The Changing Face of Tellers

Determining the Balance Between Tech & Touch

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Introduction / Statement of the Issue

Credit unions behave differently from other financial institutions. The difference has always been clear and consistent: A credit union can be recognized by our people-centered actions whether in Alaska or Florida, in the heart of a major American city or in a tiny village in the developing world. Why do we behave differently? Because we think differently. Driving everything we do is a set of powerful ideas that make up the credit union philosophy of "people helping people" and/or people are more important than dollars. These ideas are enduring. They have worked successfully, virtually unchanged, for a century and a half. Our member-centric, personal service philosophy drives everything we do. There is a reason we call our clients members, not customers.

Recently, there has been much discussion on the changing of credit union branches due to technology. A more focused question remains: How does the current labor force, specifically tellers, adapt to the increase in available technology through credit unions and their branches? What is the balance needed between personal, human interaction type service to our members and do-it-yourself technology that our members and potential members have grown to expect and sometimes prefer? The fact is, tellers of today are not tellers of yesterday, and we must balance this reality effectively for credit unions to succeed and remain relevant in the marketplace.

Is the credit union focus on personal service going to be a sustainable business strategy for future success? Can adopting emerging technology still be considered "personal" if consumers prefer its use? The proof is in the numbers. In the Third Quarter 2016 US Credit Union Profile National Trend report produced by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) and CUNA, as of September 2016, the number of US credit unions total 5,966 – this is down from 6,680 in 2013 and 7,486 in 2010. This substantial decrease could certainly be for reasons other than technology adoption, but much of it can be attributed to consumers choosing to do business with financial institutions that offer products and services that are most convenient (technology-based) for them. Many credit unions are faced with the challenge of affordability of such products and services, among other things, and simply cannot survive.

Yet, many other credit unions and financial institutions around the globe have been quite successful in implementing some state of the art technology teller solutions that members and customers have seemingly adopted very well. For example, Navy Federal Credit Union offers a SMS text banking service that allows a member to set up alerts and quickly access their accounts. Members simply type in short codes to get details about balances, transfers and more. Royal Bank of Canada is betting on video as the next step in customer relationship management with its small business customers. The bank began offering a video chat service in

December 2016, partnering with the technology provider Vidyo, to its small business customers in Canada and the U.S. Pakistan's MCB Islamic Bank Ltd. is expanding access to financial services with biometric authentication cash dispensing technology from Diebold Nixdorf, allowing the bank to offer a seamless customer experience that provides increased security and convenience. Lastly, Hawaii State Federal Credit Union's Pearlridge branch in Aiea, Hawaii just went through a redesign of their 3,896 square-foot facility, introducing teller pods that allow more personal interaction between the credit union's Universalists (not tellers) and its members.

In this paper, we will explore how best to find the "tech versus touch" balance. To do so, we will examine current trends in technology and innovation, credit union employees' skill set necessary for technology adoption, member engagement and adaptation to technology solutions, the effect technology makes to the traditional physical branch model in addition to the teller role, and finally, decisioning the balance that is right for credit union success.

As John Naisbitt said in his 1999 book "High Tech High Touch," in a high tech world with an increasing search for balance, high touch will be the way to differentiate products and services.

Research

Technology and Innovation

Technology is the great disrupter and innovation is the key to remain relevant in the market. The death of video rental giant Blockbuster, caused by the adoption of digital delivery methods, most notably Netflix, is the perfect example of technology as a disrupter to an industry. Technology is also disrupting the banking industry and credit unions must adapt to survive. Many transactions can be completed remotely or via self-service methods, practically eliminating the need for transactional based tellers. From software to hardware, technology is evolving at a rapid rate in the banking sector. What technology is available and how does it affect the role of the teller today?

Online Banking

Online banking allows a member to conduct transactions remotely in a fast and secure way as long as they are connected to the internet. Online banking services allow a member to transfer funds, pay bills, order checks, make payments, scan personal and business checks for deposit, view digital statements, and view transactional activity. Loan balances and other loan information can be accessed through online banking as well. Many credit unions have also moved membership account openings, credit card applications, and various types of loan applications such as mortgage and vehicle online as well. While visiting credit union branches, members may also have access to workstations and/or tablets to encourage usage of online banking.

Mobile Apps/Mobile Banking

Mobile banking allows users to conduct financial transactions remotely with a mobile device such as a mobile phone or tablet. It uses software, usually called an app, provided by the financial institution. Mobile banking is usually available on a 24-hour basis. Some financial institutions have restrictions on which accounts may be accessed through mobile banking or may place a limit on the amount that can be transacted.

Transactions through mobile banking include obtaining account balances and lists of latest transactions, initiating electronic bill payments, transferring funds between accounts. Some apps enable statements to be downloaded and printed at the consumer's premises. Because of the availability of electronic statements, some banks and credit unions charge a fee for mailing hardcopies of statements.

Research completed by FICO (Fair Isaacs Corporation) in 2016 indicated that large banks continue to dominate US market share. They grew to a 57% share from a 50% share – primarily at the expense of credit unions and community banks. Much of this shift in market share has been attributed to the advanced mobile capabilities of the largest financial institutions. In the FICO survey, it was found "that the most-satisfied customers are also the most likely to be using a bank's mobile app once a day or more" leading to the conclusion that investments in technology is paramount to satisfying the needs and wants of the customer base, or in credit union terms, the membership. "The key to preventing good customers from leaving is to anticipate when they're coming to a juncture in the financial relationship," the survey further outlined. To manage attrition, a credit union must leverage existing transaction and member-level data models to anticipate lifecycle changes or possible switching, and make correct decisions related to pricing, cross-sell offers or fee waivers.

Advanced ATMs, Automated Kiosks, Personal Teller Machines, Interactive Teller Machines, In Lobby Teller Devices (ILTs)

Advanced ATMs and automated kiosks are equipped to do the job of a teller. In addition to withdrawal transactions of the typical ATM, a member can also complete deposit transactions. Many kiosks can accept currency deposits of up to 50 bills and up to 30 paper checks at a time. Automated kiosks are usually touch screen and mimic personal mobile devices in appearance and functionality**.**

Personal Teller Machines, Interactive Teller Machines and/or In-Lobby Teller Devices use video chat technology to interact with the member. The member touches the screen and interacts with a virtual teller to make their deposits and withdrawals, among many other services. The member can do everything at these machines that they would normally do with their teller. While named differently based on manufacturer's branding, all three of these machines function similarly and are used in the industry.

Chris Conway's blog post in the CUES Next Top Credit Union Exec blog in 2016 outlined his credit union's (Smart Financial Credit Union, Houston, Texas - $649 million in assets) transition to this technology. "Our virtual tellers are housed centrally and are able to take transactions at all the locations where machines are located. If there are no transactions at any given time, they are able to help with other tasks and help out other departments, making these employees very efficient with very little downtime. Other benefits of this technology include decreased chance of robbery, typically quicker transactions and a more unique transaction experience. It also reduces a huge amount of operational duties and tasks as compared with a traditional branch. Without the operational burden that comes with having to manage a teller line and cash, our platform staff has the ability to assist our members with their other financial needs more easily and efficiently. It also allows the management staff much more freedom in developing and coaching their staff to better serve our membership. Obviously, there were many concerns with making this drastic change. The main concern was that our members would hate it, not want to use it and end up leaving the credit union. There were many opinions that certain groups of our members would not like the technology and would revolt. With these concerns in mind, we strategically hired energetic, extroverted, technically savvy individuals. With our awesome staff constantly present to help our members with the machines, we have had very little opposition to this change and many of our members actually prefer this way of transacting with us. We have proven over the last two and half years that this is a successful concept and that this is the direction Smart Financial will continue to go."

