

Santander successfully completes integration of Banco Popular's branches on schedule

- This weekend in Andalusia, the bank completed the technological migration of Banco Popular's 3.5 million active customers across Spain. These customers have not had to change their account number or their cards.
- Rami Aboukhair, chief executive officer of Santander Spain, said he was very pleased with how the process had gone: "We have successfully completed the technological integration of Popular on schedule, without experiencing any problems. From day one, our primary concern was our customers and ensuring that the integration process did not impact their banking experience. We are now starting a new chapter, in which we will be launching new campaigns, with more and better products and services for individuals and businesses across all our channels".
- Over 1,200 people took part in the migration of almost 1,600 branches, 15.2 million contracts were migrated, and 1.6 million hours of software development and over 60,000 tests were needed.

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This weekend in Andalusia, Banco Santander completed the technological migration of almost 1,600 Banco Popular branches across Spain, fully migrating 3.5 million active customers to the Santander platform. The process was carried out in eight waves with the first being launched last November in Galicia, and the last concluding this weekend in Andalusia. The integration was completed without any setbacks and on schedule.

As part of the integration, Popular branches were rebranded both externally and internally. As soon as the technological migration took effect the brand was changed so that, to all intents and purposes, each branch became a Santander branch. This means that now this process is completed, the Popular brand will cease to exist commercially (legally, it stopped being used in September 2018).

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This has been a very large-scale process which has involved over 1,200 professionals - mainly from the Technology and Operations Area - and which has caused the least possible inconvenience for customers. It has included 1.6 million hours of software development and over 60,000 tests. Almost 10 million letters, messages and notifications were sent to customers, plus 500,000 calls and 120,000 visits were carried out.

External Communications

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Customers were very satisfied with the project's transparency and the support received. They also appreciated the fact that the technological migration did not affect their normal activities. In a questionnaire filled in by 6,000 customers, 91% of customers whose accounts had been migrated said they had been properly informed about the integration process, and 55% said they were very satisfied with the information received (on a scale of 0 to 10, their scores ranged between 9 and 10). The average score was 8, and 52% of them said that they were “very satisfied”.

The bank decided to implement the integration gradually in successive waves, to avert any possible incidents, and also so that customers could keep their account and card numbers until the time comes to renew them. It was important to maintain quality in customer service, so special care was taken with customer communications. Customers were kept informed at all times of how the process would be carried out, and the progress of their branch's migration to the Santander platform. As part of this process, employees received 190,000 hours of online training and 133,000 hours of onsite training.

Main advantages for customers

After the technological migration to the Santander platform, Popular customers can now use their Santander debit card at over 7,500 Santander ATMs in Spain and 30,000 ATMs across the globe, without charges or fees. Customers can also use what is considered to be the best Contact Center in the banking sector, according to the Award for excellence in customer service for the best Customer Relationship Centre in 2018, awarded by the Asociación Española de Expertos en Relación con Clientes, in collaboration with IFAES and IZO. They can also access Santander's digital apps, including mobile payments with Apple Pay, Samsung Pay or Santander Wallet and can use Santander's digital banking platform, which, according to Aqmetrix, is the most useful and functional for customers across all devices.

Entrepreneurs and self-employed persons can also use apps in their daily business activities, for example the Santander Empresas app and the Mi Negocio app. They can also seek advice from 4,000 specialised agents, especially in International Business, where they can count on the support of 12,500 branches worldwide and services in over 150 countries.

In this internationalisation process, Santander Spain also offers comprehensive solutions to companies taking their first steps in the international arena. It helps companies which have already done so to branch out into new markets and settle in other geographies. One of these solutions is Santander Trade which helps companies from different countries network and set up business relations. It also provides in-depth information about doing business abroad. This user-friendly and intuitive portal offers entrepreneurs detailed information on 185 countries so they can pick the most interesting ones to do business in. Santander Trade can also convert 147 international currencies and provides information about exchange rates and volatility.

The International Desk service promotes international connectivity, helping SMEs set up and expand in other countries where Santander Group offers commercial banking. It offers a customised service in multiple languages and all companies setting up operations in the new country will be treated as trusted customers from the outset and will be able to use all the bank's products.

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