

SIMPLIFYING HYBRID WORKING IN BANKING: “FACILE HELPS TO SUCCEED AT SCALE”

The future of work is hybrid, and BNP Paribas Fortis has understood that since well before the COVID pandemic. Their brand new office building at their headquarters in Brussels, Montagne du Parc, hosts 4,100 workplaces for over 8,000 employees. We sat down with BNP Paribas Fortis' Marianne Kremer and application lead Kevin Huart, to discuss how they collaborated with PROCOS Group to smoothen the transition to hybrid working using the Facile app.



SETTING THE TONE FOR A NEW WORLD OF WORK

BNP Paribas Fortis was a frontrunner in the shift to hybrid working, starting with a pilot programme back in 2008. “At that time working from home was possible, but rather difficult,” says Marianne. From 2013 they deployed new ways of working at their Brussels headquarters. “We worked in different waves,” explains Marianne “We started with a sharing ratio of 1.15, then 1.07, then 0.9, then 0.8, then 0.7. Each wave was an opportunity to introduce, repeat and fine-tune our change management.”

The COVID lockdowns showed that working from home in an efficient way was possible and can enhance work/life balance. “We knew that most people would like to keep a part of that once life returned to normal again,” says Marianne. As the pandemic started to lift in March 2022, BNP Paribas Fortis decided to evolve with a **50% presence on-site and 50% telework**. Managing their new office space in an intelligent way was a huge priority. “Facilities are the third top cost for a company” says Marianne.

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Establishing a new post-COVID way of working required managing the change with care and sensitivity. “We realised that people would have to move to a new building and shift to 50% hybrid working while returning to the office after two years of lockdown with all the stress it entailed,” says Marianne. “We decided we needed to support our employees during this ‘back-to-the-office’ period and needed a tool to help them.” **BNP Paribas Fortis turned to Facile to smoothen the path toward hybrid working for their teams.**

A WORKPLACE FOR EVERYONE, DRIVEN BY THE CLOUD

The first objective BNP Paribas Fortis wanted to achieve by using the Facile app was to make sure that collaborators who came to the office had an ergonomic workplace to work at. The team also wanted to know when colleagues were going to be present to help organise agenda points such as face-to-face meetings. “That’s the added value of coming to the office,” says Kevin. “Colleagues can also use the app to see where colleagues are seated, making it easier to stop by and see them.”

The BNP Paribas Fortis teams found Facile to be very user-friendly. “Once you are used to it, it takes less than one minute to make a booking on the web version on the laptop or mobile app,” says Kevin. “The Facile app is linked to the company’s software for employee data, floorplan and workplace management, badging software, and parking reservations.”

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The main challenge in implementing Facile at BNP Paribas Fortis was to convince our team. While the tool is very simple to use, we explained the benefits and demonstrated its **ease of use** to our teams. “We had to answer all the questions,” recounts Marianne. “We overcame this by rolling out a demo and Q/A to each team a few weeks before their move to the new building and involving everyone from the get-go.” The fact that it is based in the cloud makes the smart evolution of the app more agile, Kevin found. “**PROCOS Group is always open to discuss the evolution of its standard package,**” he says.

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Implementing a new IT solution in a short term is not always easy. “If Facile were on-premise instead of a cloud solution, it would have been impossible,” Kevin adds. **The human relationship with PROCOS Group was also valuable.** “They understand the complexity of banking environments, were patient and worked in a co-creation mode with us,” says Kevin. “The people at PROCOS Group were very responsive and reactive when we encountered challenges or problems.”

THE FUTURE OF WORK IS HYBRID

Workplaces are evolving quickly, accelerated by the explosion of new technologies. BNP Paribas Fortis envisions **increased use of technology such as Internet of Things (IoT) for things like automated check-in.** “Currently the adoption rate for manual check-in is low as it is not the first priority when someone arrives at the office, even if it would have a real added value in helping to find the last available seats and locate the colleagues, which is why an automated check in could be meaningful,” explains Marianne. They also see synergies in **the integration of HR tools to manage presence and absence, as well as in the predictive management of parking and catering for example.**

The company’s main advice for those just starting out in their hybrid working journey? “**Don’t make it too rigid,**” advises Marianne. “When people are stressed, they want to be in the lead and make their own decisions, but smart working can only succeed at scale. For example, capacity management in Facile must be done at business unit level, not team level.” This means not micro-managing in the tool and solving all imaginable challenges up front. “It is better to keep the tool flexible, the administration simple and to count on people’s common sense to align on personal or team agreement,” adds Kevin. “That’s at least the approach we rolled out and that allowed us to reach the objectives”.

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It’s also important not to underestimate change management for initiatives like these, finds Kevin. “Be clear on initial objectives,” he says. “Our first objective was to ensure a seat for people coming to the office. All other functionalities were nice to have.” **Follow-up after the introduction is also key,** because when it works well, it can be easy to think the app is no longer necessary. “There can be some flexibility in the use of the app but it remains useful for departments where higher presence is expected as well as peak days,” Marianne says. “The benefits of Facile shine clearly when you maximise the capacity and use of your building.” When BNP Paribas Fortis first started using Facile, it was a “new” solution. The company appreciated the open-mindedness of PROCOS Group in improving the way that added value for them. “**PROCOS Group keeps the app standard and easy, but in an evolutive way,**” says Kevin.

Want to learn more about how Facile helps teams optimise their time and space? Don’t hesitate to **get in touch.**