Chatbots

A chatbot (also known as a talkbot, chatterbot, Bot, chatterbox, Artificial Conversational Entity) is a computer program which conducts a conversation via auditory or textual methods. Such programs are designed to convincingly simulate how a human would behave as a conversational partner.   This technology is often included within or as part of Advanced ATMs, Automated Kiosks, Personal Teller Machines, Interactive Teller Machines, In Lobby Teller Devices (ILTs).

When a member asks routine questions, a chatbot can respond with real answers. A chatbot can even be programmed to introduce a real human on exception items or when a member is getting frustrated. Often times, it is entirely possible that the member would never know whether they were chatting with a human or a chatbot. Many credit unions may struggle with this concept as it contradicts traditional personal "good member service" and the people aspect of credit unions. The broader issue credit unions struggle with is how we define good member service and deliver it consistently. In order for a chatbot to work and provide good service, it would fundamentally have to be setup in a way that allows it to handle the gray areas of member service, for example, not all fee reversals are equal. Credit unions would have to muddle through all of these gray area decisions that our employees are empowered to make judgements on today so that these decisions can be embedded into the chatbot's software. This is an arduous task – but if successful – credit unions could see better consistency and service scores overall.

Universal Tellers / Pods / Remote Advisory Services

Many institutions have opted to replace the traditional teller line counter with what the industry refers to as "pods." These pods break up the teller counter into individual areas or stations where employees can help members with a variety of financial transactions. A more open retail design concept, pods also enable employees to interact with members without a perceived barrier, encouraging member and employee collaboration. Employees may walk members throughout the branch, perhaps to see another employee, such as a loan officer or branch manager, or simply walk members in and out. This transfers the role of "teller" to the role of universal teller, universalist, member service representative, or member relations specialist.

Pods usually house cash recyclers. Cash recyclers have become a tried and true technology for increasing efficiencies, and improving cash handling, security and accuracy, all while enhancing the member experience.

The University of Louisiana Federal Credit Union ($45 million in assets) is one of the financial institutions who decided to reconstruct their traditional teller line to round teller station pods as well as electronic cash recyclers instead of cash drawers.

Debbie Kidder, CEO at ULFCU stated, "The decision to remove the teller line and replace it with what we call teller pods was made to utilize the given floor space and make a more inviting atmosphere for our members." She goes on saying that because ULFCU is located on the campus of University of Lafayette, "it just makes sense to bring this new technology to our members." ULFCU likes this concept so much that they have plans to repeat it at their newly announced main branch that is scheduled to open in the spring of 2017.

ULFCU is only one of the financial institutions who have made the decision to switch to the pod concept. Guardians Credit Union ($141 million in assets) headquartered in West Palm Beach, Florida, is currently constructing a new West Palm Beach branch whereby pods will be incorporated into the branch's design and service delivery. "We are optimistic the pod concept will offer a more inviting, warm, and service-oriented environment to better serve our members and to live up to our brand standards of being guardians to our membership," said John Deese, CEO at Guardians CU.

Similarly, but including additional built-in technology, in June 2016, America First CU ($8 billion in assets) headquartered in Riverdale, Utah opened a tech-forward Innovation Center automating nearly all traditional teller and member service tasks. The concept was to feature "expert-at-a-distance" devices. There are no teller lines. Members are greeted by large tactile screens, which allows them to either touch a screen and have various products presented at their fingertips or the screens will feature 3-D models demonstrating products such as automobile loans or mortgages. "Once the information is placed on the screens, members can activate information about those types of products,' said Randy Halley, America First CU's Executive Vice President. "Multiple users can be using the same screen at the same time without interfering with each other." Halley went on to explain that the ILTs used in the center are capable of handling almost any transaction a live teller can.

"There are no loan officers or loan originators. These activities, along with new account openings, will be handled by the expert-at-a-distance devices that allow members to have a conversation with the employee who is best trained to address the service requested by the member," said Halley. He also added that upon entering, there is also a front table that hosts various mobile devices that allow floating staff members to demonstrate how members can use their phones or tablets to access products and services.

These self-serve technologies decrease the need for face-to-face teller assistance in a branch. Next we will explore the human resource side of transitioning tellers to universalist type positions, the skill sets necessary for employees to have to do so, and how and when to complete the transition.

Credit Union Employee Skill Set Necessary for Technology Adoption

The role of the traditional teller is to process transactions for members walking in, cashing checks, making deposits, handling withdrawals, etc. Over time, with the adoption of technology, many institutions have noticed that these staff members have increased downtime and need more to do. They could be trained to cross-sell credit union services, a shift from teller to seller. Sometimes tellers are used to make calls to members, complete early collections calls, or stay updated on product and service training. What is now expected of tellers and front line branch staff has morphed and changed over the years. Now, the branch employee needs to convert their focus from completing transaction counts to fostering engagement and advising the membership, while acting as teller, loan processor, product and service champion and overall account specialist.

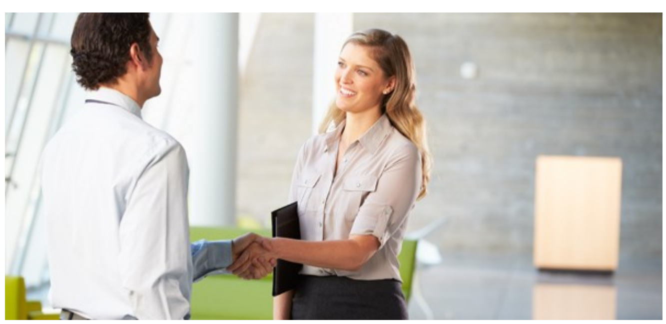
Hence, introducing…Universal Tellers, Universalists, Member Relations Specialists and/or similar titles describing this multi-functioning position at credit unions and other financial institutions.

While the concept of the Universalist is not new, it has taken a long time for the credit union industry as a whole to catch up to their members' demands for a high-touch, high-tech experience, and it is still lagging behind traditional banking institutions. Gone are the days when members set aside a lunch hour to "go to the teller line at a credit union." Consumers conduct financial tasks around the clock from nearly anywhere — at a restaurant, in line at the movies, in the comfort of their homes — and they expect their transactions to go through securely and seamlessly.

But, when members do visit a branch, they expect an experience like no other – an experience a Universalist provides, offering a one-stop shop for all their needs.

Part of this experience is also a first impression, a critical function a Universalist provides – he or she is the key influencer and curator of the member experience right when the member enters the branch. When a member thinks about his/her credit union, he/she sees the face of the friendly, knowledgeable person who assisted him/her, feeling less like a number and more like a valued member. More importantly, a member should leave the branch more informed, empowered, perhaps even delighted, and ultimately glad he/she went in. In short, the Universalist is the key to creating value in the physical branch channel.

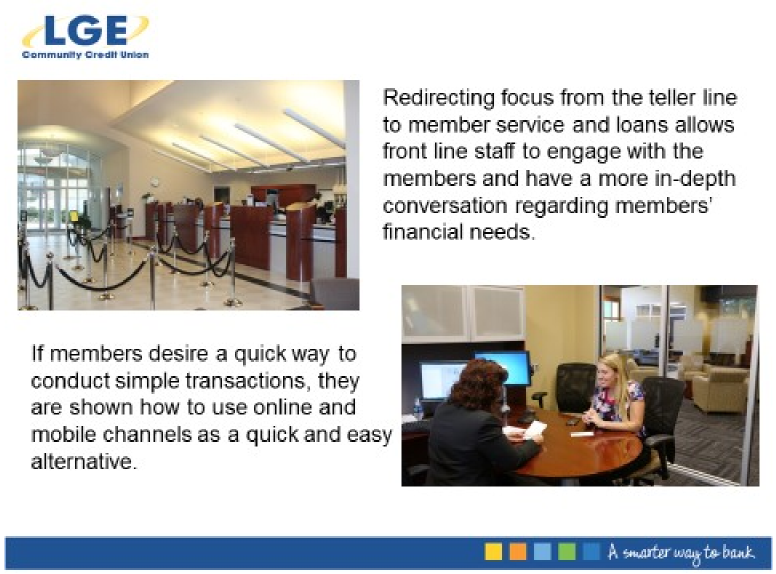
The best cross-trained Universalist employee must not only have preparation and skill, but comprehensive tools that can maximize engagement with members, intentionally designed with both form and function in mind. One of the most powerful tools at the Universalist's disposal is the tablet. This one device brings together multiple pieces of information into one place, where the member can directly interact with all of a credit union's products and services, alongside a knowledgeable partner, a Universalist, who can help guide them to the most customized solutions to their financial needs.



