

Banque Accord (Auchan) continues its strong growth in 2004

Throughout 2004 and for the fifth consecutive year, Banque Accord, a subsidiary of the Auchan Group, continues growing at a strong pace and has achieved results that are up substantially and higher than forecast.

- The amount paid through its cards (international bank cards, private cards, gift cards) in stores rose to Euro 5.1 billion, as against Euro 4.3 billion during the previous year (+18%).
- Its net result reached Euro 24 million, as against 19 million in 2003 (+26%).
- Its net bank product rose to Euro 159 million, up 15% over the previous year (€138M).
- The amount of credit outstanding managed by the Banque reached Euro 1.6 billion, compared to the 1.2 billion posted the year before (+35%).
- Its risk cost continued to improve, going from 2.3% of credit outstanding to 1.8% over the period.
- The number of its customers also grew significantly (+13%) to reach 3.8 million in the six countries where the bank operates (France, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal).
- Its employees increased from 663 in 2003 to 757 at 31 December 2004, due to the acquisition of part of the activities of Egg France and to international growth.
- Its international activity continued to grow in the six countries where it operates and especially in Portugal, through its Crediplus subsidiary, and in Hungary, where it signed a partnership agreement with Cetelem. Furthermore, Banque Accord opened two business agencies, in China and in Russia.

Egg, a major strategic acquisition

At the end of the year, Banque Accord acquired the bank card and consumer credit activities of Egg France, for which it has already made the client portfolio profitable, as of the first quarter of 2005.

These activities, distributed between Paris and the Tours call centre, enabled Banque Accord to diversify its client portfolio (73,000 clients) and to confirm its position as multichannel bank while reinforcing its Internet know-how.

Sustained activity in France

- **In the area of cards**, 2004 was marked by the launch of a 45-euro Visa Premier card, the cheapest on the market, following the successful 2003 launch of a classic Visa card at 25 euro.
- **8 Banque Accord agencies opened** in eight Auchan hypermarkets distributed over the entire territory: Englos, Le Mans, Le Pontet, Bordeaux-Mériadeck, Montivilliers, Lens-Noyelles-Godault, Plaisir, Lyon-Saint Priest. Situated in the heart of the hypermarket or in adjoining shopping gallery, they welcome customers and their shopping carts; Banque Accord employees trained in bankassurance offer them the Banque Accord line of discount financial services: savings, insurance, personal loans. These agencies provide access to personalised advice on products and services traditionally difficult to sell by phone or Internet.
- **Among the products offered to its customers in 2004**, we note the unique success of personal loans, at a record rate of 2.90% (fixed annual APR). This offer made it possible to access an unassigned amount of between € 3,000 and € 21,500, repayable over a period varying from 12 to 60 months, the 2.90% rate being accessible for all loans under 12 months.

Strong international dynamism

Crediplus and AccordFin, Banque Accord subsidies in Portugal and Spain, greatly developed the Auchan and Leroy Merlin card activities. In Spain, the number of customers grew by 25% in one year.

For its part, Accord Italia launched an Auchan Accord MasterCard in October. This card, available in the country's 38 hypermarkets, is the first marked card in Italy; it is also the first co-branded bank card launched by Banque Accord.

In Hungary, Banque Accord created Accord Magyarorszag in early 2004, as a partner of Magyar Cetelem Bank, which successfully launched its first offers.

Good prospects for 2005

2005 will see the consolidation and development of Banque Accord activities, with the objective of preserving the purchasing power of its customers by reinforcing its "discount" positioning. To do this, Banque Accord will pursue the launch of new products and expand its partnerships everywhere in France and internationally, where its growth rests on support from Auchan and its partner stores.

In terms of products, Banque Accord will continue to innovate by creating low-price quality products and putting its historic electronic banking know-how and multichannel bank experience to work for its partners, an advantage at a time when Business Europe is growing.

Finally, with an ethical approach to permanent quality, Banque Accord will continue — beyond its "discount" policy — to fight overindebtedness and, more generally, to promote all business measures that contribute to combating bank exclusion.

About BANQUE ACCORD

Banque Accord, a 100% subsidiary of the Auchan Group, specialises in electronic banking, management of payment cards, and distribution of financial products and services (credit, savings, insurance).

At the end of the first quarter of 2005, it has a close relationship with more than 4 million customers in Europe, including 2.2 million in France. The amount paid using cards managed by the Banque is Euro 5.1 billion. At 30 April 2005, the Banque employed 900 people in Europe (in Lille, Warsaw, Lisbon, Madrid, Milan and Budapest).

Banque Accord adapts the rules of successful distribution to financial services and optimises its costs in order to redistribute them among its customers. Its purpose: to offer simple and innovative discount products that facilitate life for consumers and promote the business of our partner stores.

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