CASE STUDY

J Trust Royal Bank

A Cambodian bank used an Australian IT team to re-platform its system. How did that pay off?

Imagine being asked to step into the CIO role at one of Cambodia's biggest banks. The bank's major shareholder has decided to sell its stake and is exiting the market.

While the sale is negotiated, you've been tasked with reviewing IT by the prospective new owner. The bank's current team is restricted in what they can disclose until the deal is finalised. You're outside, looking in.

The scope of the task becomes clear. You'll have to rebuild the Bank's entire IT platform while flying blind – and have it ready to operate from Day 1.

Now imagine you have just 12 months to deliver the task, from scoping to go-live.

To make it even more challenging, you're working in the hectic and unpredictable environment of a developing nation. Some of the bank's sites are well off the beaten track. You'll just have to figure things out as you go.

This was the situation Glenn Miller found himself in. One of Cambodia's leading banks was in the process of transitioning to new ownership and re-branding as J Trust Royal Bank. Glenn was the incoming CIO, employed by J Trust Royal, with the daunting task of managing the IT migration.

As one the top four banks in Cambodia, with 15 sites and over 90,000 customers, the organisation had to shift all its data and systems onto an entirely new platform – and do so in less than half the time a project of this complexity would normally take.

Challenge accepted.

Glenn knew he'd need an agile and experienced project team to supply the high-level skills for the transition and avoid a data disaster. He turned to IT strategy and systems consultants, Rumble Asia. In turn, Rumble recommended that Glenn bring Platinum Technology on board to handle the core aspects of delivery.

"We'd worked with Platinum before so we knew they were a quality outfit," said Rumble MD John Scobie. "They had expertise in Microsoft Office 365 and the cloud. And they were the right size."

John explained that taking the traditional 'corporate' approach would imply a two-year timeline. Large IT providers might have the technical ability to deliver but would struggle with the need to move at a faster pace. Small vendors might be nimbler but could be overwhelmed by the scope of requirements. By contrast Platinum Technology had the capability to handle the scale of the project, but was agile enough to move rapidly.

The inherent complexity of the task – including shifting to a hybrid cloud platform, migrating terabytes of data, setting up treasury operations, and catering for a suite of financial products, legacy software and shared services – would require mastery of functional scoping while constantly adapting to a host of unforeseen challenges.

Through working with Platinum Technology on similar projects, John knew they would bring the right combination of IT smarts, flexibility and a responsive approach.

Glenn Miller agreed. "We needed a service provider that could move fast and iterate. This wasn't your everyday IT system set-up."

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> **GLENN MILLER**
> CIO – J Trust Royal Bank Cambodia
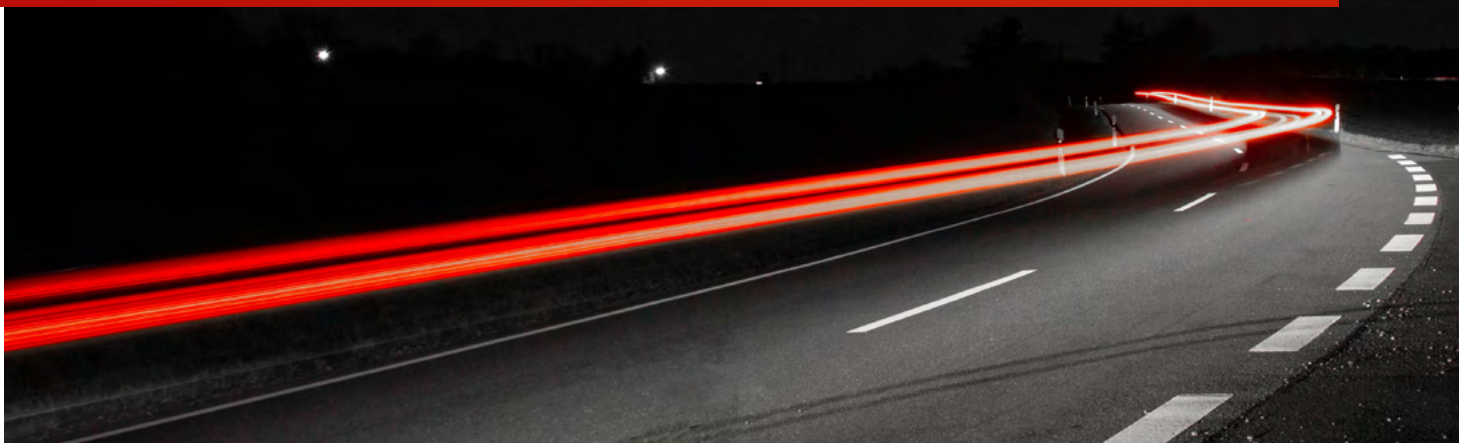
What made the task so challenging?

Because of sensitivity around data security, there was minimal access to the current system and limited consultation with the Bank's outgoing owner. Glenn, John and the Platinum Technology team were at times operating in the dark.

