



Christian Reiter, CTO Sparkasse Malta

Building a Core Banking System - and Going Live Smoothly

*Interview with Christian Reiter about Sparkasse Malta's move to its own banking system - using **CaptainCasa Enterprise Client** as core framework for user interface implementations.*

First of all: congratulations to you and your team! The new banking software you developed went live about six months ago now!

Yes, we flipped the switch in May - all core processes, from account management and payment transactions to securities trading and our accounting, are now running on our own software. I believe everyone in the IT industry knows this intense phase of a migration: the responsibility we carry for the company is significant. All the more satisfying that everything went live in a fairly calm and controlled manner.

Developing a new banking system from scratch and deliberately not using existing industry software - what was the motivation behind that?

As a bank, we have a strong focus on custody and depositary services, particularly the servicing of fund management companies. Our search for an existing solution that truly fit our needs was unsuccessful - so at some point, developing our own system became inevitable. One important point: we had experience managing projects of this

scale, so we didn't stumble into this by accident.

Let's talk about the architecture of your application. Could you outline it briefly?

I would describe it as largely based on Enterprise Java (Jakarta) standards, running on a commercial Jakarta EE server. On top of that, we use Kubernetes and a container-based deployment. Within Java development, we strictly decouple processing into services. And of course, a key component is the CaptainCasa Enterprise Client as the central framework for building user interfaces.

How did you come to choose CaptainCasa Enterprise Client?

We were looking for a framework that would significantly relieve application development in the area of user interface creation from the inherent complexities of frontend development. After all, the frontend runs in the browser, while the application itself runs on the server. From other projects, we knew how much effort it would take if we were to dive into explicit frontend development, for example using JavaScript. CaptainCasa, with its approach of 100% Java development on the server, was a perfect fit.

CaptainCasa is not a framework from one of the major vendors. How did you build the necessary level of trust?

By taking a close look at CaptainCasa's DNA: the company has been around since 2007, has very satisfied users in the enterprise application space, and follows an approach that fits perfectly with the challenges of complex Java server applications while integrating cleanly into Java server standards. Another very important factor was the direct personal contact with the development team, especially during the early phase when issues or enhancement requests inevitably arose. And beyond that, this was not the first project we implemented with CaptainCasa - the success speaks for itself.

What is the scope of the user interface development in your application?

Our entire system comprises around 500

individual dialogs. Many of these are typical form-based screens, some of them with a high degree of flexibility and corresponding complexity. CaptainCasa allows us to define these dialogs and their contained controls easily and connect them directly to server-side Java processing. Very early in the project and in the architecture, we introduced a layered structure that standardized this integration. Concretely, an input field is bound to a property of a business object and automatically adopts all of its characteristics - from data type and value selection to logical validation.

Who on your team actually developed the user interfaces?

The design and definition of the interfaces were, of course, done in close collaboration with the business departments and in compliance with a style guide - and very importantly, with a dedicated person ensuring that this style guide was consistently applied. The implementation itself was then part of the normal application development process. Since the entire development runs on the server in Java, we did not have a strict separation into frontend and backend teams. I am firmly convinced that this avoided a great deal of friction.

You mentioned the go-live phase at the beginning. What were your key takeaways from that period?

One thing is obvious: the application must reach a sufficient level of maturity. And this doesn't just mean stable operation in a test environment. The application must also work with the fully migrated data from the legacy system. We tested this migration almost to the point of excess and repeatedly identified "small things" that tend to surface when data isn't quite as clean as expected. As a result, there were practically no few surprises at go-live.

And the other side of the coin?

There were still minor surprises. And in that case, only one thing helps: you must be able to react quickly - in live operation. Without going into too much detail: we can deploy a change to the application

system, such as a code fix, into production within 20 minutes - including running all our automated tests. Users who log in afterwards receive the corrected version, while everyone else can continue working without interruption.

Now that things have settled down, how do you look back on the decision to use CaptainCasa?

Quite simply: for us as a development team, and for me personally as its lead, it was a decisive game changer. From that point on, user interface development was simply no longer an issue for us. In operations as well, CaptainCasa Enterprise Client has proven to be completely trouble-free. Please note: we are not talking about individual web pages that are accessed occasionally. We are talking about an application used by professional users in a 24/7 mode from three locations across Europe.

In short: I can wholeheartedly recommend CaptainCasa Enterprise Client and proudly count myself among its very satisfied users.

Thank you for this conversation!

The interview was conducted by Björn Müller, CaptainCasa GmbH.

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