

Driving More Efficiency From Core Systems

First and foremost when looking to improve staff efficiency levels, credit unions should look for flexibility and the ability to customize their core system. No two credit unions are exactly alike, so an efficient core system should be able to adapt to the individual needs of the credit union, not the other way around. The core should provide credit union staff easy access to member data, in a clear and presentable format. Staff should not have to go digging for information. Also, a core that is able to integrate easily with any third party is a must when maximizing efficiency levels. A highly efficient core system is one in which the credit union performs as much as possible from within the core, without having to access multiple systems or rekey data.

The core should be able to present product offerings on the main screens within the core system that credit union staff uses to service the member. The core should be able to look at and analyze the member's relationship with the credit union, and offer products and services that make sense. Access to information to assist in product offerings should be integrated within the core, and no more than a click or two away.

In terms of evaluating a service bureau solution versus an in-house system, there is certainly an advantage to utilizing a service bureau solution. A service bureau is able to leverage the collective experience of working with many credit unions using the same core platform. This provides tremendous opportunities to learn and implement best practices in using the core system. A core good system, with ample integration points, is traditionally highly complex. Instead of maintaining a large IT staff, credit unions can take advantage of service bureaus, and their expertise of the core system, to ensure the core is being used to maximum potential. The credit union should request System Utilization Reviews from their service bureau, at least once every two years, so their use of the core can be evaluated and additional efficiencies or modules implemented. Training is also a must, so take advantage of any training opportunities offered by your core vendor to keep your credit union ahead of the curve, and ready for the next wave of core enhancements.

Service bureaus also take care of a lot of the behind the scenes heavy lifting, enabling credit union staff to better focus on and serve their members. Service bureaus manage and monitor external products that connect to the core (such as home banking or mobile banking), automate batch processes (end of day, end of month, end of year), test and install new releases and patches, perform backups and replication to offsite locations, transmit data to any third parties (such as the IRS for tax reporting, or fraud prevention software), and much more.

At Synergent, we utilize the Episys core processing platform and deliver the solutions from our data center. There are a few items that truly set Synergent apart, enabling us to deliver a highly efficient core processing experience:

* PowerOn - Synergent has worked with nearly 60 credit unions in delivering the Episys core processing platform. PowerOn provides the ability to implement various customizations in the core, whether it be reports, extracts to and from external systems, or simply a way to display the data quickly and easily to credit union staff. Synergent boasts a team of programming staff who are highly skilled and experienced in PowerOn programming from working with our client base.

* SymForms - Utilizing the PowerOn tool mentioned above, Synergent has worked with credit unions to take electronic forms to the next level. Synergent works with our credit union to deliver highly complex electronic forms (SymForms) that not only push and pull member data, but also can manipulate the database to build products, posts fees, and even perform transactions. SymForms also provide the ability to capture signatures, automatically archive, and even interface with 3rd party electronic signature vendors to send the document quickly, and securely to a member outside of the credit unions branches.

* SMA Op/Con - Synergent partnered with SMA in the early days of transitioning our client base to the Episys platform. Using this product, we've been successful in automating and monitoring millions of batch jobs, online services, and file transfers. This has truly helped us achieve more of a "lights out" processing environment, and provides tremendous efficiencies to credit unions when they do not have to worry about running batch in the evenings, performing backups of their core system, or having to monitor a critical service such as home banking overnight or weekends.



Nick Chasse
Director

As a credit union service organization owned by credit unions, Synergent serves only credit unions, and has provided comprehensive solutions since 1971. We are a single organization composed of different services divisions, all located under one roof. This comprehensive approach to credit union services leads to a high level of efficiencies throughout the credit union. Here, **Nick Chasse, Director of Sales Support for Synergent Technology Services**, explains how with the right core processing partner, credit unions can enhance both efficiencies and service.

