

Who knows how to convert core banking services to platform services better than the original provider? By Chris Skinner

I've been travelling worldwide for many years now, and have encountered many software companies providing banking solutions. Not all companies are the same obviously, and many of the ones I've encountered are American. So, it was a pleasure to encounter Silverlake Axis, an Asian solutions provider who have a different view of the world. Part of the reason for this different view is that the company originated thirty years ago – this year is their thirtieth birthday – and have a fresh outlook on the world of banking. Another part however, is the leadership of the company and its founder, Mr. Goh Peng Ooi, who has created a very familial feel to the firm. In fact, in my experience of working with him and his team, it is very much a close-knit community of friends and colleagues which creates a very warm atmosphere.

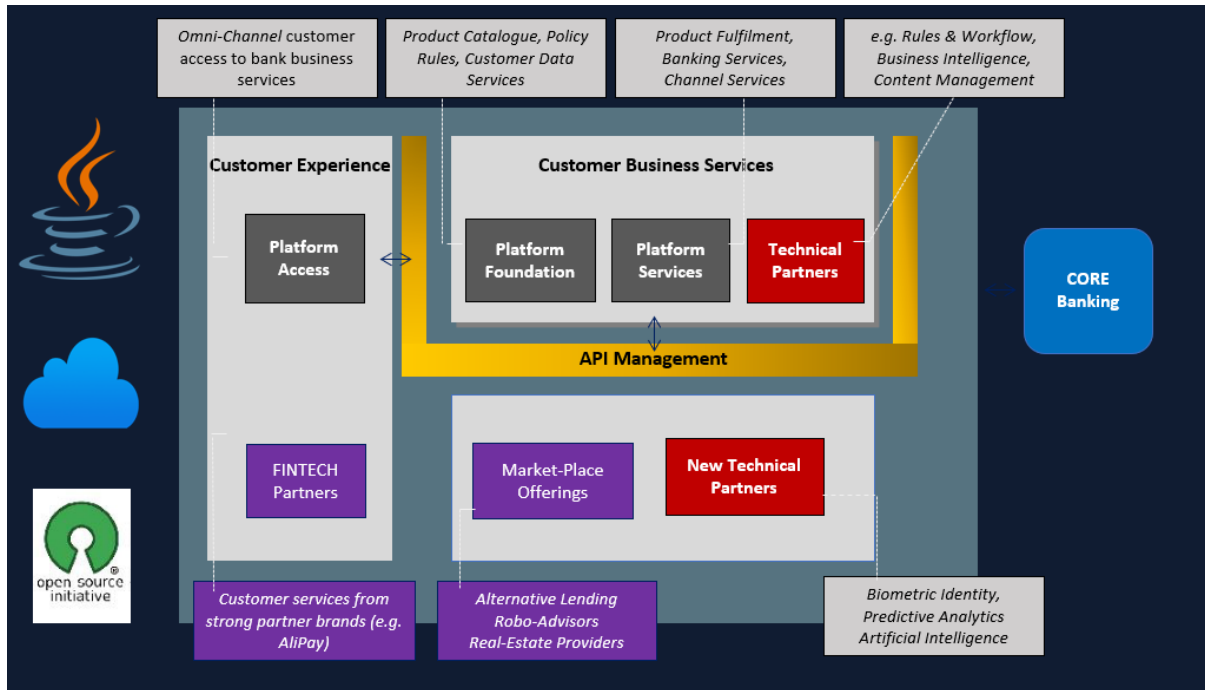
At this year's conference in Mr. Goh's hometown of Penang, Malaysia, there were a variety of presentations from the management team, including a keynote by me, and the launch of the new Silverlake Axis platform called *Möbius**



