

League Data + Brunswick Credit Union: A Case Study

COOPERATION ISN'T A COST, IT'S VALUE.

CHANGE FOUND THEM

Change isn't always something you plan on. Sometimes, it comes to you.

That's where Brunswick Credit Union found themselves in 2017 when their former IT manager announced their retirement.

Suddenly, the legacy core banking platform they relied on was more than a challenge to be managed, it was a liability.

"And it was a worry as to, you know, do we have enough individuals in place to manage things as we go further and as we grow?" says Kelly Burchill, SVP, Operations, Brunswick Credit Union.

Their previous banking platform had been difficult to update, and it was managed fully in-house. So when it came to systems communication across Credit Unions "we were always the last to have that new feature," says Burchill. "Any kind of initiatives that would happen, we always fell behind on things and had to go last."

At conferences and gatherings of credit union leaders, they started to feel out of place. "They're talking about different initiatives," says Burchill, "and I'm thinking, well, that's not how our system operates. We are completely outside of the spectrum of everybody else."

It was critical to Brunswick Credit Union that they continue to make their decisions locally, based on what their local community and members value.

But while they knew it was time to change, they also knew not all change is good. And they certainly didn't want to change their local approach.

It was critical to Brunswick Credit Union that they continue to make their decisions locally, based on what their local community and members value. "I've talked about this a million times, that we're not that big corporate entity, where it's just all about revenue and bottom line," says Burchill. **"We think in-house here, our decisions are made locally."**

And that includes their technology decisions.

David Thompson, Brunswick Credit Union's Director of IT and Innovation, says that "Local IT needs to have representation when decisions are being made. We need to have an understanding of the operations, and be able to work closely with Operations, so we know what those needs are and, and how best we can fulfill those needs."

So Brunswick Credit Union needed more than a technology conversion. They needed a cooperative partner.

THE CHANGE THEY FOUND

"In order for us to have the capabilities we wanted, it was going to take quite a long time to achieve it and was going to cost a considerable amount in fees," says Burchill. "And it just wouldn't have made financial sense for us to try to build our own."

For more than 50 years, League Data has helped credit unions, aggregating the technology and support they need to serve their members' needs today, and tomorrow, and for decades to come.

For any credit union, sourcing the capabilities and technologies they need to stay innovative means drawing resources from everywhere else.

"We can take IT for granted. But it's imperative to have an individual, a Director of IT and Innovation, at the leaders' table because it is fundamental and it touches everything we do," emphasizes Burchill.

The value of having someone "that is technical bring a vision of where the IT department itself needs to be in order to provide the services we do," Thompson notes, is critical.

"But also having an understanding of the operations and be able to work closely with Operations, because that's important to how best we can fulfill those needs."

“IT is fundamental, and it touches everything we do.”
— Kelly Burchill, SVP Operations
Brunswick Credit Union

Working with League Data, Burchill notes, “gave us the ability to look at things differently. It allowed our IT department the ability to really rethink the way they’re doing things and be more innovative, be more forward-thinking than reactive.”

With League Data, they would no longer have to feel out of place, or out of sync, with other credit unions. They could do more than keep up, they could become leaders.

It was a big change, and any change can be complicated and challenging. So Brunswick Credit Union relied on League Data to make it as smooth as possible, leaning on the change management support they offer their partners.

In fact, “that’s where League Data can shine really for credit unions and become an all-purpose partner for them,” says Thompson. Because it’s about more than technology for credit unions, it’s about their ability to serve their members.

“We built such a good relationship with League Data that I could pick up the phone at any time during the day or night and call them and say, this is what’s going on, help us through it,” says Burchill.

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- Continual innovation + updates

“In fact, we’ve recently implemented some new procedures that haven’t gone as smoothly,” says Burchill, “and I think, well, what did we do differently? And the answer is change management.”

League Data has more than 50 years' experience supporting credit unions, which means they've seen a lot of change, and they've made a lot of changes.

Which means their partner credit unions benefit from all that change, all that experience.

“If we’d been on our own, and not had that partnership with League Data, it could have been very different,” says Burchill.

THE CHANGE THEY MADE

Cooperation at every level meant that “within that week, the very next day, we were operating, we were functioning,” says Burchill. “It’s huge what we accomplished with League Data.”

When it comes to the in-house or out-sourcing question, Thompson is quick to say, “I think that it should always be on the table to look at outsourcing, because sometimes, maybe oftentimes, it is the best option.”

“We’re not an IT shop,” Thompson adds. “We’re a financial institution. So that’s what we want to be able to focus on.”

But the biggest change hasn’t been about technology. It’s been about confidence in themselves, pride in their abilities, and leadership in their community.

“The tables have completely turned,” says Burchill. “We used to be seen as slow to follow. Now, we’re looked upon as leaders.”

“I don't think I would hesitate in a minute to recommend League Data to anybody.”

— David Thompson

Director of IT and Innovation
Brunswick Credit Union

And Thompson was able to transition from an IT systems analyst to the Director of IT and Innovation within Brunswick Credit Union, freeing him up to focus on the most important capabilities for staff and members.

For credit unions, staying relevant for their members means staying ahead of technology and regulation. It means being able to make change quickly, securely, and safely.

“If providing IT services to your credit union is taking away from your core business,” says Thompson, “then you should probably be thinking hard about converting your banking system. It should probably be at the very top of that list of whatever you're thinking about.”

For League Data partners like Brunswick Credit Union, that means taking a cooperative approach. “We have some staff that absolutely have that cooperative value going through their bloodstream,” says Burchill.

Because cooperation isn’t a cost, it’s value.

And it’s the value League Data offers its partner credit unions.

They can focus on their members, knowing League Data is focused on their future.