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Tinker FCU Finds Significant Value in Outsourced IT

Qualified technology staff is increasingly difficult to locate and retain. At the same time, technology continues to gain in its complexity. To counter these challenges, Tinker Federal Credit Union has found that outsourcing certain IT tasks is more efficient and cost-effective.

"We outsource most of the 'hard stuff' to RG2 Solutions," says Grant Woldum, the credit union's Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer. "They handle the projects that we're not staffed to handle internally."

Although Woldum's long-term plans do include additional technical staff, he adds that he has no expectation of replacing the skills offered by RG2 Solutions. Says Woldum, "We'd probably have to hire two and a half people just to replace the skill set that RG2 Solutions brings to the table." According to Woldum, there's no cost justification for increasing his staff to that level.
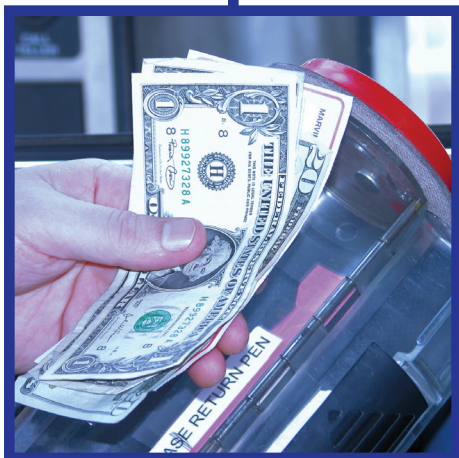
Third-Party Integration Is Key

In today's competitive environment, the integration and deployment of third-party products is essential. "Out of all the services provided by RG2 Solutions," says Woldum, "this is the one that gives us the greatest value." He adds that Tinker FCU has used RG2 Solutions to deploy known interfaces, as well as to create interfaces where none existed.

The most significant of these is a three-phase project designed to automate the credit union's remote lending operations. The first phase allows either a member or non-member to complete a loan application on the credit union's website, outside of the home-banking application. This data is automatically fed into a loan queue in Tinker's core system.

The second phase brings this same functionality to Eagle's Nest, the credit union's outsourced loan call center provider. Instead of faxing information to the credit union, Eagle's Nest staff enters the data online and transmits it directly into a new loan queue. The third phase extends this to DecisionPro, the credit union's indirect lending application.

Tinker also called upon RG2 Solutions to replace the serial bridge between its core server and home-

CU Snapshot

Name: Tinker Federal Credit Union

Location: Tinker AFB, Oklahoma

Field of Membership: civilian and government employees of Tinker Air Force Base

Assets: $1.3 billion

Members: 174,000

banking server with an IP bridge. Even though this involved two products from the same company – core system and home banking – Tinker found it more efficient and cost-effective to let RG2 Solutions do the integration work.

Flexible Reports Add Value

Tinker FCU's core system provides "canned" reports in a proprietary format. Says Woldum, "They're not reports that you can view on your PC desktop or easily pull into programs like Excel." To meet the credit union's reporting needs, Woldum deployed the popular Crystal Reports. The challenge is in creating the reports.

"RG2 Solutions can create new reports in Crystal Reports much more quickly and easily than we can in-house," says Woldum. He attributes this to RG2 Solutions' intimate knowledge of Crystal Reports, as well as their in-depth understanding of the inner workings of the core system's database.

According to Woldum, the combination of Crystal Reports and RG2 Solutions gives Tinker FCU comprehensive reports that are easy to use and reuse, easy to modify, and are accessible from any desktop in the credit union.

An Integrated Intranet

In 2001 – prior to Woldum's tenure – an employee created Tinker FCU's first intranet. It consisted primarily of external links, with a few

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internal documents. It was a crude start, but it demonstrated the potential value of an enterprise-wide intranet.

"When we decided to create a 'real' intranet," says Woldum, "we called in RG2 Solutions." The intranet now includes dynamic content, as well as instant access to virtually any information an employee might need – e.g., SEG lists, digital copies of brochures, details of current marketing campaigns, etc.

Each department also has its own homepage and is responsible for its content. Woldum claims that adding and modifying content is a simple matter.

Woldum sums up Tinker FCU's relationship with RG2 Solutions this way: "RG2 Solutions is a critical member of our IT staff."

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