Dickinson Financial Corporation

Fast-growing financial services company improves customer service, saves millions of dollars annually, and realizes 1,408% ROI over three years using Adobe® LiveCycle® software

Dickinson Financial Corporation
www.bankmw.com

Industry
Financial services

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Challenges

- Reduce the time and manual effort needed to process forms
- Improve the speed and quality of customer service
- Cost-effectively scale operations to support new services
- Ensure compliance with bank processes

Solution

- Forms Automation
- Process Management
  DFC is using Adobe LiveCycle solutions to reduce the time and manual effort associated with processing day-to-day customer service requests.

Systems At A Glance

- Adobe LiveCycle Process Management ES
- Adobe LiveCycle Forms ES
- Platform: Suse™ Linux®

Delivering better customer service—while saving millions

Dickinson Financial Corp. (DFC) is a privately held financial services and bank holding company with nationwide and global operations. Its focus on customer service, operational efficiency, and target markets has proved a formula for growth: DFC holds nearly $5 billion in assets, with an impressive return on average equity of 18.83%.

Until recently, DFC used paper forms to initiate and process customer service requests for new accounts, debit cards, account changes, and other activities. Most forms had to be manually routed to DFC's central office for processing. Transit time, coupled with manual error-checking, rekeying, and approvals routing, made it hard for DFC to meet its goals for customer service and efficiency.

Doing the math: manual processing didn't add up to growth

Josh Laire, application development integration manager at DFC, realized that too many resources were being allocated to processes that were yielding returns below the company's overall rate. He was concerned that the problem would only get worse: with DFC adding another $3 billion in assets and growing from 100 branches to more than 200, time-intensive manual processing threatened to stifle future growth.

Laire focused on deploying systems that would eliminate the need to allocate additional staff to handling customer compliance and customer service forms: instead, DFC could adopt highly scalable, software-based systems to automate those processes and bring returns up to acceptable levels. Laire aimed to improve scalability and ROI, but he also wanted to take advantage of the other benefits of automation, including better risk management through automated compliance with documented processes, and faster service to customers.

Quantitative Results

- Achieved savings of more than $2.4 million across Dickinson subsidiaries
- Realized ROI of 1,408% over a three-year period by automating due diligence and compliance forms processes
- Dramatically accelerated processing time for banking forms—Customer Due Diligence Forms handled 76% faster; Address Change Forms 50% faster; Account Closing Forms 43% faster
- Slashed time to process debit card requests by 95%
- 90% of benefits realized began in first year

Qualitative Results

- Executed CIO charter of using technology to grow banking services
- Enabled bank to serve new customers without increasing staff needed to process forms
- Freed employees to engage with customers for increased up-selling and cross-selling
- Accelerated time-to-revenue with faster service delivery

Efficiencies At-A-Glance
Reduced manual time spent...

- Reviewing and rechecking the debit card application process from 3,200 hours per year to 10 hours per year
- Selecting a card number and updating the entry log and system from 4,200 hours per year to 15 hours per year
- Scanning and indexing debit card applications from 6,500 hours per year to 40
- Correcting errors as a result of inadvertent data input from 2,060 hours per year to 20 hours per year

"In this industry, we must win our customers' loyalty through service excellence," says Laire. "If we're slow to respond to their needs, we risk losing them."

Focus on profitabili y
Inefficiency and customer dissatisfaction are the two most obvious costs of manually intensive processes, but other areas of concern include the hidden costs of lost opportunities. For most banks, the vast majority of accounts are marginally unprofitable, and approximately 80% of profits come from just 20% of accounts.

For its long-term health and vitality, DFC sought to build its "share of wallet," selling higher-margin products to its less profitable customers, such as those with just checking accounts. Staff needed to spend time with those customers, talking with them and seeking out opportunities to cross-sell and up-sell higher-margin products, such as a mortgages, lines of credit, or savings accounts.

