Integrity rx5670 Server with Intel Itanium processors

### Primary software

- Microsoft Windows Server 2008
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Analysis Services

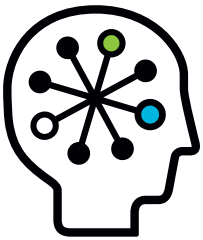
### Services from HP

- HP migration and optimization services
- HP Mission Critical Support

The HP and Microsoft solution also supports another business objective to expand usage of business intelligence across the bank, as well as produce rapid results even when conducting more complex data mining and analysis. With the increased performance and scalability of Integrity servers and SQL Server 2005, Banca Popolare has a powerful infrastructure meeting that objective.

“We were able to expand the end-user category to include directors of subsidiaries and product managers, giving another 500 users access to this powerful information resource,” reports Buccino. “We can also deliver highly focused intelligence to all our users, extracted for subsidiaries, zones, or business sectors. For example, if a user wants to know how many loans are open with the Banca Popolare di Vicenza, and the growth percentage, a report can be generated instantly, detailing this information.”

The bottom line is, Banca Popolare has increased the value of its information assets significantly while reducing infrastructure costs. “The licensing structure of SQL Server 2005 is much more favorable compared to our previous solution,” notes Buccino. “In addition, the Integrity platform is less costly to support. This solution allows us to exploit our information more effectively to capitalize on business opportunities and invest more in our core operations rather than upkeep and maintenance of information technology.”



## Technology for better business outcomes

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