Skillsets Redefined

Freedom First FCU ($453 million in assets), headquartered in Roanoke, Virginia, has added new levels of expertise and now has everything from a basic teller to a universal teller position. A basic teller (Teller 1) is expected to spend most of their time doing transactions, with some expectation of cross-selling (20% of their time), as well as helping with the opening and closing of the branch, greeting members that come in, and helping direct them where they need to go. This requires a high school education or GED and 6 months of job experience.

A Universalist position with Freedom First FCU requires more skills, including opening and closing accounts, explaining loan options, submitting loan requests, imparting general knowledge and answering questions about loans, evaluating member needs, identifying cross-sell opportunities and referring members to other departments like mortgage, insurance and investments. They must show leadership skills when management is not present and help open and close the branch. They must also assist all other staff in the branch operation when needed. This requires someone with two to five years of experience and some level of advanced education like a two-year college degree.



LGE Community CU ($1.1 billion in assets), based in Marietta, GA, has been evolving their branches to use more technology and switching the teller role to Financial Service Advisors (FSAs). They spend more time developing relationships with members. The members like this because they feel like they have a personal banker. The FSAs can answer many questions and assist with loan applications. This credit union has sales staff in another role called Retail Sales Specialist (RSS). This is an advancement opportunity for FSAs if they demonstrate great sales skills. There are incentives and rewards made available to branch staff. These new roles must be appreciated by staff because the credit union was named by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution from 2013-2016 (four years in a row) as one of the Top Work Places in Financial Services & Insurance in the metro Atlanta area.

The world of tellers and front line staff at a credit union is so much more complex than it used to be. Employees in these more advanced positions must be strategic and critical thinkers, and empowered to make decisions. They must comply with the Bank Secrecy Act, direct members to various other departments, and understand the credit union's products and services and technology being used. Many times they are the employees that demonstrate the credit union's technology for members. They listen to member needs and cross-sell appropriate items at the right time. They have an operational, member service and a sales job. Sometimes they work at branches with extended hours to better serve the needs of the membership. It is a lot of responsibility to ask of one person.

But, high performing Universal Tellers or Universalists can sometimes earn up to double what a basic teller does. Highly motivated staff who are compensated for their efforts are great to have, but there is a challenge. Members do not visit the branch as often and might engage through another channel, impacting the earnings capability of staff receiving incentives.

Shifting the Paradigm

When is the time to make the transition to a Universalist type environment? A credit union must examine transaction data and financials to help determine when is best. Also, they must have a good training plan in place for the transition to be successful.

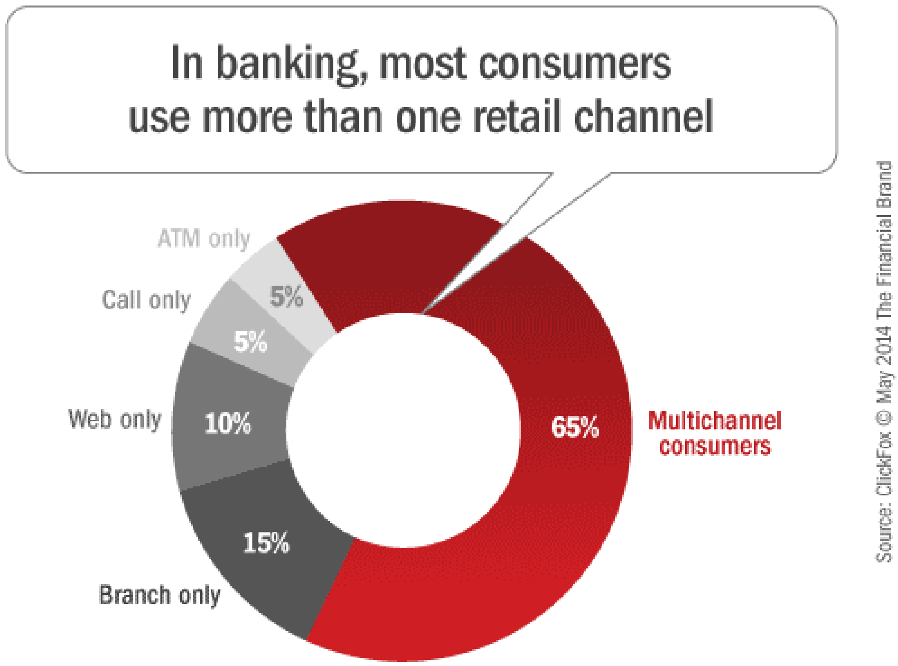
FSMI (a Financial Branch Performance Optimization Company) reports that transactions in the banking industry have declined by over 45% since 1992, while salaries and benefits have simultaneously increased by over 84%. Thus, labor cost per transaction has increased by 124%, and productivity, as defined by transactions processed, has decreased by nearly 18%, all resulting in the average cost per transaction doubling from $0.48 to $1.08. In this challenging environment, the need to enhance employees' ability to sell and provide valuable advice has never been more critical in order to offset employee compensation costs.

We need to ask ourselves: Would we rather pay four employees to do the work of five, six or even seven? Cross-trained employees with expanded skillsets reduce the need for extemporaneous headcount. By training one individual for multiple roles, branches are able to reduce staff by as much as a third in some cases and streamline expenses with a leaner staff that is more productive and efficient. Employees are able to cross-sell and engage members in valuable conversations, while servicing complex transactions and ultimately improving overall member satisfaction.

If we decide that transitioning to a Universalist type platform is best, the vital next step is to implement a training plan that allows the Universalists to successfully operate. Many Universalist candidates have previously been tellers. They must not only have fundamental skills training to support more robust job functions, but also understand the organization's vision for transformation and how to use their new skills to deliver on this vision in the Universal Branch environment.

Member Engagement and Adaptation to Technology Solutions

How do credit union members react and adapt to the technology shift? They seemingly welcome the change, and expect varied service delivery channels as well.



Let's examine an example from Element Federal Credit Union ($30 million in assets) headquartered in Charleston, West Virginia.

Element FCU Chief + Innovator, Linda Bodie explained that her credit union changed to a dialog branch concept around 2012. They serve over 4,500 members.

"We have an open branch office concept- no teller line. All of our staff in all branches have iPads. The technology we use, whether it is showing a member how to do something on their mobile phone, our iPads or on our core system in the teller pods, it is all just a tool to help the member. Our tellers and staff are critical in having conversations with members about what they are trying to do… connecting the dots. Making sure they are educated about what we offer."

In addition to typical branch transactions, tellers use technology to help members do many things (either doing things for the member or showing the member how to use self-service options) like:

- Applying for a loan
- Reviewing financial education videos or information

- Browsing the CU website
- Ordering checks
- Doing a home banking demo
- Showing them how to use remote deposit capture
- Discussing debit or credit cards

Element FCU trains their staff internally on what they expect from tellers and member service staff. They act more as a universal teller. They must give good service, and know about the credit union's products and services. The tellers must use their knowledge to educate the member at the right time and for the right product or service. The credit union does not want to push products on the members and has no sales goals or incentives for individual staff. Rather, they have overall credit union goals to which staff contribute. The staff and members interact often in their café, where there is free Wi-Fi and coffee. This gives a very casual, conversational opportunity to serve the members and discuss products and services.

