



## CASE STUDY

# How SAMBAT Finance Doubled Loan Volume and Cut Processing Time by 75%

## Background

SAMBAT Finance has been a trusted name in Cambodia for nearly ten years, providing essential micro-loans to factory workers and small business owners.

At one point, however, they found themselves caught in a frustrating paradox: the bigger their business grew, the less efficient the processes became.

An inefficient paper-based system outweighed their legacy of reliability. The company was drowning in paperwork with the increasing volume of loan applications. They needed to go online and automate the entire workflow.

## Challenge: Drowning in paperwork and overwhelmed by scale

Each loan application involved slow and painful processing with handwritten forms, repeated typing, and manual checking.

As Harvey Poh, SAMBAT Finance's Managing Director, explained:

*"If you were looking at a micro-loan of 200-300 dollars, the entire process could take half a day for one application. We had to print and circulate copies from one person to another. The amount of time spent just processing a single loan application was staggering. And we were processing a couple of hundred applications a day."*

## SAMBAT Finance

|                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| Location:      | Cambodia   |
| Founded:       | 2015       |
| Employees:     | 80         |
| Lending model: | Microloans |
| Product:       | Enterprise |

*"I am proud to say that because of TurnKey Lender, we are the first lender approved by the National Bank of Cambodia to operate a fully digital online lending platform."*

— Harvey Poh, Managing Director

Here's what SAMBAT Finance was dealing with:

1

#### Mountains of paper

Applications had to be handwritten, and errors meant starting over from scratch.

2

#### Multiple systems

Processing loans required opening different systems for credit checks, sending printouts to reviewers, and then to decision makers, making the workflow cumbersome and slow.

3

#### Redundant data entry

Approved loans required manual data entry into banking systems, which resulted in repetitive data entry and increased chances of mistakes.

By 2018, SAMBAT Finance had swelled to over 150 employees. But even with this army of workers they barely kept pace with the workload demand. Harvey knew something had to change.

Hiring more staff was not a sustainable solution.

*"We realized that hiring people was no longer feasible. We can't just keep hiring; when people leave, we get in trouble. We really needed to look for a solution to digitalize our entire work process,"* Harvey stressed the urgency of the matter. *"We needed to think differently."*

## Solution: Finding the right tech partner, embracing digital transformation

Harvey explored local and international IT vendors to seek a reliable long-term solution. However, the local vendors lacked the necessary expertise, while many international options offered generic solutions that didn't meet SAMBAT Finance's unique needs.

They were looking for a simple, clean, and easy-to-use interface for their customers and employees.

That's when Harvey stumbled upon TurnKey Lender. Intrigued by their website, he made a cold call to the company's Singapore office. The experience was positive from the start. *"I spoke to the sales guy at TurnKey Lender; there was no hard selling... everything was very transparent and clearly communicated,"* he shares.

## Results

- From half a day of processing time to less than 1 hour
- Doubled loan book
- Complete visibility into the loan lifecycle
- Fewer errors & Improved decision accuracy
- First lender approved by Cambodia's national bank to run a fully digital online lending platform

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*"There are many developers and vendors out there, but you can trust TurnKey Lender to deliver the right solution for you. Before you experience costly failures or waste your time with other developers I'd recommend: Give them a call!"*

— Harvey Poh, Managing Director

Harvey was particularly impressed by the demo: *“The demo actually helped me a lot. I got to know exactly what we want and where we want to end up at the end of the day.”* When SAMBAT Finance teamed up with TurnKey Lender, the team worked hands-on on the solution setup.

TurnKey Lender communicated extensively, held regular online meetings, and even flew their team to Cambodia for two weeks to understand precisely what the customer needed.

Harvey says explicitly: *“We are delighted with the support. The response time is good, and these guys are easily accessible to us. We have a weekly call scheduled without fail, which has become routine for us every Tuesday.”*

This steady support and open communication helped SAMBAT Finance handle challenges promptly and efficiently, keeping the transition smooth.

## Results: From half a day of processing time to less than 1 hour

The first significant change was automating the entire loan origination system (LOS) to make it user-friendly and efficient.

The system was customized to fit SAMBAT Finance’s local needs, including dual language support, Google Maps integration for addresses, and automated document generation.

The result?

The processing time of one loan application was reduced from half a day to less than 1 hour, significantly increasing customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

**Other benefits followed:**

**1**

### **Error reduction and enhanced accuracy**

Automating data entry and verification significantly reduced errors improving loan decisions’ accuracy.

**2**

### **Operational transparency**

SAMBAT Finance gained complete visibility into the loan lifecycle, enabling real-time tracking and data-driven insights for continuous optimization. *“We have what we call a full visibility of the entire loan origination process,”* Harvey explains.

“

*“I spoke to the sales guy at TurnKey Lender; there was no hard selling... everything was very transparent and clearly communicated.”*

— Harvey Poh, Managing Director

3

**Significant cost savings**

By streamlining operations and automating tasks, SAMBAT Finance reduced its headcount by half while doubling its loan portfolio. *"We've cut down our headcount by almost 50%, but our loan book has more than doubled,"* Harvey states.

4

**Empowered workforce and more relaxed environment**

As manual burdens were lifted, employees experienced reduced stress and increased job satisfaction, fostering a more positive and productive work environment.

5

**First licensed digital lender in Cambodia**

SAMBAT Finance also became the first lender approved by Cambodia's National Bank to run a fully digital online lending platform. Harvey says: *"I am proud to say that because of TurnKey Lender, we are the first lender approved by the National Bank of Cambodia to operate a fully digital online lending platform."*

Working with Turnkey Lender SAMBAT Finance streamlined their loan process, making it faster, more accurate, and more accessible for employees. This not only saved money but also enabled them to assist more people in their community.

As Cambodia's financial sector continues to evolve SAMBAT Finance is poised to lead the way with TurnKey Lender as their trusted ally in the digital lending revolution.

For other financial institutions considering a similar digital transformation, Harvey has some advice: *"I always recommend people check out TurnKey Lender's website and give them a call. They offer the right solution and are professional to work with."*

## Next steps

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Tell us about your micro-loans business. We would be happy to demo our system, talk about your unique requirements, and discuss a solution precisely tailored to your business.

**Reach out today!**

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