



REDEFINING THE REALITY OF BANKING PROCESSES



100%  
TRANSPARENCY



119,5 BN CHF  
TURNOVER



3.600  
EMPLOYEES

CELONIS PROCESS MINING HELPS KEEP POSTFINANCE CUSTOMERS SATISFIED

The financial sector is about far more than number crunching and anonymous financial transactions. What shapes the long-term success of banks today is their interaction with the customer. **Bank customers expect simple, fast and transparent transactions, but internal processes need to be optimally integrated and coordinated for this to occur.** PostFinance recognized the challenge and now relies on Celonis Process Mining to analyze and optimize its business processes.

THE DIGITAL POWER HOUSE

With 3.3 million private customers and 300,000 business customers, PostFinance, a subsidiary of Swiss Post, is one of the five largest financial institutions in Switzerland. **More than 50% of payments in Switzerland are processed via PostFinance, making it the largest payment processor in the country.** As a licensed bank, it offers its private and business customers a full range of financial services including pension and savings options, investment opportunities, and loans or lines of credit. PostFinance still generates a large part of its income from interest

rate differentials, which in times of low and even negative interest rates, is alone no longer sufficient to sustain its success.

The management quickly realized that it needed to find other legs to balance the business on. **Since then, PostFinance has pursued a multi-pronged strategy designed to keep it competitive and boost its sales in the long term** - always with a strong focus on the customer. With the increasing digitalization of products, PostFinance wanted to create new incentives for existing customers and also attract new customers. **The final destination for this journey will be a “digital power house,” where banking is made as easy and fast as possible for its customers.** This of course assumes that service processes will need to particularly have to run smoothly and that customers will not have to wait long for the services they want. In addition to digital products such as e-finance and the PostFinance app that allow customers to manage their assets and transactions at their convenience, the optimization and acceleration of its processes will make a long-term contribution to customer satisfaction, which, in turn, will lead to greater efficiency and

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*Peter Lacher*  
COO

sales. But for that, internal processes must first be made visible and understood.

#### TRACKING THE ACTUAL PROCESSES WITH CELONIS PROCESS MINING

Processes are the heart of every business and crucial for success. PostFinance had a clear idea of what its own processes should ideally look like. However, the process map failed to provide much information about how processes actually work. “The problem in companies is usually that people think that processes can simply be noted in just about any tool and employees assume that they will work for them. The reality is often very different,”



PETER LACHER  
COO

says Peter Lacher, COO at PostFinance. Especially when opening accounts, PostFinance suspected that there were weak spots and inefficiencies in its processes and wanted to take a closer look. After all, up to 200,000 accounts are opened

at PostFinance every year. These are processes that were previously handled by hundreds of employees with numerous forms and documents that carried an enormous risk of error. Leaner, error-free processes and faster turnaround times were the goal. Big data technology partner Celonis Process Mining was the solution. **With Celonis, PostFinance can now track its actual processes, not just for opening accounts, but also for lending decisions and disbursements as well as SAP-based purchasing.** The software solution relies on enterprise data systems, merging data traces left by digital processes, reconstructing processes end-to-end, and modeling how they actually work. A visualization with as much detail as desired allows users to identify in real time those points in the process where there are extra detours and delays, extra demands on time and labor this creates, the causes for such situations, and potential solutions to the problem. “A huge amount of detours and links was what we discovered when we did our first process analysis with Celonis Process Mining,” says Peter Lacher. “It became clear to me that there was a massive chasm between the way we imagined our processes functioned and the way they actually do.”

#### ACCOUNT OPENING MADE EASY

Although PostFinance was initially skeptical that process mining could cover the full breadth of its systems, these concerns were quickly laid to rest during imple-

mentation and proof of concept. During trial runs of process mining in account opening, loan settlement, and purchasing, it quickly became clear that all systems and data could be properly connected using standard connectors and PostFinance was able to model and analyze the desired processes. **“During the proof of concept, we were able to quickly gain important initial insights and translate them into concrete measures.** At that point in time, we knew that we had found exactly the right solution with Celonis,” says Peter Lacher. Especially in the field of account openings, PostFinance employees’ eyes were opened. The back office had previously processed documents manually. The fact that mistakes creep in is almost unavoidable. Even small mistakes add up and can result in high costs. **Process mining analyses very clearly showed that errors regularly occurred as documents were requested and information was transferred to forms, adding additional steps to the process at the expense of efficiency.** Too many forms were submitted to customers and were often returned to the back office either incomplete or containing errors. This required follow-up to add the missing information. Some documents were even returned to customers several times with multiple requests for additional information.

In order to eliminate the weak points that had been discovered and to create uniform, efficient processes, PostFinance deployed Celonis Process Mining for



account openings in various regions and locations. The results were then compared, best practices identified, and internal benchmarks set. Since then, PostFinance has been able to save resources across regions and significantly accelerate processes. “We have seen that we have very different constellations on how a process can proceed. Bringing these together in one easy-to-use tool was a revelation,” says Michel Ellenberger, Head of Process Management for Accounts at PostFinance.

The insights that Celonis Process Mining provided through the account opening process ultimately impacted the company’s digital strategy, heralding the birth of the PostFinance app. It was designed to replace the countless forms and simplify the process for both employees and customers. “We thought: it has to be easier than this. Getting away from

forms and using an app allows customers to enter their data quickly and easily on their phones, tablets, or computers, and open an account in just 10 minutes,” says Peter Lacher. The use of process mining not only led PostFinance to take a decisive step towards greater process efficiency, but also increased customer satisfaction in the use of digital services.

#### PROCESS MINING: AT ALL LEVELS, IN ALL DEPARTMENTS

Celonis will be providing PostFinance with even more support as it continues to evolve into a “digital power house.” Further applications of process mining will be developed with IT, marketing, sales, and public relations. “We want to use Celonis where customers will notice it, i.e. where we interact with the customer,” says Daniel Schilliger, ICT Business Engineer. At the same time, PostFinance is busy identifying

other, resource-intensive processes that might promise great savings potential once Celonis Process Mining is applied.

In the spirit of a hands-on mentality, more and more employees are being given access to process mining, a step facilitated by the flat hierarchies and culture at PostFinance. “The more transparency you have and the more you understand how something works or functions incorrectly, the greater the likelihood that employees will think together and develop suggestions for improvement themselves.”

From management to department heads to individual employees, process mining will be used in the future to promote innovative ideas and thus, according to Peter Lacher, promote the culture at PostFinance of “working together to do right by the customer.”



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