

Cathay Bank

Investing in Logicalis' data center experience and unified communications skills pays big dividends for Cathay Bank at its new corporate headquarters.

Founded in 1962 to provide financial services to a fast growing Chinese-American community in the greater Los Angeles area, Cathay Bank expanded rapidly beyond its original market and is now part of a publicly traded financial institution with stockholder equity of approximately \$1.30 billion and total assets of more than \$10 billion. Its service network now includes offices in California and Washington as well as in Illinois, Texas, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. Overseas, it has a presence in three important commercial centers in the Asia-Pacific Rim: Taipei, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

The construction of Cathay Bank's new corporate headquarters was part of a strategy to provide offices for its senior executives and consolidate several offices in the LA area that housed various corporate business departments. Anticipating that his IT department would need to stay focused on supporting routine banking operations, Cathay CIO Bob Romero turned to Logicalis to design, manage and execute the build-out of the data center, the cabling infrastructure and the converged IP voice and data network, and to manage the move of the technical equipment for more than 300 office staff. The bank also wanted to implement a state-of-the-art IP video solution for real-time collaboration, conferencing, training, broadcasting, and human resources.

Design and Implementation

"Logicalis worked on the design and implementation for all those projects," says Romero. "Anything that dealt with the infrastructure—the network, the wireless, the data center, as well as the movement of everybody, and the video conferencing infrastructure."

Cathay Bank has been a Logicalis client for many years. Logicalis account executive Ken Ohlson, in fact, has been a trusted advisor to the bank for more than a decade. Logicalis designed and implemented a converged IP voice and data network for the bank in 2006, and Logicalis Managed Services has served as the network operating center for all Cathay's locations for more than four years. Other Logicalis services provided over the years include supplemental staffing, training, and business continuity.

"A lot of credit goes to Bob Romero," says Ohlson. "He recognized the challenges the bank faced as it continued its impressive growth. He developed a solid strategy for how his IT organization could use technology to address those challenges, and leveraged Logicalis' core competencies to enhance his team's effectiveness."

Logicalis assembled a team with a broad range of skills for the world headquarters project. The first phase was the design of the data center. Logicalis lead network engineer Jay Kim architected the IP infrastructure, and data center expert Bob Mobach and his team started early to design and oversee the wiring of the data center and the entire building from the ground up during construction.

Closer to the occupancy date, the Logicalis team ramped up operations to build the wired and wireless networks, the IP phone system and the IP video solution. All these were completed prior to employee move-in to ensure a seamless transition.

By the time the building and the data center were ready to occupy, Logicalis Project Manager Greg Mest had planned for every detail—and every contingency—for the arrival of the banking staff, all their computers and printers, and other office equipment. The actual move was accomplished over five weekends.

The relocation had the potential to become a very unsettling event for bank employees all the way from the executive suite to the clerical staff. "There were lots of changes for people," Romero notes. "They were in a new building, in new work areas where the layout was different. We didn't want a bunch of techs going in there saying, 'Here's what you get,' and then leaving." But that's not how Logicalis does business.

Customer Service Skills

"The Logicalis team really excelled during the implementation," Romero says. "They worked extremely well with our users and made it an easier transition for everyone. We had made many changes in how we structured printers and other equipment, and the Logicalis technicians did a really good job working with all our users. They have great technical abilities, and they also have great customer service skills. They answered everyone's questions completely, and carefully explained why we were doing certain things a new way. Having Logicalis here took a lot off of my plate."

Somewhat surprisingly, given the complexities of moving people and technology, there were no major surprises, Romero says.

"Having Logicalis involved in the initial design of the data center and the cabling was a big help. They knew our current environment. That and good up-front planning eliminated a lot of problems for us during implementation and afterwards."

As they settled in to their new surroundings, the bank staff was able to take advantage of a number of new technologies that enhanced their productivity. One of the most dramatic, Romero says, is the new IP video system. Bank executives can now communicate face-to-face across the U.S. and as far away as Hong Kong, saving themselves significant time and money. The bank also saves dramatically by using Cisco MeetingPlace as an enterprise-wide workspace for training where employees can share materials and presentations interactively.

While all this activity was going on in the background, Romero and his IT team were able to stay focused on supporting the continued growth of Cathay Bank as it expands services around the world. "Logicalis worked as an extension of our team," Romero says. "We couldn't have done this without them."

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Bob Romero, CIO, Cathay Bank