

Volume 13, Issue 2

# Perspectives

The Official Magazine of the Cornerstone Credit Union League



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



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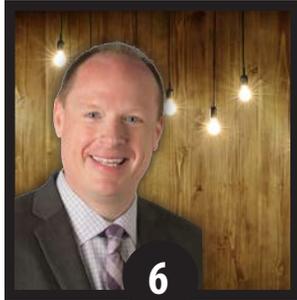
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# Inside

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 **CU MEMBERS**  
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# Professional Development: The Cornerstone of Strategic Sustainability

*Caroline Willard, President/CEO, Cornerstone Credit Union League*

Welcome to another great edition of Perspectives. We're glad you're joining us to quench your thirst with the latest news, trends, tips, and information from the Cornerstone region and across the nation.

Inside this edition of Perspectives, we're spotlighting the one and only Andy Reed, president and CEO of Texas People Federal Credit Union and one of the most distinctive voices in the region. We've also given our signature CU:ROAR program a remodel, and our ROAR feature will show you ways you can more passionately engage with lawmakers and members alike, ensuring the future of credit unions through grassroots advocacy.

It's true! Knowledge is power. We've brought you several articles authored by distinguished instructors at the Southwest CUNA Management School whose expertise is sure to help credit union professionals advance in their careers. We'll explore how to resurrect your strategic planning sessions, reset yourself in a shifting economy, and reevaluate those UCC-1 financing statements. Through our preferred business partners, CU Direct and LEVEL<sup>5</sup>, we'll also take a look at the reasons credit unions are making real gains in the auto lending marketplace and showcase the three-legged stool of branch transformation.

We hope you consider this magazine one of the many valuable Cornerstone resources for professional development. It's our goal that readers should benefit from current and relevant subject matter that helps them succeed.

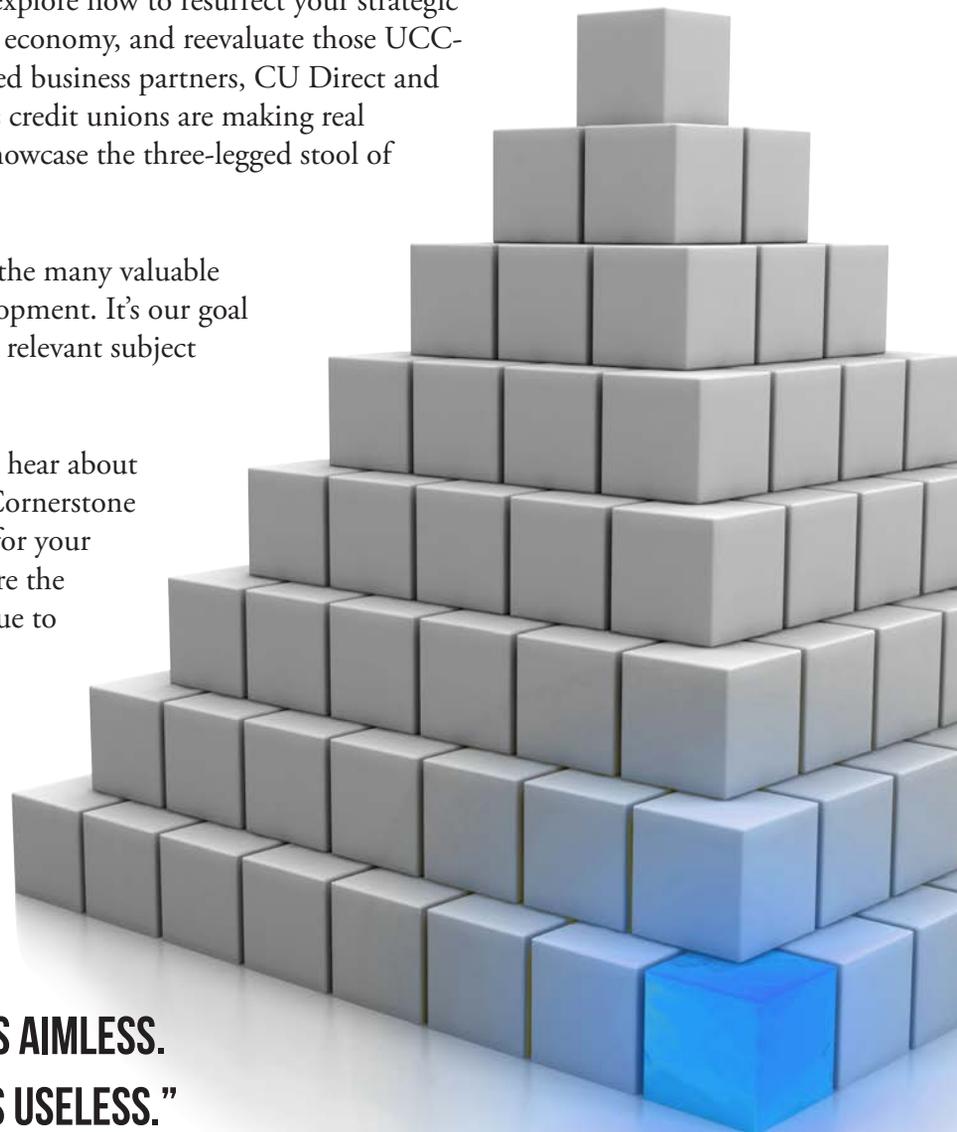
We invite your feedback, and we're happy to hear about topics that interest you for future editions. Cornerstone is committed to delivering maximum value for your dues dollars, and we encourage you to explore the many ways your league can bring greater value to your organization.

