

MARINETTE COUNTY EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION

2005 COMPUTERWORLD HONORS CASE STUDY

FINANCE, INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE

A COUNTY EMPLOYEES CREDIT UNION HAS BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE ITS ONLINE OPERATIONAL COSTS BY 25 PERCENT WHILE ALSO INCREASING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY 20 PERCENT, TRIPLING ITS ASSET SIZE, AND IMPROVING MEMBER SERVICES. [20055373]



SUMMARY

Since deploying the Progress-based Sharetec integrated credit union software system, the Marinette County Employees Credit Union has been able to reduce its online operational costs by 25 percent while also increasing labor productivity 20 percent, tripling its asset size, and improving member services.

APPLICATION

The stated mission of the Marinette County Employees Credit Union is “to provide a variety of financial services to our members in a friendly, caring environment, in an efficient manner at competitive interest rates, thereby making this a one stop financial institution.”

Founded in 1956, the Marinette County Employees Credit Union is a closed charter credit union that serves employees of Marinette county, Wisconsin and related organizations and institutions. Driving down costs and increasing customer service are central to the goals of the Marinette County Employees Credit Union, which is a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative that continually strives to serve the financial needs of its members and help them fulfill their financial dreams. The credit union offers checking and savings accounts, debit cards, loans, mortgages, and online and telephone banking services.

The Marinette County Employees Credit Union had an existing online system that charged high fees and offered limited potential to enable new services, drive down operating costs, or improve customer service. The credit union is now streamlining operations through Progress-based Sharetec, an integrated credit union core software system distributed by Progress Application Partner (AP) Bradford-Scott Data Corp., a leading data processing systems vendor, to reduce its monthly costs by 25 percent over its former online application.

Based on the Progress OpenEdge platform, Sharetec is an efficient, in-house data processing system that uses the business logic scripting capabilities of the Progress development tools and the power and flexibility of the Progress relational database to tightly integrate critical business processes.

BENEFITS

Prior to Sharetec, the Marinette County Employees Credit Union utilized an online system that required a dedicated telephone line and charged fees on top of its monthly service contract to run reports. We had no capability to do the things we wanted without being nicked and dined.

To make matters worse, we had to wait hours for a call back when we had technical problems. In addition to creating a backlog of work for us, those kinds of delays caused even more anxiety for members waiting to hear about loans, mortgages, and other services.

After learning about a nearby credit union’s positive experiences with Sharetec, the Marinette County Employees Credit Union agreed to the conversion. We knew we made the right decision when an IT team from Bradford-Scott Data Corp. remained onsite for a week after the overnight installation to ensure fluid operations.

By automating virtually every repetitive task, Sharetec enables employees to focus on managing member relationships. As a result, the asset size of the Marinette County Employees Credit Union has tripled since Sharetec was implemented. We have been able to drive down costs and save time and money while enhancing our customer service.

We chose Sharetec because of its ease of use and support, and it has exceeded our expectations.

Rather than typing everything by hand, documents such as credit reports, cashier checks, forms and letters are now laser generated and printed. Account overdrafts and fees are automatically tallied each morning, and loan payments and other account transfers can be scheduled for a recurring date.

Robert Carrigan,
Chairman of the Chairmen's Committee

Ron Milton,
Vice-Chairman of the Chairmen's
Committee

Dan Morrow,
Chief Historian

IMPORTANCE

We estimate a 20 percent increase in labor productivity as a result of this technology initiative. As a result of the timesaving, we can now allocate staff time to previously neglected but important activities, such as marketing endeavors and in-house training. We have also been able to leverage the timesavings to add new benefits for our members, such as a Junior Savers Club and workshops that teach students how to balance a checkbook. We didn't have time to consider offering these high-value services before Sharetec.

Virtually every repetitive task has been automated, allowing us to improve customer service and enhance quality control. For example, before Sharetec we had to type all of our loans and delinquency letters by hand. We had to get on the phone and call for credit reports that would be faxed to us hours later. Now all of our forms and letters are generated automatically, and we gain instant online access to credit reports.

We have dramatically improved customer service through the use of information technology. A credit report that previously might have taken hours or even days can be done while a member is on the phone or with a teller. We now offer customized web portals where each member can securely gain access to his or her account over the Internet using a standard Web browser, and customers can also access account information over the phone using our automated systems.

We've eliminated the need for the old passbook accounts and replaced them with Internet-based, real-time access to information. This information technology solution now provides us with the information we need to manage operations more efficiently. For example, we now automatically get daily cash flow and loan delinquency reports, and we can easily create customized reports that shed new insights into the state of operations.

ORIGINALITY

For us, this was a major change. We shifted from a time-sharing online approach to gaining more control over our business by deploying the Sharetec applications and the Progress OpenEdge database on an internal server. It marked a fundamental change in how we conduct business, and it impacted virtually every aspect of daily operations.

SUCCESS

Since we deployed Sharetec, we have realized a 25 percent cost improvement over our previous system. Our business processes and workflows have been streamlined, resulting in a 20 percent increase in labor productivity. We've been able to reallocate staff time to improve customer service and offer value-added services to our members. And we've been able to launch new marketing programs that have contributed to our ability to triple our asset size.

Both members and employees have received major benefits. Members have online access to their accounts, and they can take advantage of new, high-value programs and workshops. They also receive highly competitive rates because we're able to keep our costs down. Employees are removed from virtually all of the previous repetitive, time-consuming tasks and they can instead reallocate their time toward better serving our members.

DIFFICULTY

The most difficult part of this information technology initiative was deciding that we had gone as far as we could with our old online service. Change is always difficult, particularly when it impacts all of your employees and all of your members. Employees swiftly embraced the change as they realized their time was being freed up for more interesting, challenging, and worthwhile tasks, and most of the members quickly realized the value of Web-based interfaces, although for some of the customers familiar with old passbooks initially missed their little savings booklets—but there is no longer any resistance. Sharetec has provided measurable benefits to the entire Marinette County Employees Credit Union community and allowed the organization to better serve the needs of our members and more efficiently manage operations.