They somehow needed to create a new system in parallel with the old one while upgrading features and migrating all the Bank's customer information. This business-critical data would be handed over on hard drives just before going live.

All this, in a 12-month timeframe.

The workload – and potential pitfalls – were evident at every level. For instance, the project team had to refresh the hardware for over 700 laptops and desktops, replacing disk drives with SSD and adding memory to boost performance. Some of the older hardware couldn't be upgraded and would have to be replaced on a case-by-case basis. The new Standard Operating Environment (SOE) had to be implemented on all devices.

The usual way to bring in new devices would be to identify suitable models, negotiate terms with the preferred suppliers, test the SOE, and finally purchase, set up and hand over the hardware to users.

The reality in this project was different. Platinum had to build the image onto devices that had been purchased remotely, In the weeks leading up to go-live, this sometimes meant hopping on a tuk-tuk to relocate servers and other equipment.

Platinum's Darryn Ferris sheds light on another critical aspect of the project – data migration. In his own words:

"The complexity of the data and security permissions was much greater than expected. The outgoing owner handed over drives with some elements stripped out, because of the need to filter out data they wanted to keep confidential.

"We had to ask ourselves – did we miss a folder or was it culled? Then we had to create logical file structures and set-up permissions so that staff could turn on their hardware at 9am on the Monday after the change of ownership, and get on with work.

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> Platinum Technology

Solution at a glance.

Working closely with J Trust Royal Bank and Rumble Asia, Platinum Technology scoped and delivered a complete banking platform with the following elements:

> New network for voice, data and internet services to all 15 sites across the country.

> New server room built from scratch:

- Strengthened floors
- Raised floor platform
- New racks
- New patch cable management for both Cat 6A and fibre
- New telecommunication services and equipment
- New switches
- New firewalls
- New server hardware
- New file storage solution

> Provisioned DR in a new colocation facility

> Secure cloud environment built within AWS, including both Windows and Linux hosts.

> Over 100 Windows servers built within AWS and On-Prem, with hardened lockdown controls to CIS standards.

> Over 700 laptops and desktops across 10 different models.

> Over 150 printers across 38 different models.

> 70+ scanners across seven different models.

> Standard Operating Environment (SOE) comprising Windows 10, Microsoft Office 365 with hardened lockdown controls to CIS standards.

> Integrating user desktops for over 25 legacy applications of on-site and cloud-based environments.

> Design and implementation of new software deployment capability for both applications and security patching – SCCM/WSUS.

> Design, implementation and migration of 1000+ user, shared and archive mailboxes into Office365. (The archive was huge and dated back many years.)

> Design, implementation and migration of over 10TB of users' data volumes.

> Design, implementation and migration of SharePoint environment.

> Design and implementation of additional Office365 tools, including Teams.

> Working with the bank to achieve PCI compliance on the new environment.

What else did Platinum Technology add?

So far, we have looked at some of the technical and logistical aspects of the project. But it's important to understand the underlying factors that drive success.

According to Glenn Miller, it was vital for the project team to be very disciplined in meeting deadlines but flexible in the way they operated. This meant communication was vital.

He said, "The Bank's management team and I leaned on Platinum for advice throughout the project. There were no hierarchical barriers."

Darryn Ferris said that communication was backed by a responsive and 'can do' attitude. "We tried to be nimble and accommodating to the bank's needs as they evolved. There was no work to rule."

So if vital hardware was held up at the border, or a remote branch needed help with its network, the Platinum team was ready to leap into action. As experience shows, this is the only way to build trust and meet deadlines in a fast-moving project environment.

Performance unleashed.

At 9am on Sunday, 18 August 2019, the old system went offline. At 9am on Monday, the Bank's employees logged onto the new network.

The desired outcome was achieved, which was minimal disruption. All critical systems operated securely over the new cloud-based network, with access to the legacy applications and data the re-branded J Trust Royal Bank would need to keep its customers happy.

But a smooth migration wasn't the only benefit. As a result of installing new systems, the Bank is now able to operate a lot more efficiently.

To give just one example, a number of slow-to-boot laptops were replaced by upgraded SSD devices operating Microsoft Office 365. These can be up and running within seconds. As a result, bank employees can access systems and serve customers at a much smarter pace.

CIO Glenn Miller adds that moving to a secure cloud-based network has boosted the Bank's capabilities.

"Mobile access is much better. When you look at the old system it was quite clunky. Now our users have the SOE on their mobile device, and it's very secure. They can work efficiently from just about anywhere in Cambodia."

Rumble's John Scobie is proud of the way the project was delivered in partnership with Platinum.

"We re-platformed the entire Bank within 12 months, and it worked. That's cards, branches, treasury – the lot.

"They now have a much better platform to work with. It's faster, more feature-rich, more reliable and secure. The new owners got the asset they paid for and they can operate it securely. Moving forward, they can execute on their strategy."

Not a bad pay-off.

For more information on with Platinum Technology, don't hesitate to contact us at **enquiries@platinumtechnology.com.au** or visit us at **platinumtechnology.com.au**