**With gratitude,  
Caroline Willard**

**“WITHOUT STRATEGY, EXECUTION IS AIMLESS.**

**WITHOUT EXECUTION, STRATEGY IS USELESS.”**

~ MORRIS CHANG, CEO, TSMC





# Spotlight on CEO Andy Reed & Texas People FCU

*Kimber Cockrill, Cornerstone Credit Union League*

When Andy Reed accepted his position as CEO of Texas People Federal Credit Union in January 2015, the existing staff weren't sure what to expect. At first, things were quiet. Library or funeral home quiet, he recalls. That's when he knew he had to transform a potentially suffocating environment into a place people could enjoy.

"One slow and stuffy day, shortly after I had become the CEO, I cranked up the lobby music to a Michael Jackson jam and silently moonwalked from one side of the building to the other," he said. "When I was finished, I went straight back to my office and took my seat. There were giggles, chatter about what I'd done, and then hysterical laughter that day. Bonding and camaraderie were born into my relationships with my staff, and a positive workplace culture started to emerge."

Once Reed set an example to make work outrageously fun, the team

followed suit. "While it's still quiet at times, because everyone has a job to get done, laughter is plentiful and joy is abundant," Reed said.

The credit union plans fun days that include dressing up in costumes with themes from the 1970s, Sunday's Best, Day of Mourning, etc. They "work the runway" in their lobby and once made it rain for an employee who achieved a personal health goal.

"I've even danced on a desk in the lobby," Reed said. "After all that, I certainly don't think anyone at Texas People rolls out of bed on Monday morning and does a cartwheel because they get to go to work at the credit union for another week, but I do think they enjoy their time here, and it isn't drudgery. They just leave the cartwheels to me because they know I'm the most unconventional CEO ever."

Reed is fond of an early mentor, Lori Reeves, who hired him at his first credit union and helped him accomplish

personal and professional goals that at first seemed insurmountable. She gave him a plaque with a Walt Disney quote that reads, It's kind of fun to do the impossible. Today, the plaque rests on Reed's office window sill, along with a glass ladybug Reeve's boss gave him.

"The plaque reminds me I've done lots of things that seemed impossible at the undertaking, and it was fun to make the impossible things a reality," he said. "The ladybug reminds me the process is slow, and I should exercise patience to achieve my goals. That ladybug can be very irritating; I've been impatient my whole life. I was born in an elevator on the way to the delivery room, and it just got worse from there."

## **CH-CH-CH-CHANGES**

Since he became CEO, Reed instituted a number of changes, among them dramatically growing loans outstanding, introducing marketing to fuel growth, and adding member on-boarding offers and incentives. Their IT infrastructure



was also replaced and modernized, creating a platform for product/service growth and enhancement, as well as superior information security. He also diversified his staff, added more Millennials, and implemented a well-living bonus designed to engage employees in their healthcare while making them a partner in cost control.

