

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Staying On Task

Dubai Islamic Bank taps @task to maximize IT resources for project portfolio.

“**A**T DUBAI Islamic Bank, we take pride in being able to blend the intricacies and traditions of the Islamic faith with innovation and modern banking solutions,” says Jawdat Jwaeid, the Dubai-based bank’s technology practices coordinator. “To meet the needs of modern customers, as well as the bank’s technology infrastructure needs, I started researching project management solutions to give my team the tools we needed to keep the bank on the cutting edge.”



In August 2005, Jwaeid explains, Dubai Islamic Bank (DIB; US\$172 billion in assets) was experiencing dramatic growth in the United Arab Emirates, but the IT staff was “overwhelmed” with the number of projects required to support the growth. “We were juggling and managing a growing portfolio of projects using only Excel spreadsheets,” he says.

The bank decided it needed a solution that would provide a high-level view of projects, resources and timelines. “We required a technology solution that could grow with our organization and also protect the extremely sensitive information we work with on a daily basis,” Jwaeid relates. Although cost was an issue, Jwaeid says he believed that a solution with the right features would pay for itself.

During its two-month search, the bank evaluated solutions from @task (Orem, Utah), Microsoft (Redmond, Wash.) and Oracle (Redwood Shores, Calif.), according to Jwaeid, ultimately selecting @task’s

Web-based project management software, which the vendor says is platform- and database-independent. DIB, which runs a Windows environment, implemented the @task software in about a day in September 2005, Jwaeid recalls. “It was a simple download of the essential components,” he says. While Jwaeid declines to offer specific costs, he says the engagement included a software license and installation fee, as well as

opened online training that the DIB project managers could deploy themselves.

Next, IT staff members were assigned access to their own customizable Web portals, through which project managers can use the solution’s task-management feature to assign activities. Project managers, Jwaeid notes, also can integrate information from @task into other systems, such as Microsoft Outlook, to facilitate alerts, for example.

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an annual maintenance fee for software upgrades and support. Though it wasn’t a requirement, to support its growth plans, DIB also purchased a new HP (Palo Alto, Calif.) server to carry the @task requests over the bank’s LAN, he adds.

The following month, @task conducted telephone training for DIB’s technology project managers, which helped speed adoption, Jwaeid says. @task also devel-

“Deploying @task has helped us to manage more projects with the same number of staff, provide a central location for collaboration, and allow our project managers to quickly and effectively communicate with their team members, assign tasks, track progress, manage workloads and report on areas of concern,” Jwaeid says. “With @task’s built-in reporting capabilities, I can quickly run a report to show management the status of projects, current and estimated project expenditures, and staff workload. ... @task has made it easy for our project managers to simultaneously control huge numbers of projects.”

Jwaeid adds that @task provided excellent support during the project. “The documentation and online support are very strong from @task,” he says. “We need that because @task is located on the other side of the world, and distance and time zones create an obstacle to working in real time.” □ —Nancy Feig

Snapshot

- » **Institution:** Dubai Islamic Bank (Dubai, United Arab Emirates).
- » **Assets:** US\$172 billion.
- » **Business Challenge:** Gain overview of IT project portfolio to maximize resource allocation.
- » **Solution:** @task’s (Orem, Utah) project management software.