
Leveraging Enterprise Content Management Technology: *How Blue Eagle Credit Union boosted sales and service opportunities by phasing out paper processes*

By Bluepoint Solutions

When Blue Eagle Credit Union found itself hindered in its growth and service delivery goals by legacy, paper-based processes, it was clearly time to step up to the task of converting to enterprise-wide electronic document management. Under the experienced leadership of CEO Jeff Thompson, the credit union has implemented a comprehensive, easy-to-use system that frees sales and member service employees to focus on assisting members instead of on handling paper. By making sure the system is well integrated into their workflows, it is also boosting productivity for all staff, and realizing significant cost savings.

After completing the transition to a multiple common bond charter in 2012, Blue Eagle was serving new communities while continuing to maintain its strong commitment to existing members. It was growing, but unable to fully realize its new potentials—both in terms of new business acquisition and in services to current members—as long as members and staff were still using paper forms, filled in by hand, for most of its processes.

Number of branches: 4

Chartered in 1948

Assets: \$124 million

Members: 11,650

Data Processor: CruiseNet®

Thompson knew that the keys to unlocking the strategic benefits of an enterprise system were, first, to select a comprehensive enterprise content management (ECM) platform and partner, and second, to take a top-down approach to making sure every feature of the system is fully leveraged. As he put it, “Doing the job halfway doesn’t make sense. ECM is only worth the significant investment of time and money it takes if every employee makes use of all its features, all the time. This only happens if management keeps its focus on the system’s strategic payoffs—the big vision.”

The Right Solution and a Strong Partner

Blue Eagle’s stated mission is “delivering solutions,” which it defines as matching the right solution to its members’ immediate needs. “If we were to provide the right solutions for our members,” Thompson said, “we would need to follow our own vision and find the right solution and the right partner for converting to ECM.”

Paperless operation is the ultimate goal for an ECM system, which means that the system must be more than an electronic file cabinet, and must do much more than simply replace physical files. As Thompson commented, “The right solution for us had to add efficiency across the board and deliver as many services to staff and members as possible, right down to the level of e-signature for loans.”

Loan documentation was of particular importance, because, as it is for many credit unions, loan origination and processing were among Blue Eagle’s most paper-intensive activities. It had overcome one hurdle in 2009 by adopting an electronic loan origination platform, reducing hand-completed forms, but with minimal impact on paper usage. Manual document creation still predominated across the entire organization, supported by extensive off-site records storage and physical records transport among the branches, some almost an hour apart. Not only did these outdated processes carry significant costs in money and productivity, but the delays in retrieving records for use were unacceptable from a service-level standpoint.

Guided by Thompson's experience leading an ECM implementation initiative in his previous role as a CU chief operations officer before joining Blue Eagle, the CU took a careful, considered approach to finding a solution, spending much of 2012 defining their specific requirements and the workflows in which they were embedded. Exploration of potential vendors began in August, and Bluepoint Solutions was included on the list. According to Thompson, "We had been receiving market research materials from Bluepoint for some time. When we started to take a closer look at FASTdocs 5, their ECM solution, we liked what we saw. They seemed to be further along in terms of features and functionality compared to other vendors."

Thompson knew that to achieve full system adoption, the system needed to be easy for staff to use, with an intuitive interface. He found that Bluepoint's FASTdocs 5 fit this criterion. "It's not enough for the system to have features. They have to be easy to use, and become a natural part of how our employees work. That way, the system truly gets out of the way of what's important, which is the ability to work with members."

In addition to being a good fit with overall processes and workflows, FASTdocs 5 could be fully integrated with a robust, e-signature platform to support electronic signatures and enable online loan processing, which was a critical requirement. Bluepoint also offered a teller check capture solution that was much more attractive to the credit union than its existing branch capture utility.

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FASTdocs' member-centric filing structure, appealed to Blue Eagle because it allows employees to search for data in an intuitive way, and makes searches extremely flexible. Paired with Bluepoint's Receipt Manager®, transaction data is stored and made searchable both directly and through the FASTdocs interface. All of these features allow the credit union to store and retrieve *all* member-related data in a universal repository.

