

Halkbank



Turkish bank delivers exponential digital banking growth and improves digital experience for users with Riverbed Network Performance Monitoring Solutions

Founded in 1933, Halkbank is one of the largest banks in Turkey. In 2020, it was ranked the third largest bank in Turkey in terms of assets by the Fintech Times. It has 16.5 million customers, including four million digital customers, 23,000 employees, and more than 1,000 branches.

The bank offers a variety of services, including corporate and retail banking, investor relations, and SME and commercial services.

Technology plays a significant role in providing a seamless customer experience and maintaining a competitive edge, and the bank's IT environment is maintained by a team of 1,000 highly skilled staff.

In Brief

Challenges

- Ensure highly available banking services during peaks in demand
- Speed up identification of network issues
- Increase capacity of network monitoring solution
- Faster incident resolution and troubleshooting

Solution

- Riverbed Network Performance Management safeguards network availability
- Riverbed® AppResponse speeds up application and network diagnosis and resolution
- Riverbed® Portal consolidates and displays data in user-friendly dashboards
- Riverbed® SteelHead™ maximizes network and application performance

Benefits

- Safeguards access to banking services for customers
- Increases network availability despite 1.5x more traffic
- Faster, more efficient problem diagnosis and issue resolution
- Extensive monitoring dashboards to oversee 40+ critical applications
- Actionable insight to ensure optimum performance and a great customer experience

Challenge: Safeguarding network availability as traffic volumes surge

To stay competitive, Halkbank needs to be able to innovate at speed and release new products to market quickly, all while providing highly available, seamless, digital banking services to customers.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and customers overnight began using more digital channels, the bank's mobile banking platform needed to scale to handle more than double the volume of traffic – growing from one million mobile customers to 2.5 million in a short timeframe.

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Mehmet Arpa
IT Manager, Halkbank

“Mobile is our most used channel, followed by Internet banking and physical branches,” explains Namık Kemal Uçkan, Head of IT Operations at Halkbank. “While we knew we could scale to handle the increase in traffic, we needed to increase the capacity of our network performance management tool to ensure we could identify network issues before they risked disrupting services for customers and impacting our reputation.”

Without a robust solution in place, finding the source of issues to resolve them quickly can be challenging, and if the issue isn't related to the network the IT team needs to know quickly so the relevant department can be notified.

“If mobile banking went down for even a few hours customers wouldn't be able to access their accounts or process transactions. Our goal is to provide 100% availability for all services, so we need a solution that helps us be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to network management,” adds Uçkan.

Solution: Refreshing reliable solutions from a long-term partner

Halkbank has been a Riverbed customer for over 10 years. The bank deployed Riverbed® SteelHead™ across more than 1,000 branches in 2011 for WAN optimization accelerating application access and beating latency impact on the Core Banking system. Two years later, the company rolled out Riverbed Network Performance Management, including Riverbed® AppResponse, which monitors the applications underpinning financial and online banking services.

Mehmet Arpa, IT Manager at Halkbank continues, “We’ve been very happy with Riverbed and the ease of use, performance, and reliability of our existing products. Riverbed also has great local and global support services. Refreshing our solutions was the obvious choice, and we were excited to use new features such as SSL certificate monitoring to help keep data secure when browsing the web.”

Riverbed Network Performance Management monitors critical services across the network and data center using Riverbed Portal, which consolidates and displays data in user-friendly dashboards that monitor more than 40 business-critical applications and proactively identifies any performance issues before it impacts end-users.

“There's no other product that can find the root cause of issues faster than Riverbed's Network Performance Management solution.”

Mehmet Arpa
IT Manager, Halkbank

Portal dashboards are also used by other IT teams, with a color-coding system in place to identify the source of any developing issues – red alerts mean an issue is server related, yellow alerts relate to transmission, green indicates a payload issue, and blue is for connection and firewall faults. Riverbed's SLA dashboards for critical applications are a highly important view for Halkbank's executives.

"Before Riverbed, our network was like a black box with no visibility, which meant IT was often blamed when there was a service issue. Now that we have improved network visibility, we can easily understand where issues are and notify the right team to fix it before it causes an outage. This actionable insight ensures we maintain a high level of customer service," explains Arpa.

The solution is one of many integrated with the bank's IT management platform, giving the team real-time visibility of the network and applications and generating alerts when there's an issue. By calculating SLAs on the platform, Halkbank can track how service availability is impacting SLAs to help it continuously improve services and strive for that 100% availability.

Riverbed AppResponse is also helping the team to proactively identify and fix issues using automated base lines, which was particularly helpful to safeguard the availability of mobile banking services during peaks in demand due to COVID-19.

"There's no other product that can find the root cause of issues faster than Riverbed's Network Performance Management solution," adds Arpa.

"With automated alerts, mean-time-to-resolution is almost at zero. We can see an anomaly as soon as it happens and resolve it before it impacts service. This actionable insight really does ensure optimum performance and a great customer experience."

Namık Kemal Uçkan
Head of IT Operations, Halkbank

Benefits: Providing seamless services to customers

The Riverbed solutions have significantly increased visibility over the network and applications, enabling the IT team to proactively monitor the environment. In one case, Riverbed helped the networking team identify that the issues plaguing the banking platform were code related, so they could route it to the software development team.

"With automated alerts, mean-time-to-resolution is almost at zero. We can see an anomaly as it happens and resolve before it impacts service. This actionable insight ensures optimum performance and a great customer experience. Thanks to Riverbed, we've had no downtime on our mobile platform at all over the past two years, despite more than double the volume of traffic," concludes Uçkan.

Next, the team is planning to roll out more automation and explore AI Ops as its volume of data grows, and Riverbed's Network Performance Management capabilities will help the team to better manage networking data and events correlation as well as continuing to unlock visibility of the network.

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