



With thousands of offices in more than 80 countries, the International Private Banking (IPB) division of one of the world's leading financial services companies faced increasing customer dissatisfaction as a result of inefficiencies in its international wire transfer operations. The group turned to Six Sigma Qualtec for help increasing customer satisfaction and retaining these high net worth clients.

First-Class Service Required

Serving a variety of corporate customers and high net worth individuals, successful private banking requires flawless customer service and prompt execution of customer transactions. Demanding and highly valuable private banking customers expect first-class treatment – and will leave if they do not receive it.

Analysis and Strategy

Customer feedback indicated broad dissatisfaction with the bank's wire transfer operations. Errors in wire transfers included delays in transferring funds, transmission of funds to the wrong accounts, and transmission of incorrect amounts. Frequent callbacks to customers to confirm orders and correct errors created additional inconvenience. Clients also complained about the bank's 3 p.m. cut-off time for sending wires, while competitors offered cut-off times of up to two hours later. These inefficiencies contributed significantly to the bank's high annual wire processing costs, some of which the bank, unlike its competitors, passed along to clients.

To help address the challenges in its IPB operations, the bank turned to Six Sigma Qualtec (SSQI). Working with the bank's IPB personnel, Six Sigma Qualtec professionals analyzed the bank's wire transfer processes using powerful Six Sigma tools. The team uncovered inconsistencies in initiating wire transfers that resulted in incorrect processing instructions, incomplete information, and even missing signatures. A majority of wires were subjected to double processing, including laborious retyping from faxes and verification by two separate offices. One in four wires contained an error.

Streamlining Processes

Detailed analysis enabled the team to implement a series of quick hits – extending the cut-off time for wires to the industry standard of 4 p.m. to stop the erosion of customer loyalty. A long-term plan was developed to address root causes of problems and prevent their recurrence. Implementation included standardized forms and procedures for both clients and bank personnel to eliminate duplicated work and reduce callbacks.

Business Improvements

In addition to increasing customer satisfaction and helping the bank retain valued clients, the improvements initiated by Six Sigma Qualtec should save the bank nearly \$1 million annually. As a result, the project will pay for itself in only 7 months.

Other significant improvements include:

- Wire transfer processing time reduced 46%
- Delayed wire transfers eliminated
- Per payment order costs reduced more than 50%
- Client transaction fees reduced
- Single-call problem resolution center established

The IPB division of the bank is now well positioned for the long term to undertake such innovations as web-enabled initiation of transfers by customers and further automation of wire transfer processes, resulting in even higher levels of customer satisfaction and further streamlining of operations.