

A background image showing a city street with a train on the right side, viewed from a low angle looking down the street towards a bright sun in the distance, creating a hazy, golden atmosphere.

Architectural leadership for a visionary digital transformation programme

CASE STUDY

Our Client, a global Tier 1 bank, was undertaking significant digital transformation across their Commercial Banking line of business. A key initiative was a programme of work to replace the online and mobile banking applications, as well as the underlying services and capabilities that supported Commercial Banking customers in their core UK and Hong Kong markets.

The bank was embarking on a multi-million-dollar programme which would span several years, comprising more than a dozen projects being delivered in parallel by globally distributed engineering teams. The scope was both wide and complex, with a strong focus on service and channel application modernisation, in order to deliver solutions that utilised the new cloud-based platforms being adopted across the enterprise.

Failure to establish strong architectural leadership on a programme of this size would have dramatically increased the risk of not achieving the desired target state, resulting in solutions that would not have been fit for purpose.

Why Icon Solutions?

Our Client needed an experienced partner to provide the high-calibre architectural leadership required to deliver such a significant programme of work. That partner also needed a track record of successfully defining strategic architecture vision and managing the transition towards the target state. That partner would also assume overall responsibility for the evolution of product architecture across multiple releases, and provide timely architectural governance to assess solution options, approve decisions and sanction exceptions.

Icon was invited to attend the initial IT design and planning workshops which enabled us to demonstrate our core values and skills by taking ownership of, and making significant contributions to, open and honest discussions. This, along with Icon's architectural and delivery experience, gave our Client a high degree of confidence that we were the right partner to lead the programme.

Our Approach

Icon took responsibility for the architecture designs to be delivered across a dozen projects, making sure all were aligned with the Bank's standards and strategic enterprise architecture vision throughout.

- We defined a set of architecture principles that would be used to guide decision-making, alongside a detailed reference architecture and common design patterns
- We then identified the key areas of architectural significance and the decisions that needed to be made. This required careful and pragmatic negotiation in order to balance competing priorities in the different markets
- Icon overcame these challenges, applying the key skills of good architecture leadership: listening and understanding the problems from different viewpoints; articulating the wider needs of the bank with a focus on common objectives; negotiating compromises and communicating the overall architecture vision

When the initial decisions had been agreed and communicated at a global level, our focus turned to the tasks required to instantiate a successful architecture function:

- Defining the structure of the architecture team and the architecture governance process
- Defining and implementing the communications strategy for sharing architectural decisions to the wider delivery teams and stakeholders outside the programme
- The creation of a knowledge base for publishing all design decisions, artefacts and associated information

The Outcome

Working with Icon Solutions, the Bank established a solid architecture capability which underpinned and guided the delivery of the key workstreams within the programme. The principles and practices provided the level of due diligence and governance that is essential when delivering transformational changes in a highly complex environment. This delivered immediate benefit to the project teams, providing a well-defined structure in which to operate and make decisions, using the published reference architectures and patterns to rapidly start delivering value for the Bank. Furthermore, the solution has continued to be extended and improved, following the process and patterns Icon defined and implemented, after our involvement with the programme was complete.

- Our clear communications strategy helped to drive engagement and interaction with the Bank's other governing bodies and key stakeholders, resulting in senior executive buy-in and support for the initiatives
- The strong relationships developed with Chief Architects and Technical Leads across the Bank ensured alignment of key architectural decisions, and (crucially) simplified the process for approving and managing design deviations and exceptions
- A well-communicated architecture vision boosted the morale of the delivery teams across the globe, giving them confidence that they could tackle the challenges in front of them and meet the expectations of the project sponsors

“It was an immense pleasure to work with you over the last 3-4 years. I’m impressed with your dedication, taking ownership of issues, positive attitude, but most of all, being someone that can be trusted to be honest and pragmatic.”

**UK Director - Digital Business Banking
Global Tier 1 Bank**



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DIFFERENTIATE YOUR ORGANISATION**

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