The Fort Worth-based credit union ended 2017 with \$24.7 million in assets, a 10.9 percent increase over the prior year, and had 2,739 members. To ensure Texas People FCU is on a sustainable path for growth, Reed says they changed their focus and shifted their paradigm.

“It’s easy, regardless of what level you hold in the organization, to look down and only focus on where you are in the day-to-day operation of the credit union,” he said. “But you must look forward and address the things now

that threaten the credit union’s survival in the long term. Don’t get me wrong, you have to address day-to-day things to ensure the safety and soundness of the credit union in the short term, but at some point you have to shift your focus to a future of growth and possibility. Ensuring that Texas People is on a sustainable path for growth meant first placing our focus on just that.”

## DOWN-HOME BANKING, UP-TOWN SERVICE.

The one thing that didn’t change? Their motto: *Down-home banking. Up-town service.*

**"TEXAS PEOPLE" PEOPLE**

Like all small credit unions, staffing can be a challenge. “We can’t support more staff with profits that come from the economies of scale larger credit unions possess,” Reed said. “My staff has a broad knowledge of the business, where large credit union employees likely have depth of knowledge in a single area.”

Reed notes that the credit union had been somewhat isolated previously, but staff is now more engaged in the credit union community, including the Fort Worth Chapter of Credit Unions, Cornerstone Credit Union League, and CUNA.

He encourages staff to complete some form of professional development every year and supports staff working to attain a formal education. The credit union also applies for scholarship funds from the Cornerstone Credit Union Foundation to offset the costs of staff training, holding to the philosophy that training is an investment in his employees.

## MEMBER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It’s rare for staff not to know a member’s name and rare for a member not to know the names of the staff, Reed said. “When a new employee shows up at Texas People, our team doesn’t have to introduce themselves; the members take care of that and



make them feel at home right away. Overall, we have a very warm family feeling at Texas People, and I'm really proud of that."

Texas People is equally big on community service. All staff, including Reed, perform one day of community service per year *on payroll*. They've worked with Children's Miracle Network, Cook Children's Medical Center, the Tarrant Area Food Bank, Boys and Girls Club, and two local elementary schools. Notably, a large portion of the student population at one of those schools lists a homeless shelter as their home address. One of Texas People's members was a recent Purple Heart Homes Project recipient—a veteran and the credit union's oldest member at 102.

"He built our first credit union office in the iconic Fort Worth T&P building, still attends every annual meeting, and has his original savings passbook along with the account opening cards for every member of his family who is also

a member of our credit union," said Reed. "Some of our board joined us for that workday, and the staff enjoyed working alongside them to better our member's circumstances."

### **GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY THRIVES HERE**

Texas People FCU participates in Cornerstone and CUNA programs such as ROAR, Hike the Hill, MAP, Project Zip Code, and GAC. "Discussion about advocacy isn't limited to the CEO's office or the boardroom at Texas People," Reed said. "Employees are engaged in advocacy, members are engaged in advocacy, and the leadership is engaged in advocacy. We *live* advocacy at Texas People, and everyone is expected to lead in the cause."

Reed notes that 80 percent of the credit unions in the US are considered small by asset size, and as a result, the burden that state and national legislation has placed on small credit unions over the last decade has been crushing.

"While recent legislation and regulation is well intentioned and designed to control big banks that preyed on uninformed consumers, it was also painted with a big brush using broad strokes," Reed said. "The credit union mission of people helping people runs completely antithetical to preying on consumers. As such, we need to be advocating for common-sense regulations tailored to the size and complexity of our businesses."

"The leadership of our country cannot be expected to understand the minutia of running a credit union, so

**“WE LIVE ADVOCACY AT TEXAS PEOPLE, AND EVERYONE IS EXPECTED TO LEAD IN THE CAUSE.”**

it's incumbent upon all of us in this business to tell our stories—and keep telling them—until the knowledge we're trying to impart effects



meaningful change. Complacency about advocacy, in my opinion, spells a near certain death for small credit unions. Therefore, participation in advocacy efforts isn't a choice at Texas People; it's a responsibility and a requirement."

Among his concerns as the CEO of a financial institution is the rampant nature of fraud and identity theft. "When you consider the scope and complexity of fraud, it can be disheartening and even make you lose faith in folks," he said, adding that he would rather not worry about such things and, instead, do something about them.

