



## **Fundtech works with Merrill Lynch on Global CASHstar**

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New Jersey-based Fundtech has launched a global cash management solution, which has come out of a joint development with Merrill Lynch. Dubbed Global CASHstar, the first phase of the implementation at Merrill's is due to be completed around the end of the year, after which it will be commercially available.

The solution will be marketed to financial organizations such as Merrill Lynch to leverage the SWIFT network to communicate between themselves and banks; it will be offered to banks themselves as the platform for providing cash management services to their corporate clients; it will also be offered directly to large corporate customers as a rules-based front-end to connect to their core banks.

On the surface it would be understandable if banks were concerned about the latter option, admits Fundtech's global treasury solutions vice president, Moti Porath. However, not every bank wants to manage the relationship, he says. If corporates are not as tied in as before then those banks with competitive and broad offerings combined with good service levels should have nothing to fear. The system would also allow banks to tailor their service level agreements and prices, he says. Some customers will do everything locally and then send a file, others will want to be interactive. Banks can also take into account issues such as who does approvals and verifications. Part of the way ahead will include interfaces for corporates into systems such as SAP's R/3, adds Porath.

Global CASHstar will offer multi-currency payments, treasury workflow automation, and real-time balance analysis through a Windows NT browser-based front-end linked to a central Unix and Oracle server. "Rules can be pre-configured for individual payments ensuring minimum data entry requirements," says Porath. Merrill Lynch is has over 2,000 cash accounts around the world and will use the solution for intra-day funding and forecasting. A second release will bring payment scheduling and remote Internet access for information retrieval. The offering has been written from scratch, although Fundtech has made use of specifications and designs from some of its existing offerings, says Kvaale.

On the payments side, Fundtech has gained a \$1 million contract from the head office of Allied Irish Bank for its PAYplus system to handle real-time gross settlement payments processing. PAYplus has also been taken of late by two banks in South Africa and one in Italy. This was via the Tandem (now Compaq) Payments Factory, of which PAYplus is a key part.