The credit union uses many platforms to serve members including phone, fax, mail, Internet branch, Skype, a mobile app called GO Kiosk, text, e-mail, website and social media.

"We use multiple channels for communication. Some members are big into Facebook and that is how they prefer to interact with us. For others, it is coming into the branch and talking to a person face-to-face. Everyone has different preferences for service and we provide many options- some using technology," Bodie said.

As with most credit unions, branch transactions have declined and other technology and electronic channels have increased. Element FCU processes roughly 180 remote deposit capture transactions per week. That means there are 9,300+ less check deposits coming into the credit union branches annually. Through their GO Kiosk mobile app, members can "call ahead" and schedule their branch transaction or pickup. A busy member on the go can request a transaction and have it waiting for him/her. Element FCU's members love that the credit union developed a solution that is all about member convenience.

"Technology, like GO Kiosk, does not take away from the member experience. It allows the teller more time to spend on the member and less on the data entry," Bodie added.

Members are now used to their new branch concept and have grown fond of the interactive nature. It allows for transparency and trust between the teller and the member. Members like that they can watch what is being done on their account and nothing is hidden. Bodie went on to say that since they changed their branch and staff structure, they feel are closer to their members than ever before.

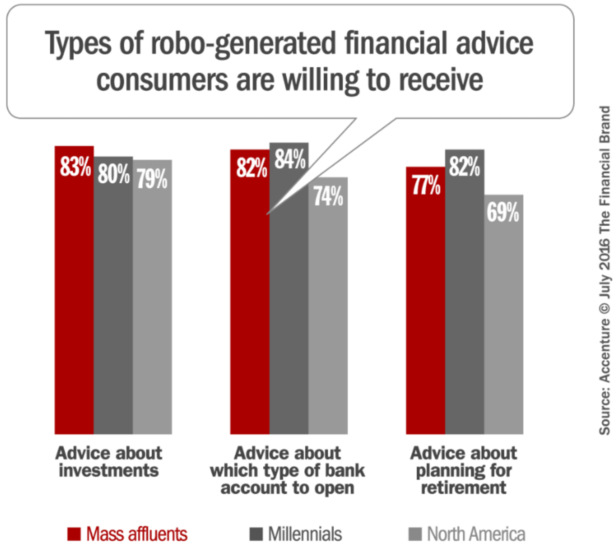
Highlighting some bank examples, The Washington Post reported in April 2016 that Wells Fargo had opened its first high-tech branch three years prior and replaced desks and teller counters with large touch screen ATMs. The 1,000 square foot branch has only a handful of staff that carry tablets to help with transactions in the Washington D.C. area. Also in this region, bank teller numbers dropped in 10 years from 10,980 to 5,990. Pay for tellers rose 35% to $32,250 as the new teller is expected to be well-versed in technology. Banks have found that customer behavior shows a decline in visiting branches and more reliance on do-it-yourself technology.

Umpqua Bank divided up their branches into quadrants starting in 2007. There is one single full service branch, with neighborhood branches in surrounding areas supporting each quadrant. The neighborhood branches can be built fast (in 45 days) and cost half of what a traditional branch costs. Their branches resemble the look and feel of an Apple store with the tech appeal of their digital walls, cash recyclers, video conferencing and tablets. Some of the nation's largest banks are also building branches in this way- called “hub and spoke.” Banks like PNC and Tangerine have even tested Pop-Up branches.

A recent study of over 4,000 consumers in the United States and Canada completed by Accenture covering consumer banking attitudes and behaviors found that “consumers are laser-focused on the value (or lack thereof) that they receive from their banking providers.” “Differentiation based on price or products and services is a zero-sum game for banks. They get trapped in an endless loop of one-upping and matching each other on discounts and product offers where no one wins. Brands ultimately become interchangeable in the customers’ eyes.” The way out, according to Accenture, is to compete on service – to provide superior service consistently across channels. While some customers will always be driven by the deal, others are willing to pay for better service and ease of doing business.

In the Accenture study, consumers said they are intrigued by computer-generated advice. This style of robo-advice automates recommendations and suggestions with insights based on profiles built from digital banking behaviors, questionnaires and advanced algorithms. Robo-advisors have already gained significant traction in the wealth management industry, but Accenture says this trend is also picking up in retail banking, creating an opportunity for banks to deliver additional value – and connect with – new customers. A surprising 46% of consumers are willing to bank using robo-advice. Consumers welcome robo-advice from banks to determine how to allocate investments (79%), the type of bank account to open (74%) and for retirement planning (69%).

“Consumers will continue to dictate how, when and where they want to interact, and banks have an opportunity to use intelligent automation and robotics to simplify and improve the customer experience,” explains David Edmondson, Senior Managing Director of Accenture’s North America Banking practice. “Successful banks will strike the right balance between human and machine interaction to elevate their role in customers’ lives beyond simple transactions and become a go-to resource.”



There is no doubt that consumers expect convenience like they get from Amazon, Google and Samsung, especially from the millennial market. The consumer's needs, wants and requests are driving the change in branch design and staff. Millennials may only visit a branch location once a month, but they may still want engagement through social media and e-mail.

What exactly are millennials looking for in a financial partner? We all want to acquire millennials and post millennials to ensure the future success of our credit unions. Is technology alone the answer?

Millennials overwhelmingly want to do business with institutions they trust. They expect banks and credit unions to be up front about fees, including minimum balances for checking, savings, or other accounts, overdraft and late fees on credit cards, and the total charges accrued in the life of a loan. Millennials also want to do business with companies that give back, whether locally or globally. This is consistent with a general trend among this segment toward doing well by doing good. Willing to make a difference, millennials are also often willing to pay more to do business with an organization that does the same. As member-owned not-for-profits that promote transparency, fair treatment, and community involvement, credit unions are poised to stand out in this regard, and apart from traditional, for-profit banks, whose reputations have suffered among millennials.

Technology solutions alone are not the answer, but are CRITICAL to attract millennials and post millennials, especially mobile solutions. According to a Federal Reserve survey from 2014, 52% of Americans, including millennials, use smart phones and 94% of those use mobile banking apps to check their accounts. 61% of them transfer money on their phone apps and 51% do check deposits by phone. The average usage of mobile is five times per month.

However, more complex transactions, financial advice, questions or opening accounts still seem to be something consumers still want and need to do in-person. Some older members state that they prefer to do check deposits in person rather than trusting technology. Others just like the human interaction and talking to people at the branch. The traditional teller role is more likely to last longer at small financial institutions (both banks and credit unions). In smaller credit unions, the members tend to want to know the people that are helping them and say they like putting a face with the name/voice. There are some credit unions that feel personal service cannot be replaced for those that prefer it.

Banks and credit unions are working to be sure the personal feel does not get lost in all this technology being used. Consumers want you to know them, be looking out for them and reward them. This breeds cross-sell opportunities and loyalty. Member engagement strategies might vary, but they are still at the heart of decisions being made in the future of banking.