### **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Incoming CEOs can only hope their board is a well-oiled machine that is supportive of their new hire. "I lucked out and got the dream board and the dream supervisory committee," Reed said. "They're all long-term members committed to having a healthy and growing credit union. They're willing

to try new ideas and don't let fear of failure stop them. They support me, my vision, and every staff member on the team. They're amazing people who make the job a real pleasure."

### **THE FUTURE OF CREDIT UNIONS**

Reed is optimistic about the future. As part of his Southwest CUNA Management School program, he had to write in detail the comprehensive history of Texas People FCU, which was chartered in 1946. In doing so, he read the minutes of all 800 board meetings.

## **“GET IN, GET OUT, OR GET RUN OVER.”**

"I certainly learned a lot about the history of our credit union, but I learned some other things I hadn't anticipated," said Reed. "The people who built this credit union worked very hard to bring these institutions into existence and then build them

into strong pillars of the community. Everything we have now was hard earned. The founders of my credit union were tireless and relentless, even holding board meetings that began at 9 p.m. Our future is bright if we honor the legacies of our credit union founders by working hard, being diligent, and exercising passion for our institutions. Resting on our laurels, complacency, and apathy certainly won't ensure our survival."

"Get in, get out, or get run over," Reed likes to say. "There's work to be done here, and it's hard work. But it's also noble, rewarding, and meaningful and worth the effort."

*Learn more about Texas People Federal Credit Union at [www.fwtppfcu.org](http://www.fwtppfcu.org).*

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# Why Waste Money Always Filing UCC-1 Financing Statements?

*Franklin Drake, Attorney*

In 40 years representing credit unions, the only thing I have found that credit unions despise more than paying lawyers is wasting money or time. I have also found that if my clients ever establish a particular lending procedure, they will follow that procedure every time in every loan, whether it makes sense or not. Sometimes, the result of lock-step procedure is wasted money.

One example is needlessly filing UCC-1 financing statements to perfect purchase money liens in non-titled consumer goods. Too many credit unions believe that the only right way to perfect (i.e., record) a lien in collateral without a title is to file a UCC-1 financing statement. That is not the law. Even worse, once they file a UCC-1 and their loan is later paid off, then they must file a UCC-3 termination statement. Both filings waste someone's money and the credit union's time.

The law is in Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). The UCC governs all lending secured by collateral that is not real estate. The law is clear. The relevant UCC section is §9-309. It is the same in Texas<sup>1</sup>, Oklahoma<sup>2</sup>, and Arkansas<sup>3</sup>.

Translated to ordinary English, this is what UCC §9-309 says:

- If you take a purchase money security interest (a lien) in collateral to secure a loan; and
- If the collateral for the loan is consumer goods (i.e., goods for personal, family, or household use); and
- If the consumer goods do not have a title (like a car or truck); then

the security interest is automatically perfected when the lien is granted.

Surprise! That means there is no need to file a UCC-1. Your security interest is instantly and automatically perfected. That means no UCC-1 filing now. No UCC-1 filing now means no UCC-3 termination statement later. No filings mean no wasted fees. No filings mean no wasted time on useless paperwork.

To be fair, filing a UCC-1 in a purchase money consumer loan certainly does no harm to anyone (except a wasted fee of \$10–\$16, depending on the state). Still, a UCC-1 filing accomplishes precisely nothing more than not filing does. The lien is just as perfected either way. Most lenders have no appetite for wasting time or money. Save the money. Spend your time on something worthwhile.



1. Tex. Bus. & Com Code §9.309

2. Okla. Stat. §12A-1-9-309

3. Ark Code §4-9-309

Now, do not misread. Don't assume that UCC-1 financing statements are always a waste of time and money. They are not. Note that all three ingredients must be present to make a UCC-1 needless. Leave out any ingredient, and the cake falls flat:

1. If you are re-writing an earlier loan (your own or an upstream lender's), then the new loan is not purchase money. That means you must file a UCC-1 financing statement to perfect the lien.
2. If the collateral is not a consumer item (e.g., for business, commercial, or agricultural equipment), then you must file a UCC-1 financing statement to perfect the lien.
3. If the collateral has a title (like a car, truck, or motorcycle), regardless of how it's used, then recording on the title is the only way to perfect the lien.

