

The e-tool for the job

AS ECONOMIC TURBULENCE CONTINUES, TREASURERS ARE LOOKING FOR GREATER ACCESS TO TRANSACTION PROCESSING INFORMATION AND IMPROVED OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY. **LISA ROSSI** EXPLAINS THE LAUNCH OF AN ONLINE TREASURY PLATFORM THAT OFFERS VISIBILITY OF END-TO-END PROCESS FLOWS AND INFORMATION.

Times are tough for corporate treasurers. Access to bank-supplied credit lines remains restricted and the growing cost and burden of regulation are a reality for all – and come at a time when many are being encouraged to take an increasingly strategic role within their organisations. In addition to the day-to-day tasks, the majority of treasurers are now expected to assume responsibility for improving the bottom line as well as driving companies towards their strategic treasury goals.

The upshot is a significant expansion of duties and increase in responsibility. This extra load happens to coincide with financial market pressures that have led to a decrease in financial resources and a potentially reduced number of staff. As a result, treasurers are under mounting pressure to do more with less, at a time when it has never been more of a challenge to do so.

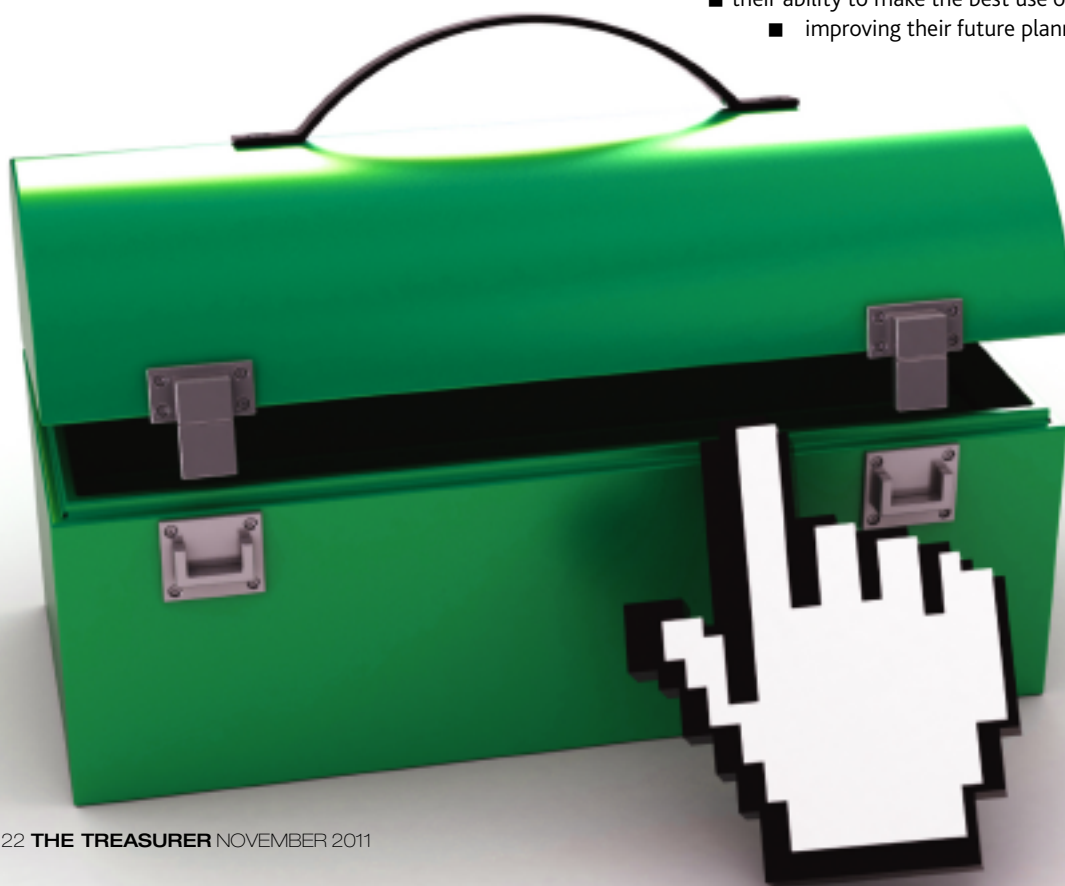
Meeting the requirements of such an increase in responsibility – particularly in such a complex and turbulent financial landscape – is

driving treasurers' demand for more integrated cash and liquidity management services, both at the point of delivery and on a more fundamental, product-design level.

Integrated cashflow, liquidity and risk management solutions should allow treasurers to gain greater control over working capital, liquidity positions and risk exposures, as well as meet the growing regulatory demand for increased transparency and reporting. As such, they are now a key requirement for treasurers at all levels.