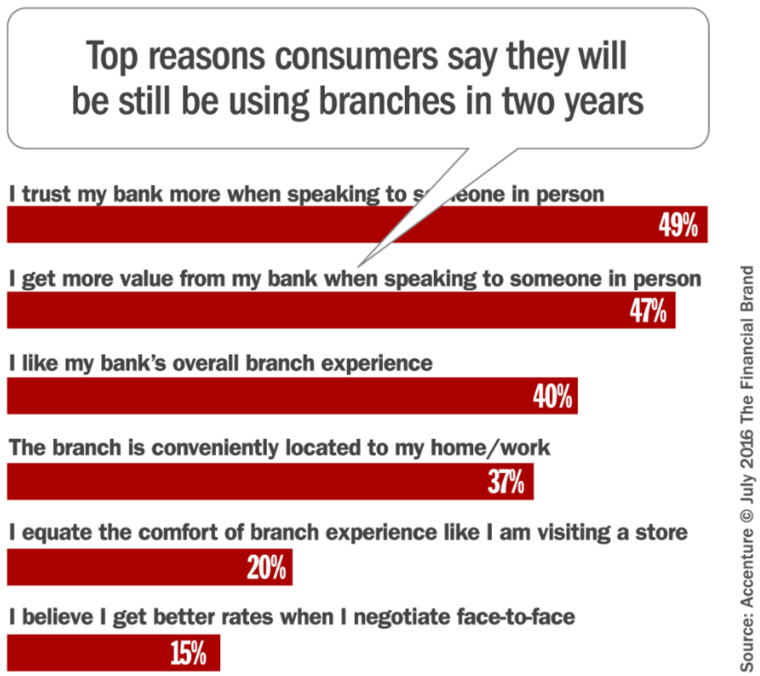
Bricks or Clicks?

Technology options for credit unions and all financial institutions seem to grow by the day, with amazing opportunities for efficiency and profitability. But, how does this growing trend affect physical branch locations? Will the branch remain relevant in the future? As alluded to earlier, our research has shown that members prefer the convenience of the new banking technologies offered, but they still want the reassurance of local branch availability.

In short, the days of going to a brick-and-mortar bank and waiting in line to deposit a check or transfer funds are quickly becoming obsolete, but our membership still needs a professional financial expert they can talk to face-to-face when they have complex questions or want to open a loan or new account. What has become clear is that inside the branch, members want a knowledgeable expert to provide the same level of convenience and customization experienced in the outside world using self-serve technology. In short, consumers want it all.

The good news for most financial institutions: **branch banking is not dead…it is just different**. Branch location, hours and the level of service provided are still major selection factors.

Accenture found that the branch will remain relevant because it is the place where consumers can connect with their financial institutions' human advisors. While online banking remains the dominant channel in terms of both frequency of use and preference, the survey found that the branch remains popular. Consumers may be receptive to robo-advice and self-service/digital channels, but they also crave face-to-face human interaction. One-quarter of respondents in the Accenture study say they use a branch at least weekly, and it remains the second most preferred channel, after online. 61% of those who use branches say they prefer the "full service" model. The vast majority (87%) of consumers, including 86% of Millennials, report that they will continue using branches in the future. Accenture says consumers' appetite for an integrated omni-channel experience – one that blends digital and physical – makes sense: "It signals how pragmatic consumers are today. To get the value they want, consumers do not always choose the same channel. Instead, they make channel choices based on their specific banking needs at the time."



Recommendations/Solutions

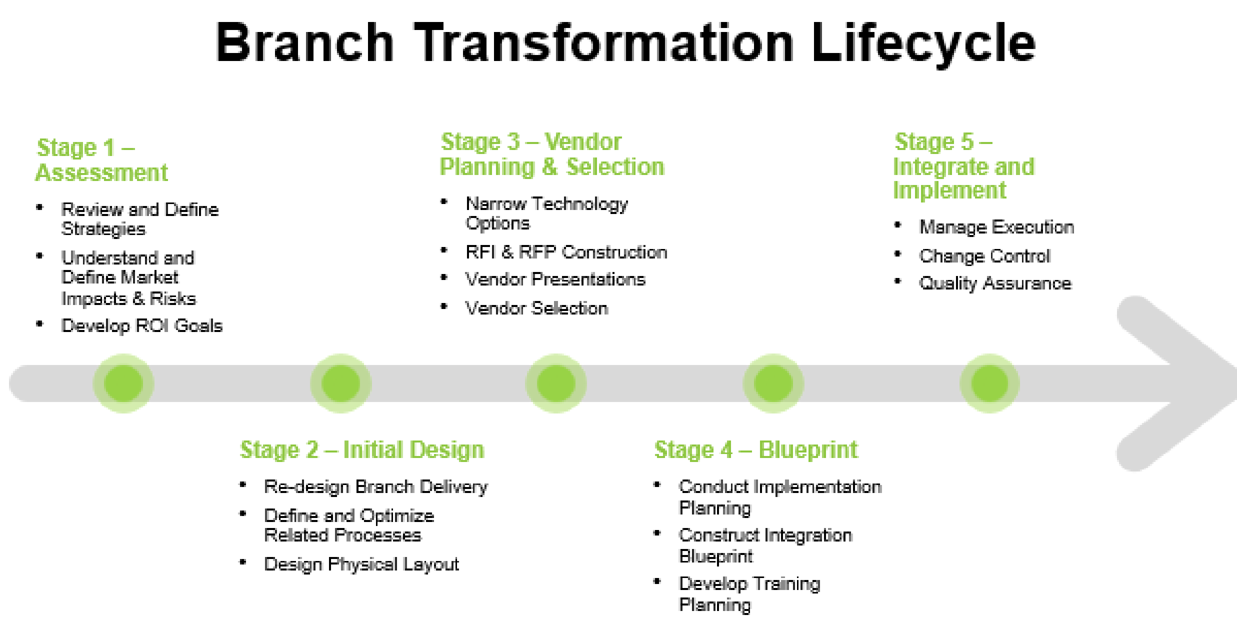
Decisioning the Tech & Touch Balance – What's Best?

According to Freedictionary.com, a decision is a conclusion or judgment reached after consideration. Indecision is in itself a decision, just ask executives at Kodak and Blockbuster. Most credit unions will likely agree change is inevitable in order to remain relevant and to fulfill the core mission of people helping people. As stated in a 2016 Financial Managers Society (FMS) whitepaper, "Bankers understand they must address the issue of branch transformation. Some have started down the road while others contemplate action. Many meetings and conferences have been held on this subject; however one of the most common frustrations with these discussions is that indecision and fear of failure prevent executives from breaking free and taking action."

It is helpful to have a variety of tools to help frame research, discussion and ultimately decisions about how and when to change the face of tellers in the credit union. Most decision making models are rational, implying a linear path such as:

- Identify the problem
- Generate alternatives
- Select a solution
- Implement a solution
- Evaluate a solution

As an example, in that same FMS white paper, a lifecycle model for branch transformation was presented.



However, it is important to realize that in reality it may not be quite so structured. According to Simon's normative model,

- There is limited information with a limited time to process the information
- Rules of thumb and shortcuts are often used
- Sacrifice is necessary (aka something is "good enough")

This should reassure even the smallest of credit unions that there is no one best approach or one best answer for everyone on any topic, much less one that affects every employee and every member. In fact, "credit union leaders must be comfortable making trade-offs." To be great in one delivery channel, be prepared to underinvest in another. Or as eloquently put by Steve Hildebrand, VP of Marketing at Freedom First Federal Credit Union ($453 million in assets), when asked how to know what the right balance is between personal touch and technology, “There isn’t an easy answer to this question and it’s one we struggle with on a weekly basis.”

Know Your Credit Union and Its Members

Perhaps one place to start is by uncovering the credit union’s member profile. This exercise will include analyzing data including gender, age, income, number and type of accounts, balances, years with the credit union, revenue generated, etc. This alone can lead a credit union to ideas or decisions.

The flip side of revenue generated is costs incurred. For example, a member who only comes into a branch to deposit a check or get cash costs the credit union more than one who uses ATM services or remote deposit capture. According to a 2011 Filene Research study, deposit costs can vary from $3.58 on average for an in-branch deposit all the way down to $0.06 for an ACH deposit. These sorts of high labor intensive, error-prone transactions cost the credit union and the member.

According to research presented by Dennis Campbell, associate professor at Harvard Business School, the top 30% (of members) contribute 110% of profits, while the bottom 10% actually destroy profits. Certainly credit unions want to know about both ends of the profitability spectrum and the reason behind it. Is a member profitable because of continual overdrafts resulting in fee income or because of the depth of products and services utilized by the member? The same research presented by Mr. Campbell suggests how the member interacts with the credit union can be a profitability indicator. On average, members who connect through on-line channels are 35% more profitable than those who only have an offline relationship.