A surprising number of lenders and lawyers are unaware of the UCC §9-309 provision. Sometimes those lawyers become trustees in members' Ch. 7 and Ch. 13 bankruptcies. When that happens, they sometimes decide the purchase money lien you took on a \$3,000 lawn tractor or some fancy firearm is avoidable under 11 USC §547 as a preference. They take away the collateral, and a befuddled lender does not know the law well enough to stop it. Now you know the law. Now you can keep from being stripped of your collateral needlessly.

Beware needless rewrites of your own loans. You can shoot yourself in the foot. What happens if you cure a delinquent consumer loan by a rewrite instead of a loan modification? The old loan note is paid off by a new note. The new note contains a new security interest in the same non-titled consumer goods. Do you see the trap?

You originally had a purchase money security interest in collateral. No UCC-1 was required. Now, the rewrite means a new debt and a new lien—a non-purchase money security interest in already-existing collateral. The result? No UCC-1 was previously required to perfect the lien, but now you must file a UCC-1 and later a UCC-3 terminating statement. Now, you also may risk your lien priority. A junior lienholder may succeed to first position needlessly.

The two morals to this tale are:

1. Stop filing needless UCC-1s, when taking purchase money security interests in non-titled consumer goods.
2. Stop rewriting your own purchase money loans. Instead, modify the original loan as required to cure the arrearage without sacrificing your automatically perfected lien.

Part of effective lending is lending smart. Holding a hammer does not mean all you see are nails. Learn when to rely on the UCC's automatic benefits for purchase money consumer lenders.





*\*\*Frank Drake is a North Carolina lawyer who has represented, advised, and taught credit unions across the nation since 1978. With a legal practice that concentrates in all aspects of creditors rights and lender compliance law, Drake prefers to spend his time keeping his clients out of trouble, rather than spending their money getting them out of trouble.*

# Signature Advocacy Program Gets a Remodel

*April Krause, Political and Grassroots Director, Cornerstone Credit Union League*

When you're a homeowner, every few years you consider remodeling to keep up with the latest trends and to make improvements that add value. Much like a home, the Cornerstone Credit Union League's premier grassroots program, CU: R.O.A.R., has undergone a remodel to increase its value in the current political environment.

CU: R.O.A.R. is now simply ROAR: Ready. Organize. Activate. Respond. ROAR consists of three key components for success that will help us gain political capital at state and federal levels: joining the army of advocates, signing up for payroll deduction, and enrolling in MAP.

## Join the Army of Advocates

Who are the Army of Advocates? They're employees, board members, and members you identify who are interested in becoming more involved in advocacy.



The Cornerstone region comprises more than 8 million credit union members, 25,000+ credit union employees, 5,000+ board members, and 500+ credit unions. But the army of advocates starts with your credit union because, while we often boast of “millions of credit union members ready to respond,” the reality is that unless we can back up that claim with political action, our efforts ring hollow.

**WE CONTRIBUTE TO BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE—REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALIKE. WE'RE NOT RED OR BLUE; WE'RE PURPLE.**

Imagine if just 1 percent of our credit union advocates became politically engaged. Our voices would ring loud and clear in Washington, D.C. and in state capitals.

## Sign up for Payroll Deduction

Back your PAC! For as little as \$1 per week, you can make a difference in the credit union movement. Imagine if all of us joined forces in support of our respective state PACs. What a difference we could make

in electing pro-credit union candidates for office—not to mention the political capital we could generate on behalf of ALL credit unions. Contributing to PAC is not only a contribution but an investment in your credit union and your future.

We contribute to both sides of the aisle—Republicans and Democrats alike. We're not red or blue; we're purple. Your PAC dollars go to candidates who show an understanding of the value credit unions provide to their members; candidates with a proven voting record on pro-credit union positions; and candidates who sit on committees of jurisdiction or serve in leadership positions.

## Enroll in MAP

The Member Activation Program (MAP) gets your members engaged in credit union advocacy at state and federal levels.

We provide plug-and-play content that you deliver to members, and your members discover ways to play a role in the future of their credit union.

