

“We need to provide what clients demand. That’s our main job, and we can’t do it without SS&C Advent.”

Saousen Ludvigsen, Process Advisor, Investment Services, Sparebank1 SR-Bank

“Client service demands are growing, and it’s quicker and easier than ever for customers to switch bank if they aren’t satisfied,” observes Saousen Ludvigsen, Process Advisor, Investment Services with Norway’s Sparebank1 SR-Bank. “So ensuring our clients are happy, and that we can deliver a good solution, is vital.”

Rather than visit branches, clients increasingly opt to use the growing range of self-service capabilities offered through the bank’s online and mobile portal. The flexibility and convenience they offer are attractive. But it requires a seamless technology infrastructure able to deliver fast and comprehensive product, portfolio and personal data when and how clients want it. Which is why SR-Bank has long trusted in SS&C Advent.

### A separate history

SR-Bank’s asset and fund management subsidiary, SR-Forvaltning, began using SS&C Advent systems in 2000. At the heart of its infrastructure is the Moxy® trade order management system and integrated portfolio and client management solution Advent Portfolio Exchange® (APX). To support the launch of its own funds, SR-Forvaltning also added interface tool General Ledger Exchange (GLX).

SR-Bank was a more recent convert. It migrated to SS&C Advent’s Tradex® fund order management and distribution platform in 2012, as well as adding APX. The bank subsequently built its proprietary self-service portal to sit on top

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of Tradex, utilizing the open API Tradex communication server to enable the firm’s (mostly retail) clients to access report information and buy and sell funds via the portal.

### Better together

Both firms though were running their own on-site SS&C Advent platforms. So when Ms Ludvigsen switched roles from SR-Forvaltning to SR-Bank, she instantly saw the synergies that could be achieved by merging their back-office operations and IT into a single department on one platform.

Security across the organization has been improved by having a dedicated IT department able to monitor and control the servers and systems. Upgrades are easier and more efficient too.

“SR-Forvaltning didn’t upgrade often because we didn’t have the resources to make changes without hitting bumps in the road,” says Ms Ludvigsen. “By coming over to SR-Bank, we now have better security around the environment and can follow the same streamlined upgrade process, allowing the firm to stay current on the latest technology.”

For instance, SR-Forvaltning ran a lot of old, custom-made interfaces, which were increasingly unstable. “With the merger, we have been able to remove those old interfaces and move onto new and better technology, including using Advent Market Data and some cloud solutions.”

#### Profile

Client: SpareBank 1 SR-Bank

Location: Norway

Description: Norway’s largest regional bank, providing equity and fixed income funds to retail clients, along with discretionary portfolio management for HNW and institutional segments

AUM: \$2 billion

#### Background

- Advent client since 2000
- Wanted to merge the IT infrastructure and back-office operations for SR-Bank and its subsidiary SR-Forvaltning onto a single platform to improve its operating efficiencies

#### Solution

- Advent Portfolio Exchange®, Moxy®, Tradex®, GLX® and Tax-as-a-Service
- Implementation by SS&C Advent Professional Services

#### Benefits

- Integrated, modern technology infrastructure improves system stability, reduces operating expenses, and enhances client servicing
- Concentrating resources in a single IT department helps centralize product knowledge and system security
- Leveraging SS&C Advent’s Tax-as-a-Service improves support for clients’ complex tax reporting requirements and cuts the in-house resources required

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## Call in the professionals

With so many legacy interfaces and the mass of old data SR-Forvaltning had been running, integrating the firms' operations proved extremely complicated. Ms Ludvigsen attributes much of the project's success to SS&C Advent's Professional Services team, including the dedicated consultant who, she says, really knew the SR-Bank and SR-Forvaltning environments, and had a clear understanding of the firm's requirements.

"Because of all the complexity it was actually amazing we did it," says Ms Ludvigsen. "So I was really satisfied with the Professional Services team."

## Meeting new opportunities

That commitment to collaboration and support continues to be vital, as SR-Bank depends on SS&C Advent's systems and expertise to navigate market changes and challenges.

For example, the Norwegian authorities are set to issue final regulations in summer 2017 for the new aksjesparekonto fund product, which is designed to bring significant tax deduction and deferment benefits, explains Ms Ludvigsen. "Norwegian tax rules are extremely complicated and onerous, so client demand for this product is huge. If we are unable to offer it, clients will simply leave us and go to another provider."

SS&C Advent has been on top of developments though, and is working closely with SR-Bank on system updates to meet its needs, says Ms Ludvigsen. "SS&C Advent has done a great job, and we have good communication around this project. It means I can sleep at night, knowing we have a system provider that is developing a solution to help us."

## Tax-as-a-Service

Indeed, tax solutions are a critical part of the SS&C Advent offering for SR-Bank.

Under Norwegian tax legislation, mutual fund managers are responsible for reporting on clients' holdings, transfers and realizations by February 10 each year.

"Tax reporting is such a headache for our clients that if we can't offer a proper service they will switch to someone that can," states Ms Ludvigsen. "But tax always involved a lot of work for us."

Which is why SR-Bank opted to leverage SS&C Advent's Tax-as-a-Service capability. The service works closely with users throughout the year to validate and test the required data to ensure the numbers are correct and ready for the reporting deadline. It then takes care of the processing and delivery to Skatteetaten, the Norwegian Tax Administration.

"Outsourcing such a major task is really cost efficient for us, especially with the difficult new tax laws that have been introduced," says Ms Ludvigsen. "We would need 10–15 people dedicating a lot of time to working on it, as well as some lawyers because of the complexity. Plus there is the risk of reporting the wrong numbers. So having somebody else to create the reports and file them on time is a huge benefit."

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## An outsourced future?

This thinking may subsequently be extended to SR-Bank's technology infrastructure as a whole, suggests Ms Ludvigsen.

"Technology is developing so fast, and we're not sure we can keep pace with the changes and complexity. We need to consider more efficient solutions, so we're looking at Advent Outsourcing Services. Nothing is decided, but cloud solutions are where the industry is moving."

Ultimately, with new laws and regulations always emerging, and new types of products coming to market, it is vital SR-Bank can stay focused and out in front of those changes, adds Ms Ludvigsen. "We need to provide what clients demand. That's our main job, and we can't do it without SS&C Advent."