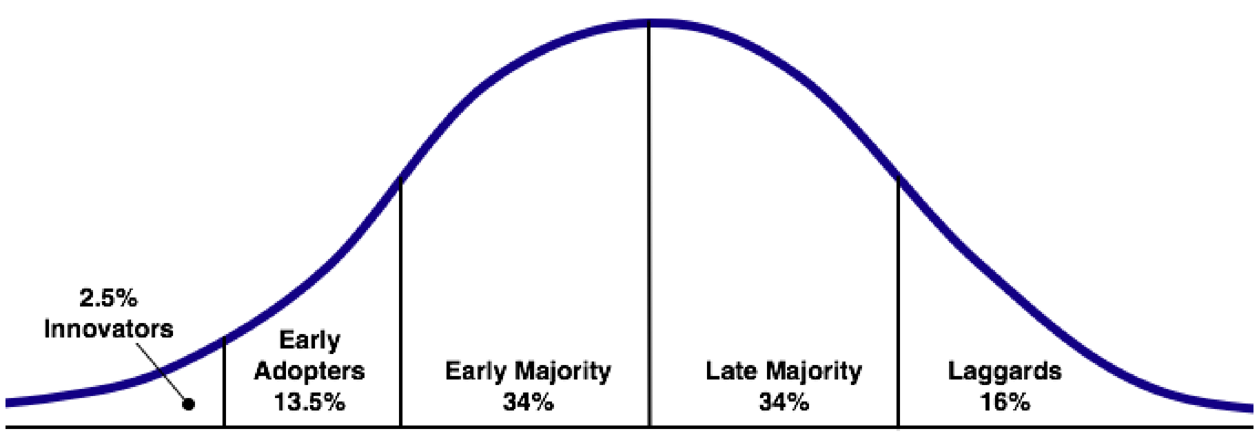
In addition to demographic and current usage data, seek to obtain data about future service needs and preferences through member forums, focus groups, or surveys that may shape the credit union’s choices. For example, Canada’s Island Savings Credit Union ($1.5 billion in assets) was planning to roll out open pods with Microsoft Surface tablets. However, their research showed member reluctance to engage in the middle of branches where others might see their data. As a result, the credit union decided to utilize more private offices in their branch redesign to facilitate member discussions.

Supplement the stated member preferences by analyzing traffic and usage data over time. Then go beyond the current membership and profile the future member. What is the member going to look like in three years or even in five years? It is important to take a long view as most significant change is going to take at least a few years from idea to full implementation.

Conduct a market assessment augmenting the member data previously utilized with public data to determine current delivery channel performance and develop recommendations for future state identifying improvements to automate manual processes or add self-service conveniences to improve member satisfaction. This may include analysis such as:

- Determining current transaction and sales mix and contribution
- Determining current performance of each channel as a cost-effective source of deposits, loans, and fee income
- Evaluating current and projected future quality of each channel based on
    - Demographic characteristics of future target segments
    - Project future demand for specific products and services
    - Consider the competition
- Similar to stress testing the balance sheet, creating what-if scenarios based on channel activity change
- Identifying probable causes of under or poor performance of a channel

Another input for consideration would be the Innovation Adoption curve as originally presented by Everett Rogers in his book “Diffusion of Innovations”. While adoption curves are useful for many discussions, with technology it is important to know where the current and future membership are/will be along with employees.



- Innovators – willing to take risk, youngest in age, social, high risk tolerance
- Early Adopters – high degree of opinion, similar to innovators yet more discrete in choices
- Early Majority – adopt after a period of time

- Late Majority – adopt after the average person, highly skeptic
- Laggards – last to adopt, averse to change, tend to be older and traditionalist

Individuals do not fall in the same category all the time in large part based upon the pain points we are trying to solve and our interest in the underpinnings of the change presented. Regardless of where an individual might be on the curve, according to Terrence Roche speaking in July 2016 at the World CU Conference sponsored by the World Council of Credit Unions, ease of use is the best predictor for whether members will use a new platform.

Developing a customer journey map may uncover more than expected. A customer journey map is a diagram that illustrates the steps a customer goes through in engaging with the company, in this case, the credit union. The more touch points, the more complicated, and more necessary for understanding, the map becomes. Most organizations are reasonably good at gathering data on their users. But data often fails to communicate the frustrations and experiences of customers. A story can do that, and one of the best story telling tools in the business is the customer journey map.

Depending on the credit union's need, a journey map can look at the entire experience from beginning to end or can focus on a very specific interaction. Either way, it always identifies key points the customer has with the organization.

Adam Richardson, a Group Product Manager at Financial Engines, suggests the charting of a timeline is a starting point and recommends evaluating

- Actions – What is the customer doing at each step? How do they move to the next?
- Motivations – Why is the customer motivated to move to the next step? How are they feeling? What are their expectations?
- Questions – What uncertainties, terminology, or other issues impede forward progression?
- Barriers – What structures, processes, cost, etc. stand in the way?

As with many of the suggestions in this section, there is no one right way to create a map. Richardson recommended in-depth interviews and in-context observations rather than surveys which may gloss over details needed to really understand the member experience. Beyond current members, include front-line and back office staff to obtain the full picture of the member experience.

Remembering that the greater the point of pain, the more likely someone is to adopt to change, seek out the points or gaps on the map that are disjointed or painful as these are good prospects for change. For example, if there is a gap when transitioning from one department to another during the lending process, could utilizing a universal teller eliminate this frustration and provide a better member, and employee, experience? Also good prospects are those extremely manual and therefore error prone tasks which could free up tellers to provide more complex/valuable service to the member. Consider what type of conversations with members that are desired and what the best way to deliver that might be. Documenting the member experience will allow management to see what works and what does not. It is all about developing a road map for digital initiatives that work for each individual credit union, makes sense for its culture, or even allows adjustments to that culture if that is where the stumbling block lies.

A framework recommended by Accenture based on their work with clients transforming their services to interconnected multichannel business model includes:

- Start with priority member interactions - those that might drive a member to leave or remain at the credit union
- Determine what data is needed to address those priority issues and to track results
- Articulate the endpoint vision and key milestones – figure out the end goal first then the appropriate approach rather than the "cool" factor
- Develop a multichannel cross-disciplinary team to ensure concerns are covered
- Pilot to prove value and get buy-in – the internet can be a less expensive way to pilot
- Align incentives with desired outcomes – if branch staff are rewarded only for transactions in branches, it is less likely they will drive business to other channels
- Similarly, thoroughly train branch staff in how to use any new tool or technology as they will support and promote based on their comfort

Planning, Project Management and Budgeting

No matter if all or none of the above tools are utilized, have a solid strategic business plan. Technology, like any other change, will not deliver long term results without solid strategy and execution. Technology alone does not deliver competitive advantage. It is what is done with that technology to create a personalized member experience that matters. Indeed, technology for its own sake is a costly distraction, which adds complexity, muddies decision making and impedes the organization's ability to adapt. Failure to take a disciplined approach will divert attention from the pressing need to break through the conventional walls of retail banking – both literal and cultural – and engage customers/members seamlessly across all channels on their own terms.

Developing that member focused strategy starts with assessing the credit union's philosophy and purpose. What is desired to communicate to current and prospective membership and is that demonstrated in the strategy? Recognize that different credit unions will see the same data in different ways. Filene Research Institute built on categories established by Michael Treacy and Fred Wiersema in their book *The Discipline of Market Leaders* to suggest a channel strategy framework and the aforementioned trade-offs that are inherent in aligning approach with plan.