Blue Eagle wanted to go live with the new system in 2013, which mandated a resource-deep partner. Before being finally selected, Bluepoint took the time to conduct an intensive on-site discovery and evaluation, during which its experts worked with and observed operations in each department.

"This was the clincher for us," Thompson recalled. "We had already committed ourselves to take whatever time we needed to understand everything we wanted the system to do, and how all the pieces would fit together. We knew doing our own research would stand us in good stead, and help us avoid surprises along the way. Bluepoint's additional consultation meant we received really specific recommendations based on actual information."

Initial Implementation Results

Implementation began in February 2013 with Blue Eagle and Bluepoint jointly defining the data structure in FASTdocs. Content in the system is searchable in multiple ways, but the most common type of search is for records pertaining to individual credit union members. By establishing a standard structure for storing each member's information, credit union staff would be able to easily and quickly locate information and respond to many different member requests.

During this up-front process, the implementation team matched workflows to system capabilities and recommended business process modifications (e.g., loan processing and accounts payable workflows) that would help the credit union take maximum advantage of the system's capabilities. Blue Eagle welcomed these recommendations, and because the entire project had management support, was able to immediately implement them.

"We fully leveraged the implementation process, and have been pleased with the results—the transition was smooth, and staff are finding the system easy to use. The interface is familiar to anyone who uses the Internet, and people like using the drag-and-drop function to get documents into the system."

Some of the major changes Blue Eagle has seen since going live in August 2013:

- *Dramatic reduction in courier time.* Not only can couriers reclaim their time for more important tasks, but also all employees can be more productive because delays in obtaining records are eliminated.
- *Immediate improvement in loss prevention.* Rather than physically transporting paper files from several points of origin to the loss prevention group, documents are created electronically or are scanned as soon as they are received.
- *Streamlined loan processing.* Loan packages are now scanned at the branches, worked on by the loan processing group at their location and entered directly into FASTdocs, replacing a workflow that included manual origination, scanning and emailing, printing, processing and paper filing.
- *Reduced paper usage.* Blue Eagle has decreased paper used for loan processing by at least 50 percent, and expects to cut this in half again by the end of 2014.

Blue Eagle found that the availability of expert support and guidance was a valuable aspect of its partnership with Bluepoint. Blue Eagle has an assigned Bluepoint technical support analyst as well as a dedicated account manager. "The Bluepoint implementation team was knowledgeable and responsive. We haven't needed much support since implementation, but there are plenty of resources when we need them."

Upcoming Expansion Plans

Blue Eagle's next step is to complete the implementation of e-signature functionality, which will incorporate electronic document signing into the workflow. Once this is in place, the only time documents will need to be printed will be when members want or need hard copies; eventually, even this can be superseded by emailing these documents. The same utility Bluepoint uses to integrate FASTdocs 5 with e-signature workflow for automated file import, will also be used to import and index electronic files of any size, including reports such as member statements.



With FASTdocs up and running, Blue Eagle is also beginning to phase in ImagePoint Teller and Receipt Manager, with completion scheduled for mid-2014. These two enhancements will round out their ECM workflows. Tellers will remain in balance throughout the day, which will minimize end-of-day processing and the resulting employee overtime, while also reducing Day 2 and exception processing.

Ongoing Top Management Commitment is the Key

Thompson has strong views about the need for a top-down approach to getting the value from an investment in ECM, as he demonstrated throughout the selection of Bluepoint and the implementation of FASTdocs. "An ECM system can benefit your employees, your operation, and especially your members. It's not quite a 'set it and forget it' project, but if you make it a way of life from the beginning, you can set yourself up to reap these benefits for years to come."

His advice to other credit unions? "Take the time to fully understand all your existing processes, reinvent your workflows to take advantage of what your new system will offer, and insist on full adoption by every employee."

Armed with its own streamlined work processes and automated records creation, storage and use, Blue Eagle CU is capturing sales opportunities for new loans and accounts that were previously missed, and delivering on its commitment to providing timely and attractive solutions to its members.