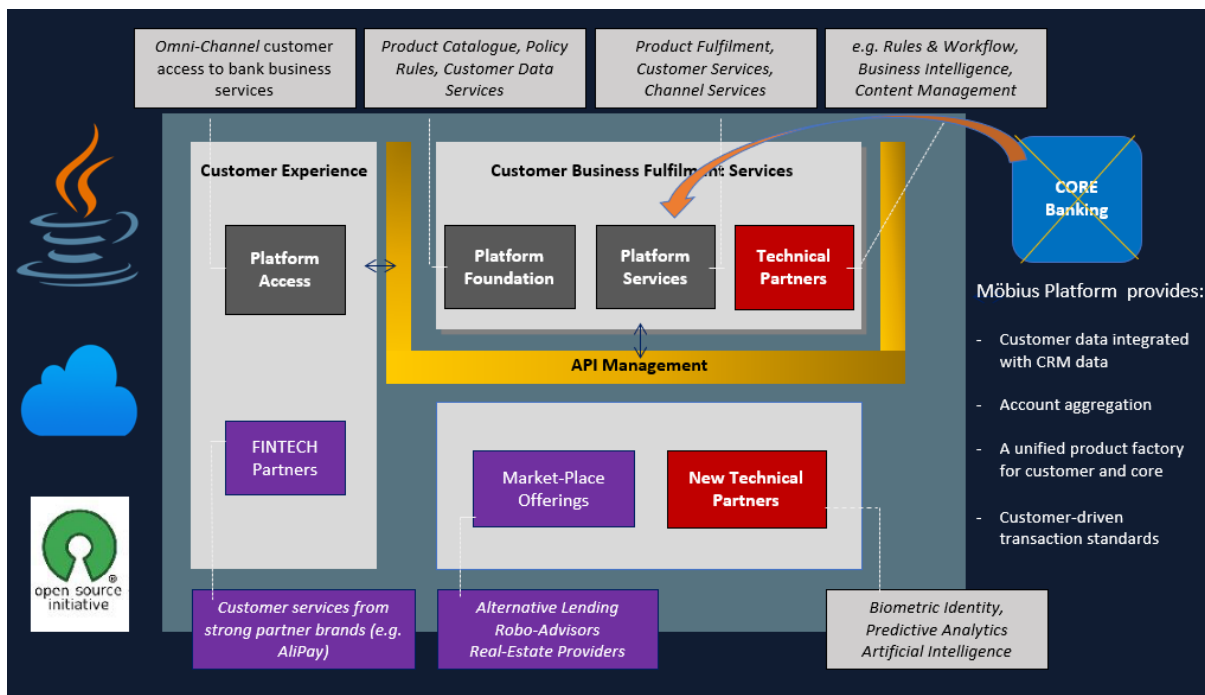
Now this announcement was quite intriguing as, for any software provider, they end up with customers in different states and difficulties getting rid of their own legacies. I know this from personal experience, where some customers are on release 3.1, others on 3.2 or 3.3, a few on release 4.0, 4.1 and 5.0 whilst one or two are on release 10.0. How to get all customers onto the same release at the same time? How to stop supporting old releases and focus on next releases?

This is a dilemma for all firms and what Silverlake Axis announced in Penang with *Möbius* is a neat way around this: a marketplace of code that is internet cloud-based, up-to-date and adaptable to replacing the old core on a bite-by-bite basis ... or is that byte-by-byte basis? It's that old dilemma: how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. And this applies equally to core releases over three decades that now need to be adaptable to the internet age and demands of digital consumers and digital corporations.

Therefore, I was intrigued to hear about *Möbius*. David Brearley, Advisor and Chief Architect, introduced the news of what has been developed by the group, and outlined the issue that many face: they are developing apps, APIs and analytics with cool new technologies and technology partners, including FinTech start-ups, but the core banking systems sit in the background languishing. These systems are often old, hard to change, require significant maintenance and hold the company back from real innovations.



What Silverlake Axis have achieved with *Möbius* is to offer a way of taking the Core Banking systems across to the platform services and hence fully integrate all of their operations onto one major platform service.



That is a super enlightened approach, as most of the providers I've been dealing with in Europe and America have been attacked by third-party FinTech start-ups who offer the core banking platform conversion services. They do this through open APIs (plug-and-play code) and offer a marketplace of services which banks can pick and choose from. Rather than allowing the third parties to take that space, Silverlake Axis has moved first to make this as easy as possible for their clients by creating *Möbius* and a company called Silverlake Digital Economy, led by Choo Soo Ching, to build, market and implement it.