This is important because research shows that members who receive these types of messages from their credit union CEOs actually become more loyal members. Not only does MAP provide an avenue to communicate advocacy messages, but it can also be used as a great educational tool.

This is important because research shows that members who receive these types of messages from their credit union

CEOs actually become more loyal members. Not only does MAP provide an avenue to communicate advocacy messages, but it can also be used as a great educational tool.

“Engaging members to advocate for our credit unions is important,” says Crystal Long, CEO, GECU in El Paso. “Often our elected representatives don’t realize the impact of regulations on our members and community, yet they will be voting for or against those measures. There is greatness in numbers and real voices. Our members can make a positive impact for common-sense

regulations and similar initiatives for all credit unions by making their voices heard because our elected officials will pay attention.”

Credit unions were created with a stroke of a pen and can just as easily be dissolved by the stroke of a pen. Either we’re involved in the legislative process and shaping our own destiny, or we let others do it for us. Get engaged today! Sign up for the new and improved ROAR, and make a commitment to help build an Army of Advocates, Back your PAC through payroll deduction, and engage your members through the MAP.

*If you have questions about ROAR or wish to make the commitment, please contact April Krause at [akrause@cornerstoneleague.coop](mailto:akrause@cornerstoneleague.coop) or 800-442-5762, ext. 6487.*





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# Reset Yourself in a Shifting Economy: A Career Survival Imperative

*John A. Vardallas, Founder/CEO, TheAmericanBoomer Group*

Reinventing yourself is no longer a career strategy reserved for musicians and politicians. Job satisfaction in the American workplace has fallen to a record low 45 percent, according to a recent survey by the Conference Board, a research organization based in New York.

The economy is currently in a shifting mode, and economists are forecasting job expansion and continued employment in many industries, especially technology and service. The greatest threat to the future of the credit union movement is not the banking industry, fintech, other companies, or regulators. It's ignorance and BAU (business as usual).

Knowledgeable, well-trained staff and volunteers are the keys to keeping credit unions operating in an efficient, productive, and thriving member-centric manner.

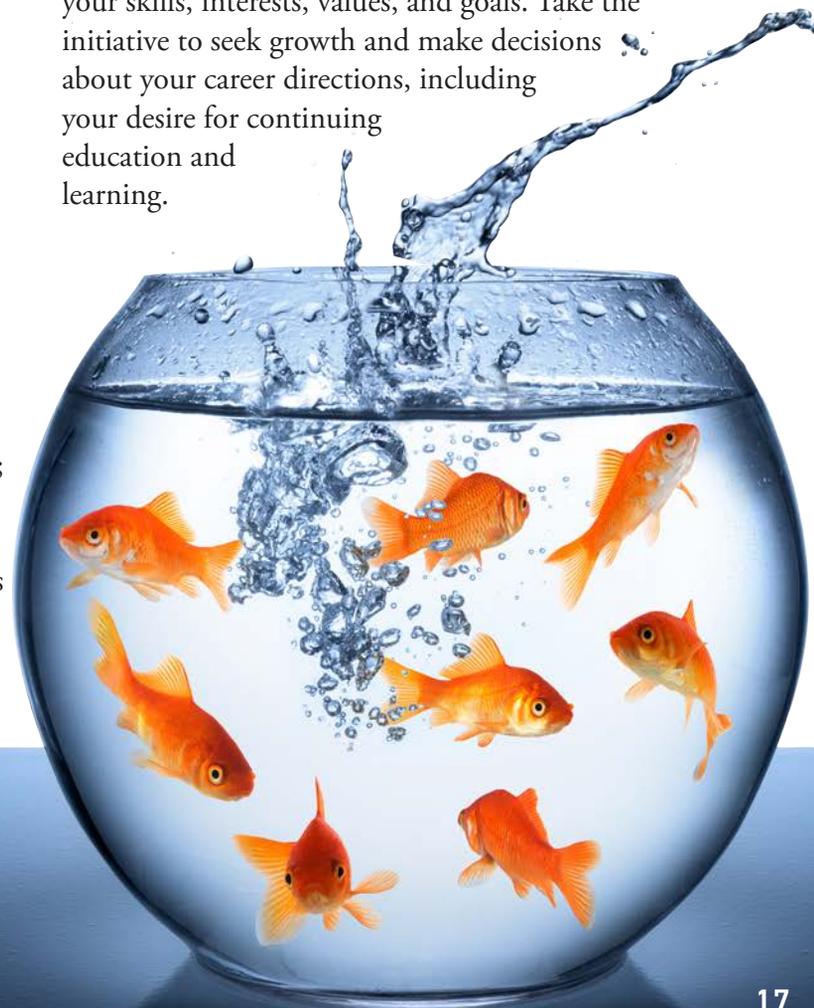
The rapid technological, economic, and informational changes occurring in business today make it mandatory for continuous staff and volunteer training—and retraining. Embracing innovation and breaking old business models are the keys to keeping up with the Amazons and Apples of the world.

