

Banking Automation **BULLETIN**



Strong growth in cards and mobile wallets in China

Branch transformation gives boost to TCRs

Banknote degradation use is on the rise in the Americas

Who should foot the bill for financial inclusion in Nigeria?

UK's fintech sector is ready to be fruitful and multiply

Country profile: Germany

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Branch transformation gives boost to TCRs

Making branch technology forecasts in 2021 is complicated because of the array of overlaying factors pushing the market in different directions.

Increased use of cashless payments and mobile

banking are reducing footfall in bank branches in many countries. Banks are responding in some cases by closing branches, but more frequently by changing the way branches operate.

RBR recently published its *Branch Transformation 2021* report which examines, among other technologies, the market for teller assist units (TAUs). The research shows that overall TAU numbers fell, albeit negligibly, by less than 1% last year. At the same time, however, the number of teller cash recyclers (TCRs), which today represent the largest share of units installed and shipped, continues to grow. Because TCRs accept banknotes and recycle them to then be dispensed, they are the most efficient of the TAU product types.

The growth in TCRs should not be a surprise, as use of the technology is increasingly valuable in a branch environment where efficient cash management is a top priority. Few banks believe they can eliminate cash from their branches entirely, so most are aiming to automate cash handling with TAUs and/or self-service devices. Storing cash in secure devices facilitates an open plan environment that lies at the core of most bank branch strategies, while TCRs provide fast and accurate cash handling for transactions carried out by branch staff.

RBR's research involves speaking to hundreds of banks all around the world each year, and it is clear that a huge amount of effort is being made to transform branches so they are fit for the future. What is happening with TAUs directly mirrors what is happening with bank branches more generally. Unit numbers may be falling, but the sophistication of the technology being used is increasing.

And then there is a twist in the tale.

With TAU numbers having fallen for six years in a row, it is tempting to predict further decline, but RBR is forecasting a modest increase by 2025. While there will be continued downward pressure on branch numbers in many countries, RBR believes that the need to offer secure, fast, accurate and efficient service in those branches that remain will ultimately win out.

Dominic Hirsch, Editor

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