



ALFAM

Consumer Credit

ALFAM innovates the credit process with open API

client reference



Info Support helped credit lender ALFAM (subsidiary of ABN AMRO Bank N.V.) innovate the credit process for distribution partners. Using an open API allows distribution partners to fully integrate the credit application process in their own systems. Info Support guided the entire change process, including the technical realization and implementation.

ALFAM needed a new credit process because of the growing complexity of the distribution chain, which was having an adverse effect on both costs and response time. At the same time, there has been a shift in the financial sector as a whole towards more openness, due in part to the introduction of the PSD2 regulation: a new guideline that prescribes that European banks must open up their payment details to third parties. By developing an updated vision on digital cooperation, ALFAM is innovating the credit process and wants to remain a leader in the financial sector. Consumers also expect transparency and quick service, in relation to credit applications as well. This requires close cooperation between the credit lender and the distribution partner, without making any compromises on customer privacy or information security.

“Info Support employs professionals who bring with them a culture of innovation. A mindset geared towards change and constant improvement. This has an enormous positive impact on the ALFAM culture.”

Krijn de Haan, Information Manager at ALFAM

The use of an open API

Creating an optimal digital credit process for ALFAM was a challenge because the distribution partners have wishes that diverge from each other. According to Krijn de Haan, Information Manager at ALFAM, the challenge in this project laid primarily in figuring out: How specific or generic should the process become? Krijn: “The fact that every distribution partner has different needs made it crucial to provide a flexible process.”

Info Support developed an open API to meet these needs. An API - Application Programming Interface - is like a kind of interpreter that speaks all languages. An API ensures that different software programs, all of which speak their own language, can still communicate with each other. For software developers, this means that they no longer have to program functionalities, they can easily call on them via the open API. So using an open API allows ALFAM to offer functionalities which distribution partners can easily integrate in their own processes.

Krijn: “In this way, ALFAM can set up a simple and standardized process on the back-end, while distribution partners have the freedom to set up the process however they see fit on the front-end.” The use of an open API is actually a kind of mass custom solution, which ensures that a company’s own process always ties in with the user’s process, in this case that of the software developers of the distribution partners. The great advantage for ALFAM is that the use of an open API indirectly improves the submission quality of the credit applications and reduces the likelihood of errors because the processes of ALFAM and of the distribution partners tie in seamlessly with each other.

A quick time-to-market thanks to co-creation

The element of co-creation is particular to this

open API. Info Support and ALFAM decided to involve three of ALFAM’s distribution partners closely in the process, so that it could be continuously tested whether functionalities were necessary or not. This made the ultimate process as simple and efficient as possible. This approach involving end users also ensured a quick time-to-market. The process was realized within six months.

Cultural turnaround

Alongside the technical side of the digital transformation, it is important to both Info Support and ALFAM that the solution enjoys broad support throughout the organization. Krijn: “‘Culture eats strategy for breakfast,’ that is Info Support’s mindset and I wholeheartedly agree. You may have a great solution, but if you don’t have the right culture in your organization, it won’t work. For new and innovative solutions you need an agile, learning culture. Info Support lives and breathes this culture. Because we work with mixed teams that include employees from both ALFAM and Info Support, Info Support’s innovative culture was conveyed to our own employees naturally. The cooperation with Info Support prompted an enormous cultural turnaround at ALFAM, for which we are incredibly grateful to Info Support.”

Digital information security

A great deal of attention was devoted to information security during the development of the open API. After all, the details exchanged in credit applications are personal and confidential and require optimal security. That is why a choice was made for strong authentication, on the basis of OpenID Connect. The security measures were tested extensively and approved by a renowned consultancy agency. The API was developed by Info Support on the basis of open standards with .NET.

Corporate start-up method

Info Support worked according to the corporate start-up method in order to realize the new credit process. According to this principle, a multidisciplinary start-up team works independently on innovative solutions and products. This team is part of the overarching organization, but functions entirely independently. This allows even large organizations to be flexible and innovative.