INCREASING VISIBILITY AND CONTROL Against this background, many corporates are turning to their bank partners for access to systems and platforms that promote the desired holistic approach to liquidity and risk management. With easy access to affordable liquidity largely a thing of the past, treasurers understand that future success depends on four crucial measures:

- their ability to make the best use of available cash positions;
- improving their future planning capabilities;



- reducing complexity; and
- enhancing efficiency across the entire treasury value chain.

A unified approach to working capital, liquidity and risk management is the most efficient way of achieving these goals.

However, while a combined approach is important, it does not – at least in itself – constitute a definitive solution to treasurers' woes. The financial landscape is in a continual state of evolution and, although maximising control of company cash and improving risk mitigation can help treasurers navigate any future storms, it is the enhanced visibility of transaction processing data that will prove their strongest defence.

Indeed, the importance of data visibility cannot be overstated. Access to real-time data is vital for well-informed business decisions and accurate liquidity forecasting, as it can bring to light problems that may pose a threat to a company's commercial health. As such, data control must constitute a major part of any next-generation treasury solution.

EASE OF USE Technical sophistication must now include ease of use – especially with regards to data and information. In fact, the data challenge that treasurers face today is that they are bombarded with too much, rather than struggling with too little information. If treasurers are to take a more prominent role within their organisations and make key financial decisions, they need to be able to locate precise and relevant transaction-related information easily and, ideally, in their chosen format. As a result, modern integrated platforms must offer enough flexibility to allow treasurers to customise their data dashboards. This will allow the desired data to be viewed in an intuitive, graphical format, making it easier to interpret as well as manage to the company's advantage.

In response to the growing demand for sophistication combined with customisability, Deutsche Bank is taking an increasingly intuitive approach to technology. This has manifested itself in the development of the treasury platform on Autobahn, our award-winning electronic distribution service.

Autobahn offers web-based liquidity management and planning, foreign exchange and investment services from a central location. The treasury platform – an integrated liquidity management module – builds on these existing functions to provide a complete and customisable line of treasury and liquidity services, designed to help treasurers actively manage their working capital and liquidity needs.

Such enhanced functionality and ease of use would not have been possible without a consultative approach to the platform's development. Client communication and feedback were central to the development and roll-out of the treasury platform. As a result, we are confident that it can add tangible value for our clients.

RAISING THE BAR The prevalence of financial technology now means that service provider differentiation lies in the quality of the overall user experience. This will, of course, ultimately depend on the clients' view of what constitutes a useful and intuitive technology platform. For many, this opinion will be greatly influenced by the popular social media tools and levels of usability common in the consumer space. In recognition of this, Deutsche Bank has further developed Autobahn and launched the Autobahn App Market. This is the first app-based electronic distribution system in the financial services industry.

The Autobahn App Market provides clients with electronic access to Deutsche Bank's wealth of transaction banking services and research expertise. It also enables them to trade electronically across multiple asset classes, including foreign exchange, equities, commodities, credit, rates and emerging markets.

One of the key benefits of the App Market from the treasurer's perspective is that it allows cash and liquidity management products and services to be grouped according to individual company requirements and business cycles – meaning treasurers select the precise tools they need. As these products and services are accessible from a single location, treasurers may also gain from greatly enhanced efficiency of operations, interface consistency, and the greatly increased transparency of information, reports and records.

Indeed, this latter point is particularly advantageous given the increasing regulatory demands for detailed activity trails. The Apps Market provides an easier way for treasurers to keep track, with records automatically and consistently maintained.

Consistent record maintenance is also a key plus for time management. Time is precious, with multitasking becoming part of everyday life, particularly for treasurers who may be juggling an increased number of duties with a reduced in-house support network. The ability to access a global breadth of products from a single site as well as mobilise and navigate cash at the touch of a button reduces the time it takes to carry out the fundamental treasury tasks – thus freeing up time for innovation and strategic development.

THE FUTURE OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT In the future, treasurers will need greater transparency and control if they are to surmount the challenges of the new regulatory environment and ongoing market instability. Sustainable commercial success depends on the long-term health of business cycles and will be achieved only if treasurers have the ability to use cash to their greatest advantage and stop any possible business threats in their tracks. As a result, tools that can provide optimum visibility of end-to-end process flows and relevant data and information – such as the treasury platform on Autobahn – will prove invaluable.

The evolving regulatory environment is likely to accelerate the use of electronic services by necessitating enhanced processing efficiency, increased market transparency and more detailed reporting – and bank providers must be able to keep up with the increasing corporate demand for such capabilities.

Deutsche Bank's significant investment in the Autobahn App Market is a response to this demand. We aim to make further progress on customer self-administration and client access channels, and focus on making it simpler for clients to interact with us – whether through technology, documentation or self-administration. The development of the Autobahn App Market is an example of our technology and service offerings, as well as our ongoing commitment to addressing our clients' evolving treasury needs.



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