CHANNEL STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Operational excellence	Product/service leadership	Customer intimacy
Processes are optimized and streamlined to minimize cost and provide hassle-free service. Efficiency demands few branch or human interactions. The payoff for members comes in convenient and fast electronic service and, ideally, better rates on loans, deposits, and other services.	A focus on the core processes of invention, product or service development, and market exploitation. This approach requires making product and delivery innovation the core value proposition, and it assumes members are willing to pay a premium for those innovations.	An obsession with the core processes of solution and relationship management. Often an employee-heavy approach, the payoff for members comes when the credit union suggests appropriate products and acts in their best interest.

Traditional channels like branches and voice-to-voice interaction lend themselves to **customer intimacy**. Customer intimacy means more than just service, however. It means building the ability to segment your membership and offer different segments products that meet their needs.

Operational excellence makes cost and efficiency core drivers of business strategy. Credit unions that excel here will push all transactions, even high-value product purchases and financial counseling, to lower-cost channels like online account opening, mobile banking, and ATMs.

Product/service leadership puts innovation at the forefront of the value conversation. The credit unions that can actually create or quickly adopt new channels (think remote deposit capture or interactive chat) are valuable for members who want the latest and are willing to pay for it.

Realize that Treacy and Wiersema believed high-performing firms excel in one dimension while maintaining competitiveness in the other two. It is also true that members place different values on each dimension depending on the circumstances.

Consider completing a SWOT analysis for an internal look at strengths and weaknesses and the external perspective of opportunities and threats. Improving member service is critical in the current market and economic conditions as price and product no longer provide a clear competitive or retention advantage. Because member interactions begin and end with delivery channels, those channels selected for investment play a key role in delivering enhanced member experience.

Identify the number of years and budget. Consider setting aside funds each year for change initiatives and budget for on-going expenses such as software maintenance and upgrades and employee training. Consider off-setting expense reductions such as salary and benefits or operating expense from smaller real estate investments. Some enhancements lend themselves to usage beyond member engagement. When Northern Credit Union ($227 million asset size) implemented "smart offices" (video conferencing with specially trained universal staff supplemented with signature pads and printing devices) to facilitate account and loan applications, they leveraged the investment by using the technology for conducting remote training and conferences with branch leadership thus reducing downtime at the retail locations and travel time for employees.

Project Coordinator Amanda Bean of Freedom First Federal Credit Union ($453 million in assets) recommends being prepared to support the decisions that are made and consider the short-term and long-term implications.

- What is the impact on members and employees?
- How much effort is required to launch?
- How difficult will it be to maintain and support?
- Can constant updates (such as those required by mobile apps) be successfully managed?
- Are back office changes needed to support this initiative?
- How does this truly improve the business or meet a member need?
- Is this achieving what it was supposed to achieve?
- Do the results provide support for other projects?

Execution includes being clear about desired outcomes. For example, is the purpose to increase efficiency, provide more convenience, or grow the membership? Too many times technology is being implemented just for the sake of technology or giving in to the "wow" factor. Be certain to ask the question "What will this technology make better?" What makes sense for the specific people, place, and moment?

Once the purpose is clear, metrics need to be determined up front and measured afterward to determine if goals were met. For example, according to Jim Marous, publisher of the Digital Banking Report, "One of the biggest impacts of moving to a more digital delivery of services is the potential for an improved efficiency ratio." Mr. Marous' writings provide 2014 data from McKinsey & Company showing a transition as small as increasing adoption of electronic statements can improve the efficiency ratio by 0.20. Previously mentioned Northern Credit

Union attributed the smart office initiative to reducing their efficiency ratio by almost 8% in 15 months.

If growth is the goal, know the value of each new account gained. Leaders Credit Union ($296 million in assets) has assigned values to each type of account based upon estimated annualized revenue. Recognizing functionality matters more than bells and whistles, Leaders CU Vice President of Marketing Josh McAfee in 2015 gave this insight on what attributed to their success. “Our approach has been to work diligently toward getting the logistics of traditional delivery into digital, and then begin to shape the experience. For example, in a simple transaction, we’re first making sure the actual posting works flawlessly, and then we back into what messaging and graphics the member sees during the process.”

During 2013, Element Federal Credit Union ($30 million in assets) changed not just their name (from WV United Federal Credit Union) but also their methods of interacting with their membership to focus on “the member not data entry.” As part of the process, benchmarks were established and met or exceeded for new account openings, profitability, and efficiency. In the words of Chief + Innovator Linda Bodie, “We had a plan; we executed it and the results can’t be disputed.”

Consider employing metrics such as Net Promotor Score (NPS). This makes the member’s voice a key part of the on-going development process. At Coastal Federal Credit Union ($2.67 billion in assets) headquartered in Raleigh, North Carolina, over an 18 month period, the credit union converted all 18 of their branches to interactive teller machines (ITMs). To be sure the member is heard, they utilize transactional NPS surveys targeting members who have completed a transaction at an ITM. The teller management team calls detractors each month to obtain even more information that might uncover issues.

Ensure adequate time for testing and pilots. As said by Tom Pritzker, EVP of Sales and Marketing at JohnRyan, a leader in retail and banking digital sign technology, “There is immense value in testing and tweaking to see not only what resonates with customers, but what fits with the organization and delivers on tangible objectives”. At Grow Financial Federal Credit Union headquartered in Tampa, Florida ($2.3 billion in assets), they have a Digital Committee to constantly monitor the balance of service and technology. The committee meets monthly or often weekly due to the ever changing nature of technology.

Change, Change, Change

Remembering that change is an evolution and not necessarily a revolution, it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel when it comes to changing the face of member interaction. Whether the credit union is just getting on its feet with time saving basics such as communicating with members via email, moving a bit further with remote deposit capture, or approaching the cutting edge with uGenius kiosks, certainly a similar credit union has already delved into this space. Resources are readily available for research, advice, and support.

- For research
    - Leverage the cooperative nature of credit unions and talk to or even better visit credit unions to discover why they chose the path they did, what the outcomes have been and what they might have learned from their experience.
    - Seek out vendors to participate in demonstrations and talk to their customer references about all steps in the transition process.
    - Read white papers including those from vendors, professional organizations, and credit union organizations such as Filene Research Institute.
    - Participate in customer or industry forums including reading vendor support forums to determine the types of issues and questions that result after implementation.
    - Ask state leagues for recent survey data and compare results over time. For example, the Georgia Credit Union League surveyed credit union members in November 2016. The first question concerned how often the member went into a physical branch.
    - Use feedback from member and employee surveys
- For expertise or financial support
    - Vendors may offer discounts because of the credit union size being large or being small or as a way of gaining market share. Vendors can also be a knowledge transfer source. For example, America First Credit Union ($8 billion in assets) is using partners such as Diebold, Cisco and Financial Town to conduct on site presentations on the implemented technologies for employees and members. These sorts of seminars are not only a source of training, but also value add to the member when focusing on the "why" not just "how." For example, the enhanced security as a result of implementing a technology.
    - Similar to conducting research, many credit unions are available to collaborate or even partner to reduce their own investment.
    - Seek out industry grants, League support, sponsorship from a SEG, or even donations from other current vendors.
    - Utilize a nearby technical school, college, or university where there are professors seeking research projects or students who are required to complete a project or internship as part of their program in technology, marketing, or strategic planning.
    - Consider the members as you never know what talent or expertise might be readily available.

- Reach out to volunteer organizations such as SCORE (non-profit association of retired executives).