Change is no longer a force in the business environment; it *is* the business environment. We must develop a lifelong learning philosophy if we are to keep up. The dynamics of change require workers to update their skills and competencies on a regular basis.

As a credit union professional, you are responsible for facilitating your development process, and you need a strategy to maintain your professional and personal edge. To maintain your position, be prepared to reset yourself by developing new goals, updating your job-related skills, and monitoring trends in the credit union movement. Your development plan should include support. As key players in your growth process, your supervisor or top managers should be consulted periodically to ensure your plan is lasting and successful.

## The Professional Development Process

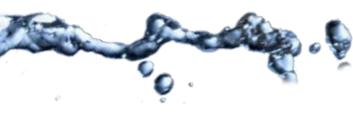
The ultimate responsibility for implementing your career plan rests with you. This means continually assessing your skills, interests, values, and goals. Take the initiative to seek growth and make decisions about your career directions, including your desire for continuing education and learning.



Performing current job duties in an effective manner is a good beginning point for the career development process. You know you must bring your “A” game to work every day and garner the resources to make career growth a reality.

That will take finances, time, strong effort, and desire to accomplish your goals.

Approach your supervisor in a cooperative, nonthreatening manner about your goals for training and career development. Place emphasis on how the professional development process can improve your performance.



For the #2s waiting for their opportunity to take the leadership reins, you may have to wait a bit longer since the pool of credit unions to move into is shrinking, and current CEOs may stay longer due to changes in their retirement plans. That being the case, focus on developing laterally, cross training, and being the unofficial VP of championing innovation,

**FOCUS ON DEVELOPING LATERALLY, CROSS TRAINING, AND BEING THE UNOFFICIAL VP OF CHAMPIONING INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY PROCESS IMPROVEMENT, AND MEMBER-CENTRIC “WOW” SERVICE INITIATIVES.**

technology, process improvement, and member-centric “wow” service initiatives.

Show your competencies and success attributes when you lay out your vision for the credit union

to separate yourself when it comes time to interview for that #1 position.

Because the credit union

movement has a longstanding tradition of promoting staff from within, awareness of the career ladder in your credit union and in the industry is essential. Build your competencies with positive performance experiences to position yourself for growth opportunities.



**STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE JOB SATISFACTION/ PROSPECTS**

- Keep up your skills and competencies
- Think positive
- Challenge yourself to learn something new
- Build networks and stay connected
- Bring your “A” game to work every day
- Find ways to help your credit union be successful
- Learn to think outside the organizational box
- Reward yourself by celebrating your accomplishments
- Maintain a survivor mindset

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Also, take advantage of local, state, and national educational offerings to prepare for future leadership opportunities. Successful completion of these programs can provide you with not only new skills, experiences, and professional networks, but also a valuable career credential.

The work environment will continue to change rapidly, becoming more Darwinian, and you'll need to survive by adapting. Cultivate your resiliency and the skill of not getting thrown by crisis, defeats, or failures.

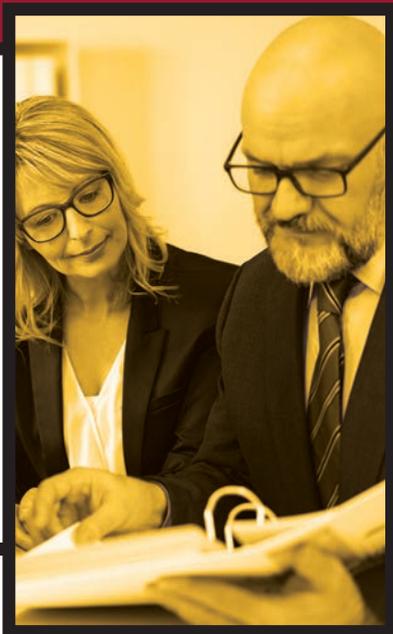
Your future success will be measured by how much you invest in growing, going, and never letting go of your dreams.