This is a good thing as who knows the core banking services and how to convert them to platform services than the original provider of the core banking systems? I'm fairly sure others will follow this direction.

During the event, there were also continuous innovation presentations and demonstrations. I attended a few of these, and enjoyed seeing how video servicing and client authentication using biometrics – both fingerprint and face – could be deployed with ease through their modular services and structures, using open systems and platforms.



There were many other enlightenments during the thirtieth anniversary conference of the company, including distinguish Guest, the Penang Chief Minister YAB Tuan Chow, CEO of Khazanah National Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan and the neat presentations from Cyrus Daruwala from IDC, Gyorgy Ladics from Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD), Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Mohd Munir Abdul Majid. Chairman, Bank Muamalat Malaysia and Goh Peng Ooi himself, all with the theme of Digital Collaboration & Transformation.

The conclusion of the event was a gala dinner with a truly Malaysian theme and a fantastic tour of Penang, learning about the history of the Straits-born Chinese – the Peranakan – and the original colonisation under the British in the 1700s.

All in all, the company has a very generous spirit and futuristic outlook, even with their thirty years of development and growth.

About Möbius

Möbius is an Open Software Platform for Banking. It is the first time a major Core Banking Vendor has combined award-winning customer-facing digital capabilities with proven core banking processing capabilities to create a unified, open, end-end application software platform for commercial banking.

The software platform is a component and RESTful API design, written in JAVA, enriched with technology engines such as rules, workflow and BI engines, and deployable optionally in a J2EE server software stack or in a Private Cloud software stack.

About Chris Skinner

Chris Skinner is an independent consultant and author. He chairs the Financial Services Club and Nordic Finance Innovate, is a non-executive director of 11:FS and on the advisory boards of various firms including B-Hive, Bankex, loV42, Moven and Meniga.

Reaction to this Article and the Announcement of Möbius

Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam

BIBD has been working with Silverlake Digital Economy on implementing the bank's digital strategy since 2012; and many of the capabilities of the Silverlake Digital Banking Platform were first deployed in our bank in Brunei. Our work with Silverlake Digital Economy won the Asian Banker's Best Smart Branch Project in 2016. BIBD's Digital Platform, which is rated as the Best Digital Platform in Brunei, has transformed the operations of the bank and the banking experience for our customers. We therefore welcome the Möbius announcement as an indication of Silverlake's continued commitment to innovation and its ability to bring the future of banking to our customers and turn technology into a key business differentiator.

Gyorgy Ladics, Chief Operating Officer, Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam

People's Bank of Sri Lanka

People's Bank, the second largest bank in Sri Lanka, embarked on its digital journey three years ago, the largest transformation that People's Bank has undertaken in its 59-year history. This involved the creation of a new 'digital bank's identity, deployment of new digital services, the digitalization of branches and the automation of end-end on-boarding and loan origination processes. The Silverlake Digital Banking Platform was a key enabler of the improved bank services that customers enjoy today. This transformation work with Silverlake Digital Economy was recognized by The Asian Banker's award for the Best Branch Digitalization Initiative in 2018. The availability of Möbius confirms that Silverlake will be ready for the next digital era of cloud computing and Open APIs which are important enablers of the services our customers expect in the fourth industrial revolution.

Priyantha Edirisinghe, Head of Information Technology, People's Bank of Sri Lanka

Commercial Bank International, UAE

Having recently transformed CBI through migrating our core and digital banking capabilities in a single step with Silverlake, the endorsements of their strategy and platform by Chris Skinner and others adds further validation to the solution chosen. The capabilities of Silverlake's Möbius platform empowers banks to take this generational step forward, delivering the digital solutions customers now expect and demand as much as internally transforming the Bank. We look forward to continuing working with Silverlake, leveraging the features of the Möbius platform to deliver ever-better services to our customers across the UAE.

James Greenwood, Chief Operating Officer, Commercial Bank International, UAE