In an interview, Judy Kinney, SVP, Branch Delivery & Operations with LGE Community Credit Union ($1.1 billion in assets) shared a fairly typical story. The credit union wanted to grow and realized the need to operate more efficiently and deliver greater value to their member for that to happen. They started small with cash dispensers and recyclers then moved to a pilot of remote teller units (RTU). In addition to evolving retail locations, LGE created an e-Commerce department in 2013 to focus on mobile and online platforms. One result was the rollout of remote deposit capture which, in the two years since inception, has doubled in monthly transaction volume and in dollars deposited. To achieve their goal of better utilizing human capital by spending quality time with the member focusing on service and lending instead of counting cash, LGE considered interactive video, however ultimately decided on kiosks after visiting University Federal Credit Union. Following their strategy of piloting anything new for 30, 60, or 90 days, LGE experienced increased member satisfaction with their "personal banker" and increases in loan productivity and product sales. As a result, LGE has ultimately decided to transition all of their locations to this model over the next 18 months.

Summary and Conclusions

Indeed the face of the traditional teller has changed. Recognizing that tech and touch are not mutually exclusive, but rather a spectrum, each credit union will come to a different conclusion about the "right" balance for their organization and their membership. It is not "bricks **or** clicks", it is "bricks **+** clicks". Additionally, as put by Scott Hodgins of Cornerstone Advisors, "Like all industries, credit unions are struggling to determine what steps they'll need to take to stay relevant in the coming years. Too often they're drawn to the idea that creativity, vision, and innovation are what will save the day – and they ignore the reality that resourcefulness, practicality, and financial performance are much more important."

Summary of Insight – Maureen Bock, Vice President of Growth Services, Georgia Credit Union Affiliates

Working at the state credit union association in Georgia, I see the challenges and opportunities of many credit unions of all sizes. I started my career in credit unions, so I know what it is like to be a credit union trying to keep up with a changing world. But the changes in technology, consumer behavior and consumer preference are moving at what feels like light speed in the last few decades since I was in a credit union. When I was on the teller line, the biggest concern was balancing each day. Even 25 years ago, they wanted us to talk to members and see if there were any opportunities, but the word cross-sell was never used. There are so many more things that the modern teller must know and do.

For many credit unions, the decision to move their member transactions to technology solutions is more dollars and cents-based. Cash handling and management is expensive. Some consider kiosks, Personal Teller Machines or mobile apps an investment and find they can bring the per transaction cost down. This provides convenience their members seem to be looking for.

Interacting with members as they walk in and handling transactions from teller pods face-to-face is now becoming more prevalent. It is a more intimate member experience and many credit unions say their members find this more engaging. Literally removing the barrier of the teller line has created an environment for more personal connections and conversations with the members.

Self-service technology can be appealing to members, especially 24x7x365 access to their finances, but this alone cannot serve all members' needs. Credit unions must understand their members' wants and needs and must do what is right for them to provide the best service and technology balance. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution for tellers and technology, but being too slow to react to changing preferences or competition could cost credit unions members. Credit unions are unique and offer much more than financial transactions. They care to help members find what works best for them and are their trusted advisor. No matter how much technology is available, there are still some things you need to talk over with your credit union staff. They truly are all about Helping People Afford Life ®. This campaign is used in Georgia.

Summary of Insight – Blair Boyer, AVP - Assistant Controller, Georgia's Own Credit Union

Because I work in the back office of the credit union without direct member contact, as our team started researching this topic, my perspective on tellers and branch technology was very much from twenty plus years as a credit union member. With all the member-facing technology the credit union that I belong to has rolled out over the years, I have physically visited one of their branches only once in well over five years. The main reason for this is hours of operation. It is next to impossible for me to visit a branch between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Without technology, I certainly would have moved my accounts – at least to the credit union where I work. Knowing I am not alone, without technology our industry is at a disadvantage, particularly those credit unions without captive membership.

One thing I was very excited to learn though our research was that size does not seem to matter in this area as much as I thought it might. Credit unions of all shapes and sizes can offer helpful technology to their membership to free up tellers for more in-depth, non-routine interaction with the member and to improve back office efficiency. What was not a surprise is that one size does not fit all and a great deal of thought, research, and consideration of options is required for each credit union to make the decisions they believe are "right" for their membership and culture.

During the time we were working on this paper, Georgia's Own Credit Union rolled out our first branch without a traditional teller line.

According to our Chief Membership Officer, Kelly Garmon, adoption has been strong. "Service is our top priority and human touch will always be part of that equation. At the same time, technology is a great enhancement to ensuring we serve members in a prompt, accurate, and convenient way." Yet again, this is confirmation that tech and touch is a balancing act.

Summary of Insight – Shannon Duran, Executive Vice President, Guardians Credit Union

Participating in this project and researching the changing face of tellers was fascinating and certainly opened my eyes to the possibilities for my credit union and the credit union industry as a whole. Finding that perfect balance is a challenging venture all credit unions face, no matter their size. But, it is also an absolute necessary venture in order to ensure the ongoing survival of credit unions. All credit unions should be researching different technology options and discussing implementation goals as part of their strategic planning. The biggest challenge, especially for small to medium-sized credit unions, is budgeting for these technology options, forecasting the cost versus expected returns and determining the timing that will work best to launch. I am honored to sit on my credit union's executive team, and a big task of ours is driving strategic planning and execution of tactics to reach our goals. Technology is always a major factor to consider in this process and is important to keep up with year after year.

This paper was timely as my credit union is about to adopt the teller pod concept in our new West Palm Beach (main) office and expected shift of the teller role within the coming months as our new branch opens in the summer of 2017. We are not complete strangers to the universal employee at this office. Our Member Relations Specialists currently can do everything for a member as a "one-stop shop" including initiating a teller transaction, answering account related questions, opening new accounts, answering product/service questions and processing loan requests from start to finish. What will be new for us is that our tellers previously "behind a wall" servicing the MRS stations, drive-thru and express teller windows using cash dispensing machines and delivering cash through pneumatic teller tubes will now be out in the open manning the pods using cash recyclers. I am anxious to see the outcome of this introduction, and how it affects service to our members in comparison to our four other branches with traditional teller lines. I fully believe and expect that we could greatly benefit from implementing the use of pods and universalists, and/or other technology options outlined in this paper, credit union–wide. This would create a consistent experience for our members, address staffing needs, attract millennials and improve the credit union's bottom line.

Summary of Insight – Mendy Salvey, VP Accounting, Freedom First Federal Credit Union

Due to my position in the back office, I am not at all familiar with the front line of a credit union other than the basic knowledge of being a member. I always volunteer to be a guinea pig for the app and the digital services before they are launched to the general membership but I am largely cushioned from the daily duties and responsibilities of our teller staff. This lack of awareness has created a challenge in researching this topic but has also allowed me to objectively look at each technology and how it affects the teller line from outside of the proverbial box.

At the beginning of the project, I did have preconceived notions about the technology used in the credit union from a cost standpoint. Through this project, I have glimpsed the decision process used to identify the projects my credit union undertakes. It has expanded my skillset and knowledge base into areas that I previously had little to no experience. Freedom First is a Community Development Financial Institution and our membership is largely low income. As credit union management, we have to decide how to implement the myriad of possible technologies to suit the needs of the largest part of our membership and to set ourselves up for future success. While many members are comfortable with the technology, many prefer the interaction received at the teller line. Recently, a good friend of mine joined the credit union. Rather than opening an account online as I suggested, he visited a branch close to his home. I offered to help him learn online banking and bill pay so that he could issue payments for his bills through the app; he opted to order paper checks and buy stamps. Until this point, I found it hard to believe that people would prefer to go through the extra cost, time and expense of transacting face-to-face. However, my friend is a solid representation of the behaviors of the membership of our credit union. We plan that our area is a little reticent to use new technologies and the average member lags 5 years behind in adopting common technologies. This can work to our favor as we do not have to be the market leaders on new technologies or to our detriment as technology changes so quickly to make existing platforms irrelevant.

During my research, I learned about technologies that my credit union is currently implementing and some that we have passed on for various reasons. I researched the job descriptions and skill sets for Tellers and Universalists and the rate of pay for each. This research has given me insight into the working of the branch that I was unaware of previously. I have gained a lot of respect for those that work with the public, it is a demanding job.

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