

March 2010

(Translated by Crédit Agricole CIB)

“At Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, IT should be considered a competitive advantage”



***Pierre Dulon**, Polytechnique (1985) and Télécom ParisTech, went from telecommunications outsourcing to retail banking IT and finally to corporate and investment banking IT. Head of the Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank information systems since February 2009, he explains his role as a service provider on behalf of internal clients and at the recruitment level to support the information systems' development needed for the Bank's strategic growth.*

How do you view your role?

IT at Crédit Agricole CIB is 900 employees and some 1,500 service providers spread across 32 countries and involved in project management, development and operations. IT is a corporate and investment bank's principal production tool and should be considered as a potential competitive advantage. As an information systems manager, I view my role as that of a service provider on behalf of our internal clients, i.e. our different business lines and support functions. We attempt to provide them with services adapted to their various functions – front offices, back offices, finance, risk management, etc. Since IT is essential to the success of their activities, this client-supplier relationship is necessarily very close and is often stimulating.

What are the function's major challenges?

The major challenge is to stick to the actual needs and be able to propose a differentiated offer, which can range from “customised”, very urgent development work for market operators to projects costing several million euros to be carried out on an “industrial” basis. It is also necessary to ensure the overall consistency of the information system in order to be able to maintain it at the lowest possible cost. In my organisation, I have cross-divisional structures for architecture, urbanism and security whose work is to guarantee this consistency and the sharing of best practices. Having the best IT systems means finding the right compromise between agility and industrialisation.

What benefits do you derive from your education at Polytechnique and Télécom Paristech?

These two schools taught me rigor and have helped me to apprehend and analyse complex problems. At Télécom ParisTech, I also had a chance to do a one-year internship in London to learn about financial markets and perfect my English.

What career opportunities can you offer young graduates in IT? What types of profile are you looking for?

In 2010 we will be recruiting 130 new employees, including 100 in France and around 30 in Singapore, New York and London. For the project ownership function we are looking for business school graduates who have knowledge of banking business lines. For the IT project management, development and production functions, we are looking for engineers. Of the 100 new hires, we are aiming at around 20 recent graduates and 80 individuals with more senior profiles and banking or IT experience (software editors, integrators, etc.). We are also offering domestic and international internships which are natural points of entry into the company. The extent of the functional and technological subjects dealt with by the IT department is reflected in the variety of profiles we are seeking. Young recruits are immediately integrated into a team and are rapidly given complete project responsibility. They can subsequently choose between two major types of career focusing on an area of expertise or major project management. The Bank also provides gateways from IT to other corporate and investment banking functions as well as to other entities of the Crédit Agricole Group, one of the world's leading banks.

Other than IT and telecommunications skills, what others are required?

We seek to position ourselves at the top of the value chain as an integrator, a turnkey IT solutions provider. To achieve that end, you need to understand perfectly the needs of the end user, whether expressed or not, and then to translate them into practical solutions. In addition to technical skills, our staff must have the ability to discuss issues with our internal clients and manage our subcontractors, editors and service providers on site and offshore. They must be able to communicate and manage in an international environment.

You have recently launched a plan to transform Global IT...

Crédit Agricole CIB has changed its business model to focus on the development of less risky products. The IT department has launched two initiatives to support this strategy: a multiple-year plan to overhaul the information system that represents an investment of more than EUR 500 million over four years, and a plan to develop the IT entity and make it more efficient. Among the actions to be taken, we can mention a project to consolidate technical infrastructure in New York, London, Paris and Singapore and the implementation of "development" and "test factories" to increase our staff productivity. We have also generalised a "short-cycle" project process in order to be more responsive. In terms of developing skills, we have just put into place a partnership with Accenture for a "Project Academy" that will offer degree programs for our project managers. Lastly, the Lean Six Sigma approach will enable us to optimise our recurrent processes. In a word, our IT department is on the move.

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Marie-Christine Bourbon, 30, Head of Unified Communications Projects

I have been at Crédit Agricole CIB since 2008 and work on innovative technologies to improve the communications tools used by our internal clients. These include the telephone, videoconferencing and online document sharing and we are developing solutions to optimise communications between departments and between offshore entities and Paris.

Hugues Sommain, 32, Project leader, Data Quality, Counterparty Risk

I am a team leader in the IT Risk division. My desire to learn about financial markets and my penchant for travel led me to join Crédit Agricole CIB. At the end of 2003 I applied for a position in Hong Kong before returning to the Paris office. My staff and I work on capital markets transactions and monitor the Bank's exposure to client risks. To do this we receive information from the front and back offices and from accounting.



Fabien Legland, 27, Global IT project manager in New York

I joined Crédit Agricole CIB in 2008 when its GIT division was hiring in the United States. Like a company with an "Anglo-Saxon" corporate culture, Crédit Agricole CIB is ready to entrust you with responsibilities no matter how old you are as long as you can show you are capable of assuming them. This faith in your potential is extremely gratifying and motivating. I unhesitatingly recommend Crédit Agricole CIB to all those who want to be challenged.

Crédit Agricole CIB's IT department is hiring

On February 6, 2010, Calyon became Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank. With nearly 13,000 employees in more than 50 countries, Crédit Agricole CIB is one of Europe's top ten corporate and investment banks.

To support the challenges faced by Crédit Agricole CIB, the Global IT division is seeking to hire new staff with a wide variety of profiles: business line analysts (project ownership), project managers, developers, systems engineers, production engineers, architects, IT managers, etc.

With a university education (engineering or business school degree with a knowledge of the finance business), you have an excellent analytical sense and ability to understand business line needs. Your interpersonal skills and your dynamism are the assets that will help you meet the challenges of the information systems department, a strategic asset for a corporate and investment bank.

If you are interested, see our job offers at www.ca-cib.com