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**Deutsche Bank**

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***Define The Name, Define History – The Experience of Deutsche Bank***

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**Abstract**

When the history of a business is written then, it is generally the eponymous company which passes on tradition and heritage. The case of Deutsche Bank can be considered a paradigm of this principle. Although today's Deutsche Bank is a result of a long and still ongoing process of mergers and acquisitions, in which several hundred other banks have been incorporated, none of those banks have been the subject of historical accounts since they disappeared from the stage. Most of them have been forgotten completely or are known only to experts. If we look for the reasons for this collective amnesia, the archiving of primary sources is a key factor. In many cases not a single record from the provenance of a merged or acquired bank has survived in Deutsche Bank's archives. The most serious loss must certainly be the records of Disconto-Gesellschaft, the leading German bank from 1856 to around 1890, which amalgamated with Deutsche Bank in 1929 in a "merger of equals". Whereas most of the Deutsche Bank files remained untouched, most of the Disconto-Gesellschaft files were destroyed only a few years after the merger.

For more than a century the consolidation process in banking continued on a national basis. During the last two decades, however, mergers and acquisitions have become an international issue. Since 1986 Deutsche Bank has acquired sizable banks in Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. All of them were re-named as "Deutsche Bank" after short time. As in Germany, the loss of independence and the disappearance of the former corporate names have been accompanied by a dwindling interest in the history and the records of the former entities. In addition to these well known problems, new challenges also have emerged due to different cultures and languages. In order to preserve the heritage of these institutions, three different solutions have been introduced:

- the records stay in situ, where they were generated and most likely will be used again (Banca d'America e d'Italia, Banco Comercial Transatlàntico, Banco de Madrid).
- the records are deposited in a public archive or library (Morgan Grenfell, Alex Brown).
- a temporary branch of the Historical Institute is set up, in which records are localised, reviewed and recorded before they are sent to the archives in Frankfurt (Bankers Trust).