Automating forms processing
To help meet its business goals, DFC turned to Adobe LiveCycle Forms ES and Adobe LiveCycle Process Management ES, speeding the completion, and processing of forms as platform- and application-independent Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. Now, dynamic digital documents are used to initiate automatic processing of account changes, account openings, and other activities.

Each of the automated processes gets off to a strong start. DFC staff enters just a few details about existing customers or requested services, and backend systems instantly validate and pre-populate the appropriate forms with data on hand. For new customers, the digital forms apply rules to ensure, for example, that dates are entered in the correct format and social security numbers have the right number of digits. This intelligent form-filling virtually eliminates the illegible and incomplete forms that were a major source of delays.

After forms completion, the new systems initiate a consistent process that automates approvals routing, data entry, and notification to the customer that changes are complete. Since all LiveCycle routing is electronic and consistent, requests made using the LiveCycle system take much less time than the manual version of the same process, saving several days or even a few weeks.

Transforming debit card delivery
DFC automated its debit card application process using Adobe LiveCycle. Previously, the application took several paper forms and required manual processing by two or three bank personnel. With data entry, data scanning, processing, fulfillment, and shipping, a customer typically wouldn't receive a debit card for a couple of weeks. If there were any data entry errors in the process, or if forms were misdirected in transit, the wait could be even longer.

With a dynamic online service for debit card applications based on LiveCycle forms, DFC automated document completion and now moves forms cross-country instantly without the delays of mailing or faxing. As a result, DFC accelerated card approval and delivery to customers by 300%, from 15 days to 5.

Within just five months, DFC had fully recouped its investment in its debit card processing solution. Through productivity gains and operational cost reductions on this application alone, DFC realized total project benefits of $632,880—a 71% ROI over a three year analysis horizon.

At the same time, the debit card application built on Adobe LiveCycle is helping DFC increase the profitability of customer services. Because it slashed time spent on manual review, updating, and error correction by more than 95%—from approximately 15,960 staff hours annually to just 85 hours—employees have substantially more time each year to talk to customers about their needs and explore cross-selling and up-selling opportunities.

Time Savings = Dollar Savings
- Time spent manually processing customer due diligence and compliance forms dropped by 76%, for annual benefits of $748,000.
- Time spent processing address change forms dropped by 50%, for annual benefits of $108,000
- Time spent processing account closing forms was reduced by 43%, for annual benefits of $187,260.

A platform for growth
While the returns from the debit card application have been impressive for DFC, the savings were just the beginning for the innovative financial services company. DFC also leveraged Adobe LiveCycle to eliminate manual processing of more than 50 customer due-diligence and compliance forms. Previously, nine different processes for each customer required extensive manual processing and intra- and inter-company forms routing.

The Adobe solution improved the accuracy of the data and qualitative information in these processed forms and virtually eliminated the number of forms lost or delayed in routing.

Bringing much-needed consistency to banking processes
DFC realized that LiveCycle could be leveraged to enable its dispersed operating groups to achieve greater consistency when working with customers and when managing their internal processes. For example, bank branches often had different versions of forms on file, so staff sometimes mistakenly completed and submitted outdated versions of request forms. Identifying and correcting such errors caused delays and increased administrative costs.

With Adobe LiveCycle solutions, forms are now available as PDF files on the company's intranet, helping ensure that staff always uses the latest versions and does not waste time submitting out-of-date forms.

