

International mobility

Giving staff the opportunity to work in different countries is part of ING Direct's human resources strategy. We offer short-term assignments (maximum three months) and long-term (one to three years) assignments. Both long- and short-term assignments have been steadily increasing in number and are expected to rise further in 2008.

State-of-the-art IT systems

Internet security is one of the most important issues for our customers, so we strive to minimise risks and use proven technology. We share best practices to optimise the development cycle. Strong IT is crucial for the business and ING Direct is always looking to achieve industry-leading reliability and provide flawless service to end-users to remain competitive. In 2007, the business continued to invest in systems to ensure that they are highly secure, in addition to being flexible and cost-effective.

Industry recognition

Our efforts have been recognised by the market: ING-DiBa Germany was voted 'Best Bank in Germany' by the business magazine Euro; ING-DiBa Austria's customer service was ranked in the top three in a major Austrian survey; and ING Direct Australia was rated number one in the national Global Customer Satisfaction survey.

CONCLUSIONS AND AMBITIONS

ING Direct has been operating for ten years with continued strong commercial growth. It faced a challenging year in 2007. The flat yield curve environment, strong competition and required repositioning of ING Direct UK affected its profit. Excluding the UK and growth investments, profit rose by 7%.

Growth remains the underlying theme of our vision to become the world's most preferred consumer bank. In this respect, good progress was made. In 2007, 2.8 million new customers were welcomed, bringing the total to more than 20 million worldwide.

ING Direct continued to invest in building the business and expanding its product offering and will continue to pursue its growth strategy in a challenging market environment by further building the business – in the US, for example, where we still see much potential – and by product line – savings, mortgages, payment accounts and investment products. In the product area we will concentrate most on expanding the mortgage business, payment accounts and investment products.

Payment accounts will be rolled out in three more countries in 2008, with continued growth in Germany, Spain and the US.

The competitive environment for savings is expected to continue, as other banks intensify their efforts to compete for retail deposits to fund their lending business, so we will make sure that adequate savings rates and proper asset and liability management, closely aligned with our pricing strategy, will be maintained going forward.

ING Direct will continue to take a customer-centric approach as this will give us the best possible chance of achieving our vision of becoming the world's most-preferred consumer bank.

Number of clients, total funds entrusted, residential mortgage portfolio, off balance sheet funds

Clients in thousands funds entrusted residential mortgage portfolio and off balance sheet funds in EUR billion and market rankings at end of November 2007	Clients		Funds entrusted		Residential mortgage portfolio		Off balance sheet funds		Market rankings*
	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	
Canada	1,526	1,491	13.9	12.3	13.2	9.5	0.2	0.2	7th**
Spain	1,624	1,455	12.9	13.0	6.5	4.8	1.9	1.5	9th**
Australia	1,316	1,414	12.0	11.2	18.3	15.4	–	–	6th
France	716	626	12.9	12.3	–	–	1.5	1.2	9th***
United States	6,524	4,629	41.3	36.0	17.9	12.5	1.8	0.3	17th
Italy	937	792	14.2	14.0	3.3	1.8	0.4	0.4	7th*
Germany	6,124	5,703	58.5	57.2	35.9	25.0	12.9	11.0	6th
United Kingdom	1,137	1,099	22.3	36.3	1.9	0.1	–	–	11th
Austria	357	302	3.5	3.5	–	–	0.0	0.0	7th
Total	20,262	17,511	191.5	195.9	97.0	69.0	18.8	14.6	

* Market ranking in retail funds entrusted in local banking market at year-end.

** Ranking at end of November 2007.

*** Ranking at end of September 2007.