



4 Steps to Automated Real-time Reporting for MFBs and MFIs

Know and control your finances, operations and reporting
with a few clicks

Report prepared by Oradian

The time of cumbersome spreadsheets and manual data consolidation is over. Microfinance banks (MFBs) and microfinance institutions (MFIs) of any type and size can now gain access to modern software solutions that suit their operations and allow for easy real-time reporting, adjusted to their specific requirements.

Real-time reporting allows to get access to financial and operational data with the click of a button and will allow for fast decision making. On the other hand, gaps from faulty data and human error in manual consolidation efforts as well as manual data collection efforts become a thing of the past.

IT-enabling operations encompasses both automating processes (preventing customers from using paper, digitizing workflows, and automating or supporting decision making) and using IT solutions to manage residual operations that must be carried out manually (for example, using software for resource planning). By taking full advantage of this approach, banks can often generate an improvement of more than 50 percent in productivity and customer service.¹



Here are 4 steps which will allow you to be in control of all your finances, operations and reporting at any point in time:

Step 1: Gathering accurate & relevant data

The term ‘garbage in, garbage out’ is used since the time of early computers in the 1950s, meaning that the end-product of data, a report can only be as accurate as the information it is based on. A simple difference of allowing users to choose from pre-defined options rather than entering free text can avoid many data entry mistakes which effectively make data unusable.

Additionally, it is crucial to carefully select which data should be tracked. Data should be relevant and should be verifiable and comparable e.g. through benchmarking. For example, an institution issuing agricultural loans could easily compare the supplied numbers about last

¹ Source: [Automating the bank's back office](#) by McKinsey Digital

year's harvest with the ones provided by other clients with similar field sizes, the same crop in a comparable area.

Step 2: Real-time data consolidation and storage

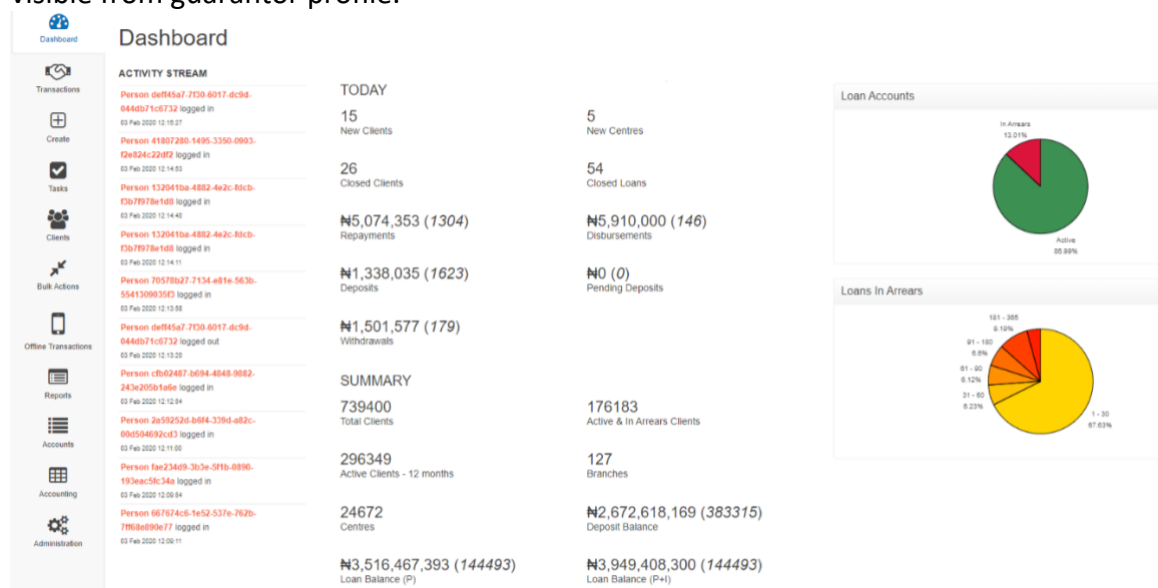
All operational data should be consolidated in real-time. This means that all data should be stored in a central location, ideally in the cloud which is accessed via a simple internet connection. This approach ensures that data can be used immediately after entry.

To minimize fraud risks, not any user on the system should be able to delete data in the system. Instead, the system should allow to make corrections while ensuring that all relevant audit trails are in place.

Step 3: Maintaining data accuracy & relevance

As only few data points are valid forever it is of a high importance that data can be easily updated. Client data should be updatable by field staff directly through a mobile app with offline capabilities which ensures that any updates, e.g., a change in address, even in the most remote locations can be easily recorded.

After recording, the systems in use needs to ensure that the updated information is accessible from all relevant places. For instance, if a client that is listed as a customer for one account is also a guarantor for another account – in such case the edited address should now also be visible from guarantor profile.



Data-aggregating real-time dashboard of Instafin by Oradian allows immediate insights.

Step 4: Data availability: all information at your fingertips

If the first 3 steps are followed, good systems will be able to provide reports about both financial and operational data with the click of a button. In addition to that they will allow for easy data aggregation necessary to include in reports requested by auditor and regulators.

All past data should be accessible to allow for easy historic analysis. Equally, all updates and changes made in the data should be well reflected in the system and available to users of the business intelligence platform. Allowing for the setup of dashboards and standardized templates, reports required to run your business are now available at your fingertips.

Banks that succeed in adopting a new real-time banking mindset will be well positioned to seize another new opportunity presented by immediate payments: the chance to develop and launch compelling new products and services for customers.²

Strategic outlook

Besides giving you the bare minimum access and control of your operations and financials real-time reporting is also the base for any future strategic decisions you might be making. Think about the wealth of opportunities new technologies, the rise of mobile internet access and smart phones in the hands of digital natives bring:

- Artificial intelligence can, if it has access to accurate real-time information, support the credit scoring and client selection process to allow the issuance of more affordable credit.
- Payment services around e-wallets, digital currencies and instant remittance allow transactions to happen instantly given the underlying systems support real-time data.
- Providing mobile banking solutions to end-clients directly is only possible if all account information is accurate and update in real time. Failing this, clients won't be able to see the correct account information on their mobile banking app

Conclusion

Real time reporting has a wide array of advantages for modern MFBs and MFIs. To future proof business model and strategy, MFBs and MFIs must start steering in the right direction today by starting with the homework around data relevance, accuracy and consolidations. Following this, they will be well equipped to face the strengthened competition from both commercial banks and fintech players.

About Oradian

Oradian a financial inclusion company and provider serving financial institutions in remote, hard-to-reach communities. Using insights from our community of customers, Oradian builds a cloud-based toolset that financial institutions plug into to access best practice and efficiency. Their global community is made up of over 80 financial institutions in 12 countries serving over 4 million end-clients.

² Source: [Real-time payments for real-time banking report](#) by Accenture