Community Credit Union Solves Challenges with AXIS™ eCommerce: Portal Technology Increases Site Visits and Volume of Online Applications

Community Credit Union
Plano, TX
Assets: $1.2 Billion
www.communitycu.org

Community Credit Union (CCU) was founded in the early 1950s when ten employees made an initial deposit of $5 each. Currently serving residents of the Dallas area as well as employees and their families of more than 700 corporations, CCU has a history of offering technology solutions to its member-base. CCU was an early adopter of ATM technology, and when Digital Insight opened its doors with Internet Banking in 1995, CCU was the first financial institution to sign up for the company's offering; becoming one of only six websites world-wide to offer remote banking services via the Internet.

Now, with 25 percent of their 160,000 members actively banking online, CCU decided that their next step was to extend their offering Beyond Internet Banking™.

--------*Navigation Nightmare at the Internet Branch*

As an early adopter of Internet technology, CCU dealt with considerable hurdles unforeseeable at the dawn of the Internet age. When the website went live in December of 1995, it was composed with seven main navigation categories. Although planned with the growth of the channel in mind, this original layout could not successfully support the information that was added within the following years. That is, the site became difficult to maneuver; members found themselves clicking through several web pages before they could get to the information they needed. And when CCU reconfigured the site's design elements, content was not taken into consideration. The result was a pleasant looking website that still had cumbersome navigation.

Executives began to take note that something needed to be done. With average site visits less than one minute long, CCU was not achieving its goal of providing an additional service channel that its members would use. "Back in the early days of the Internet, many companies posted a website simply to say that they had one. That wasn't true for Community Credit Union," John Chapman, CCU's vice president of information services. "Internet banking was always the integral feature to the CCU website. 'Brochure-ware,' a.k.a. a website that simply posts information and doesn't interact with the member, wasn't part of CCU's web strategy. We always hoped to drive our members to the site so that they could use it as an additional channel for their needs and access their accounts whenever they wanted to. We wanted to provide our members with 24 X 7 service."

In 1999, CCU planned a two-fold plan of attack to revamp the site and transform it into a true Internet branch. The first step was to overhaul the site's navigation so that members could easily find important information about CCU's products and services. The second was to incorporate the same products and services available at each of its brick-and-mortar branches. This meant that they would have to add more information to the site.

"We wanted to broaden our relationship with the member," said Chapman. "Our goal was to achieve 'Channel Equality,' i.e., whether a member walked into a branch, contacted the call center, or went to our website, the same products and services would be offered, and all with the same level of service."

--------*To Portal or Not to Portal*

When Digital Insight announced at its annual client conference in the fall of 1999, that it was investing R&D resources in a full service web portal called AXIS eCommerce, CCU had already agreed to be a beta client.

A year later, CCU went live with the new technology, presenting a comprehensive offering of products and services, including Internet banking, through the use of several tabbed-pages on the site's home page.

Although a relatively new concept for financial institutions, the web portal technology worked as a key differentiator for CCU's site.

"The portal presented us with a structure that is easy for us to maintain. It allows us the flexibility to expand our online offering, to achieve channel equality, and it's easy for our members to find the information that they are looking for," said Chapman.

--------*Channel Equality Achieved*

With the onset of the portal, daily website visits have increased 192% percent: from 5,827 to 11,188. The average site visit doubled in length, website emails have nearly tripled, and online applications rose dramatically. In fact, monthly inbound contacts from the site averaged 1500 per month prior to the rollout, compared to more than double that amount following it. Since the portal launch, CCU has also been watching the number of Internet banking transactions increase steadily. A few months after going live with AXIS eCommerce, www.communitycu.org has had more banking transactions than all of the Credit Union's 21 brick and mortar branches combined; posting a net increase of 168% over the same time period the year earlier. As an added benefit, the website's Internet banking penetration has increased to 40,000 active end-users.

Members have expressed positive feedback regarding the new website. After the site went live, one member expressed via a site email: "I just wanted to let you know that I utilize your home banking service every day. I have really come to rely on it to keep my finances in order. I don't mind telling you I was more than a little nervous when I saw that you would be changing the site; however, after perusing the new layout I must say that I really like the new 'look and feel.' It seems more up-to-date, and flows more smoothly without losing the great layout and functionality of the old site. I can still access my account information without having to learn a bunch of new pages and links. Great job! Thank you for continuing to provide such a great service!"

Chapman summarized the success of the new website. "The website is a service platform where members come because they want to do business here. Its easy, its convenient, and it has all the products and services that are found in the other locations. The significant increase in the numbers for page views and site visits coincides with the release of the new website. The information is easier to find; in fact it now takes less time to do and see more. We wanted to create a site that members would have a reason to come back to, and to do so more often. I believe the numbers substantiate our success."

Digital Insight. *Beyond* Internet Banking.