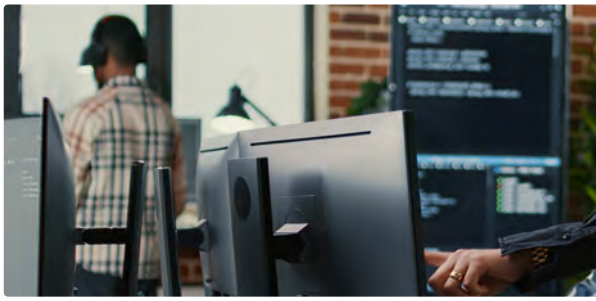
SILOED WORLD OF BANKING SERVICES

Traditional product-led banking models are becoming outdated. When banks operate in silos, they miss the value of customer relationships and can limit cross-selling. This weakens service coordination, and leads to pricing that does not reflect business that clients bring in says Sudheer Padiyar at SunTec Business Solutions.



The way businesses operate in the UAE has changed dramatically. Corporate banking, however, has not evolved at the same pace. Today's companies are more digital, more international, and far more interconnected than they were even a decade ago.

A mid-sized enterprise in Dubai may now source suppliers across Asia, manage customers across the GCC, process payments in multiple currencies, and navigate increasingly sophisticated compliance and tax requirements, all while expecting real-time financial visibility.

This shift is happening alongside the UAE's rapid economic diversification. According to the UAE Ministry of Economy and Tourism, non-oil activities accounted for a record 77.3% of the country's real GDP in the first quarter of 2025, marking the highest contribution in the nation's history. Finance, trade, logistics, manufacturing, and construction continue to drive this growth.

As the UAE strengthens its position as a global business and investment hub, expectations from banks are changing. Yet many financial institutions still manage corporate relationships in silos, limiting the ability to provide a connected client view.

For businesses, banking is never experienced as isolated products. A logistics company may simultaneously rely on trade finance for imports, treasury services to manage currency exposure, lending facilities for expansion, payroll systems for employees, and digital payment infrastructure for suppliers.

A hospitality group may depend on merchant acquiring, cash management, foreign exchange, and working capital solutions simultaneously. From the client's perspective, these are all interconnected parts of running a business.

Inside many banks, however, these services are still handled independently across teams and systems. Relationship managers overseeing lending may not have visibility into treasury activity. Payments teams may see transaction volumes without understanding the wider customer relationship.

Clients are often asked to provide the same information repeatedly across departments, while pricing and recommendations can feel disconnected from their actual business needs.

The result is operational inefficiency and a customer experience that feels inconsistent, at a time when businesses increasingly expect seamless, data-driven engagement. This challenge is intensifying as the UAE's corporate ecosystem evolves.

Further, the SME segment has evolved significantly. According to the Central Bank of the UAE, the total balance of facilities and loans extended by UAE banks to SMEs reached AED 81.2 billion by the end of the first half of 2024, while SMEs today contribute more than 60% of the



SUDHEER PADIYAR

Regional Head EMEA and Global Head Ecosystem, SunTec Business Solutions



UAE's non-oil GDP.

These businesses now have more complex banking needs. Many SMEs operate across borders, manage multi-currency transactions, rely on digital payments, and require faster access to liquidity and working capital.

Banks are therefore under increasing pressure to deliver the same connected, insight-driven experiences to SMEs too.

Similarly, a manufacturing company has vastly different operating cycles and financing requirements compared to a technology consultancy, retailer, or logistics provider. Their expectations from banking relationships are equally distinct.

This is why traditional product-led banking models are becoming increasingly outdated. When banks operate in silos, they often miss the full value of customer relationships. This can limit cross-selling opportunities, weaken service coordination, and lead to pricing decisions that do not reflect the broader business that clients bring.

Further, as the UAE accelerates payment modernisation, faster digital payments, real-time settlement, and integrated treasury ecosystems will provide deeper insights into how businesses operate and manage liquidity. Banks that fail to connect these insights risk missing commercial opportunities and weakening long-term growth and retention.

Corporate banking clients increasingly expect faster decisions, more coordinated support, and banking relationships that reflect how their businesses actually function. When those expectations are not met, companies distribute their banking activities across multiple institutions rather than deepening engagement with a single bank. For banks, this means reduced share of wallet and weaker long-term commercial relationships.

The next competitive advantage in corporate banking will come from better visibility, not more products. Banks increasingly need a connected understanding of customer relationships across lending, treasury, payments, trade finance, servicing, and commercial activity.

Institutions with stronger visibility can make better risk decisions, improve pricing consistency, identify revenue opportunities earlier, and deliver more relevant support to clients.

Visibility also means better service coordination and smarter deal and pricing management. From our experience working with financial institutions globally, one of the biggest barriers is the inability to connect commercial decisions across products.

Relationship-based pricing, deal governance, billing, and profitability are often managed independently, creating gaps in how banks assess and maximise corporate relationships. An intelligent revenue layer that brings these capabilities together enables banks to make more informed decisions, strengthen pricing governance, and deliver more consistent client experience.

More importantly, banks gain a clearer understanding of where sustainable growth truly exists. This is particularly relevant in the UAE. ■



- For businesses, banking is never experienced as isolated products.
- Inside many banks, services are still handled independently across teams and systems.
- Relationship managers overseeing lending may not have visibility into treasury activity.
- Payments teams may see transaction volumes without understanding customer relationship.
- Clients are often asked to provide the same information repeatedly across departments.
- Many SMEs operate across borders, manage multi-currency transactions, and require faster access to liquidity.