More forms automation, more savings
As the above examples highlight, Dickinson Financial is automating forms processes to benefit both the bank and its customers, who enjoy faster, more streamlined services. To date, the measured impacts for DFC overall have been impressive, as have the returns realized by individual operating units.
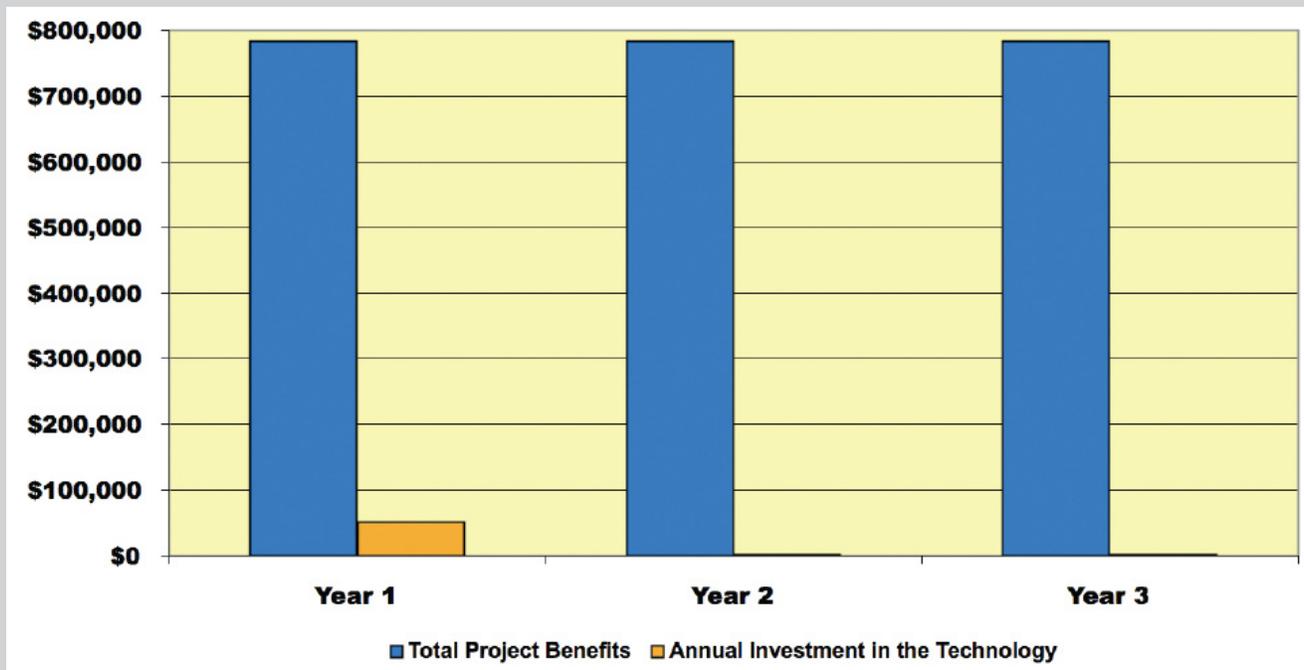
Within just one month of adopting Adobe LiveCycle Forms ES to automate its due diligence and compliance forms processing, the solution had paid for itself, delivering to DFC a whopping 1,408% ROI over a three-year period, and creating an enterprise value of $2,295,000.

Speeding into the future

"Adobe LiveCycle has helped us establish a platform for becoming a paperless bank," says Laire. Ultimately, DFC's goal is to speed its processes by automating more than 300 form-based processes and providing users access to those forms via the corporate intranet or Internet.

DFC's plans include capturing form data instantly from intelligent forms into backend systems, thereby eliminating inaccurate and time-consuming scanning and rekeying of data. It will also integrate digital signature pads into branches, so customers can electronically sign and complete transactions in real-time. With digital signature capabilities, banking branches can automatically route completed forms to all departments for processing. Digital signature capture should improve speed and service quality for vital bank services, including loan applications and account open requests.

"The automation supported by Adobe LiveCycle solutions is helping us to meet our customers' needs more quickly and accurately," says Laire. "And that, in turn, is helping us meet our growth and profitability targets."

For More Information

www.adobe.com/products/livecycle/
www.adobe.com/financial/

The benefits analyses in this story were calculated by Intellicap, a management consulting firm providing Economic Value Analyses to Global 2000 customers and the technology vendors that serve them. The firm developed the QBO methodology- Quantifiable Business Outcome—to help companies evaluate the investment potential of a proposed software solution.

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