

Everence Federal Credit Union Uses
CO-OP Network and CO-OP Shared
Branching To Increase Accessibility
and Accounts



OF YOU FOR YOU

CASE STUDY

By joining CO-OP Network and CO-OP Shared Branching, “We’ve leveled the playing field as a smaller financial institution, competing with megabanks with regard to access channels, as well as quality of service.” – Kent Hartzler, President and CEO, Everence Federal Credit Union

Bridging the Gap between Members and Access Points

Everence Federal Credit Union is a \$125 million credit union headquartered in Lancaster, Pa., with 12 branches and nine ATMs spread across five states. Established in 2000 as Mennonite Financial Federal Credit Union, its initial charter served the Mennonite and Amish communities throughout the country. Now open to individuals and groups who “desire to integrate faith and values into their financial decisions,” Everence FCU’s 16,000 members are located in 49 states and 17 countries.

“We believe a broader spectrum of people believe in growing the resources that enrich our community so we welcomed new generations and communities into our credit union,” said Kent Hartzler, President and CEO, Everence Federal Credit Union. “It became increasingly important to implement a more convenient way for people to access their finances and the credit union but it wasn’t feasible for us to launch a fleet of ATMs or erect branches in every market.”

CO-OP Network is a surcharge-free ATM network with more than 28,000 ATMs nationwide. Owned and operated by credit unions, it provides 30 million cardholders access to more ATMs than the biggest bank.

With guidance from the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association (PCUA), Everence FCU joined CO-OP Network in November 2006. “PCUA offers services to help us meet our members’ needs,” said Hartzler. “They recognized that we wanted to enhance our service area and recommended CO-OP Network. Once we signed on, we were elated by the coverage it opened up to us!”

Everence FCU’s effortless conversion to CO-OP Network laid the groundwork to later join CO-OP Shared Branching in February 2008. “Shared branching allows our members to conduct transactions within a partner credit union’s branch, and guarantees that they’ll receive the same level of service as if they were at one of our own,” said Hartzler. “Because of shared branching, we can promote and offer our unique, values-related services to members in areas where we aren’t physically located, and we’ve experienced new membership growth in areas where we don’t have our own branches. Our members benefit from having conveniently-located shared branches to visit to take advantage of these services. Shared branching is essentially an extension of our credit union.

“The cooperative services of CO-OP Network and CO-OP Shared Branching are a crucial part of allowing us to reach all of our members,” said Hartzler.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: BOOSTS IN MEMBERSHIP, CHECKING ACCOUNTS AND ASSETS

Prior to joining CO-OP Network and CO-OP Shared Branching, Everence FCU averaged 49 new members and 33 new checking accounts per month. Now, it averages 77 new members and 39 new checking accounts per month, increases of 57.1 percent and 18.2 percent, respectively. Over a four-year period, Everence FCU has seen its membership grow by 60 percent, checking accounts have increased by 21 percent and its asset size grew by 53 percent.

“We recently surveyed our members and found that 72.7 percent list ATM locations as an important consideration when choosing their primary financial institution, while 81.3 percent list convenient branch locations as an important factor. Checking accounts are a key loyalty indicator and our accounts grew by 7.6 percent just last year,” said Hartzler. “These networks are essential to developing our PFI



membership – before joining the networks, many of our members wouldn't have been able to enjoy the convenience they do now and we would've had a difficult time promoting ourselves as a national credit union."

COOPERATING ACROSS COMMUNITIES: THE CREDIT UNION DIFFERENCE

According to Hartzler, the expanded network of ATMs and shared branch locations has been a welcome addition to Everence FCU members.

"Many members who were with us before we joined the networks had grown accustomed to conducting business with us over the phone, via fax or by mail if they weren't able to get to an ATM or branch. They're still getting used to the fact that they have so many physical locations available to them," said Hartzler. "They're truly impressed to see the cooperative nature of credit unions in action.

"A perfect example is a member who was relocating from the Northeast to Fresno, Calif., and had travelled out West to look for a house," said Hartzler. "He hadn't planned on making an offer on this trip so he hadn't brought his checkbook. Well, he found a place that he wanted to make a down-payment on, but had no way to do so. He called me asking what his

options were so he wouldn't lose out on the house.

"I performed a quick locator search and found a shared branch a few miles from where he was and told him to go there to speak with a membership representative who'd take care of him," said Hartzler. "Fifteen minutes after we hung up, he called back amazed by his experience of being able to complete a banking transaction so far from home that allowed him to make the down-payment for his new house! And he's proudly still an Everence FCU member even though we don't have branches in California."

Members and prospects can easily identify where to find ATMs and shared branch locations by using a locator on Everence FCU's website. Additionally, the credit union advertises its services and nationwide accessibility through traditional media (newspaper, radio, outdoor ads), and church publications, which target its niche field of membership and reach "every community in the country."

"CO-OP Network and CO-OP Shared Branching have had an impressive impact on our operations and the level of service we're able to provide our members. Our numbers continue to grow steadily and in areas of the country where we don't physically have branches or proprietary ATMs," said Hartzler. "These networks

are examples of our industry at its best, exemplifying the ideals upon which credit unions were built. As more credit unions sign on, we'll continue to gain market share on banks, which will never replicate our cooperative model. I'd love to see how far our industry can go."

CONTACT CO-OP FINANCIAL SERVICES TO LEARN HOW CO-OP NETWORK AND CO-OP SHARED BRANCHING SOLUTIONS CAN HELP YOU GROW

CO-OP owns and operates the nation's largest, most recognizable credit union EFT Network, as well as the largest, most trusted, credit union shared branch network. Members of these services are granted access to ATMs in convenient retail locations like supermarkets, drugstores, shopping malls and airports, and more than 4,000 branches worldwide. Everence FCU adopted both and was able to successfully add a robust delivery system to its members in places where it didn't have branches or ATMs, and grow its membership.

CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW CO-OP NETWORK AND CO-OP SHARED BRANCHING CAN BENEFIT YOUR CREDIT UNION. VISIT WWW.CO-OPFS.ORG/GROW OR CALL (800) 782-9042 EXT. 7140