

# TRADE FINANCE

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## Pressure builds on global transaction banking

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# Strength through partnership

*ANZ has been a client bank of trade finance solution provider CGI for a number of years now. Mark Evans, global head of trade and supply chain at ANZ, joins Kitt Carswell and Frank Tezzi of CGI to describe the working relationship between the two institutions.*

ANZ has an ambitious growth strategy and has been successful in fulfilling it to date thanks in part to a close partnership with Software as a Service (SaaS) provider CGI. The company's trade finance product CGI Trade360® is widely regarded as a truly global platform with high levels of customisation and flexibility and ANZ is putting this to effective use.

Mark Evans, global head of trade and supply chain at ANZ, explains: "We have used Trade360 for many years now, and all of our trade operations are run

through both the back-end and the front-end portal. It is the basis upon which all of our processing is applied globally. The implementation of this has allowed us to deliver consistency to our customers, which is very important for us.

"As trade is a global business, it is very important to us that no matter where our customers are, they get the same reliable ANZ experience. To be able to provide a common platform with the ability to deliver consistent, well-managed, operational controls through a common front and back-end is a vital service to our customers."

By having the common platform ANZ is able to maintain an in-country, close-to-the-customer level of service – not just for sales, but operationally as well where desired. While a lot of banks have centralised processing in one hub, by using Trade360 ANZ has been able to get consensus and consistency across its trade business without total centralisation.

Says Evans: "Even though there is one common platform, trade transaction processing takes place on the ground in Jakarta, Shanghai, Singapore, Fiji, Christchurch, Melbourne – wherever our customers are across the Asia-Pacific region they receive the same high level of service from a team on the ground in that territory."

A key advantage for ANZ is that the bank has been able to accelerate the roll out of new services based on the enhancements to Trade360 that have been implemented by CGI. "We are a bank and not an IT company, and having someone like CGI sitting behind us allows us to engage with our customers and then relay what we learn to CGI to make the necessary enhancements to Trade360. Working so closely with CGI on



Mark Evans at ANZ



the development of Trade360 allows us to be more fleet of foot,” says Evans.

“We have been able to grow our business in a well-managed way, but at quite significant pace over the past few years in line with our super regional strategy and geographic expansion,” he adds.

Banks using a common platform tend to have the problem that it may exist in different forms across each territory of operation. When the bank performs a system enhancement it has to be rolled out in each individual market. A core global system such as that offered by CGI Trade360 allows ANZ to avoid considerably longer planning and implementation time – an update can be rolled out system wide.

ANZ is just one of the many banks that use Trade360, and while the bank obviously wants to customise the solution for its own purposes, ANZ also engages with other users through meetings that CGI holds to gather together their clients to reach a consensus view on enhancements, priorities and the direction in which the product should develop. The banks find this very useful as a method of getting market feedback and exchanging knowledge.

Frank Tezzi, director of trade and supply chain solutions at CGI, explains: “We work very closely with the community of banks that constitute our client base and we share information and experiences to make sure we provide what is needed and give them the biggest bang for their buck. As this is a SaaS platform enhancements are released throughout the year and the banks work in parallel with this knowing in advance which release the new functionality will land. Traditional trade, open account, supply chain, receivables and payables all on one platform ensures that this is a full service solution for our clients.”

Kitt Carswell, senior offering manager, trade and supply chain at CGI, adds: “We work very closely with the banks to lay out a strategic roadmap. As they identify which way they need to go, we help them



Frank Tezzi at CGI

succeed in their business strategy. The level of the relationship we have with our clients, one-to-one and as a community, is a step above anything else in the market.”

To date, ANZ is the only bank using CGI’s cash management module, and CGI has proven to be very flexible in determining a solution for the bank. “We could see that CGI was most likely to be able to deliver that solution to us in a timely manner. CGI was very flexible in helping us get to a position whereby we could have a cash management solution available in so many countries across Asia-Pacific,” says Evans.

An indication of the success of the implementation is that ANZ continually wins awards for service and delivery, including its recent success in the Trade Finance Awards for Excellence category Best Trade Bank in Australasia.

CGI is also updating the graphical interface of Trade360 – a rebuild involving better navigation and usability will complement the functionality updates that have been added over that time.

More than ever the SaaS approach has come into mainstream of all markets globally. Looking at providing new capabilities is a focus of any bank’s core competency, and this means having the right technology partner in order to compete with the lowest cost of ownership. ANZ is working with CGI as a key partner in its ability to deliver these new capabilities. Trade is an inexact science based on partnership, but having strong partnerships gives you an edge, especially in these tumultuous times.

Hanging over all of this are the commercial realities of the global trade finance market versus the theoretical side of how to change the way international trade is financed for the better. “We can work to move theory from a PowerPoint into practice, but this will always be subject to the realities of what is happening in the factories in China, the sugar fields in Fiji, or wherever trade may occur,” concludes Evans. ■



Kitt Carswell at CGI