*John A. Vardallas CAE/CUDE is a Madison, Wisconsin based speaker/consultant to the CU system focusing on improving profitability/performance/productivity. He is also senior faculty strategist and project evaluator for SCMS. He can be reached at 608-577-8707, or [jvardallas@aol.com](mailto:jvardallas@aol.com).*

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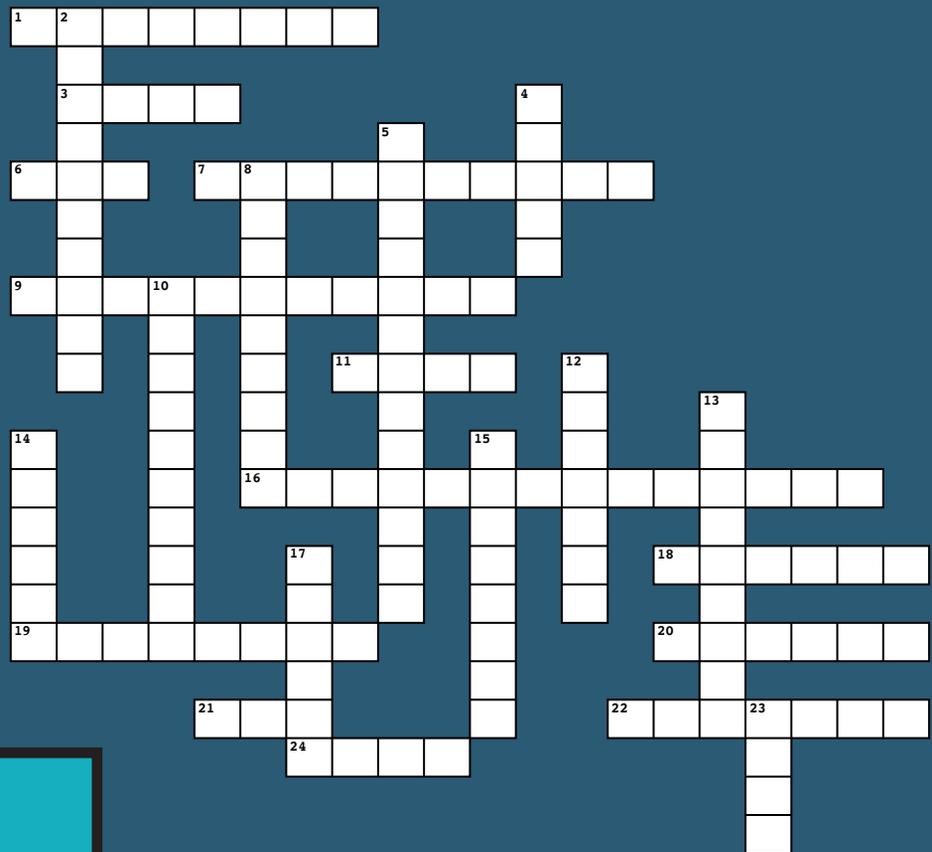
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# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## Down

2. Founder of North American CU movement
4. Financial tools people use to make MAJOR purchases
5. Share a common goal among people and organizations
8. Move forward, in Spanish
10. The ability to inspire individuals to work together
12. Targeted type of planning to achieve maximum results
13. One who serves on a CU's board of directors
14. First name in Hispanic outreach
15. CU4Kids Shop for \_\_\_\_\_
17. Credit union location
18. Cornerstone's premier grassroots program

## Across

1. The act of supporting a worthy cause
3. Innovative educational program to advance one's CU career
6. Campaign for common-sense regulations that engages members
7. Highest award for CU trailblazers (3 words)
9. Young group of professionals
11. National award for social responsibility projects benefiting communities
16. CUs that thrive indefinitely have this quality
18. Make contact and get involved
19. CMN fundraising program for CU members
20. Those whom CUs are in business to help
21. Organization that pools campaign contributions from members
22. Award for CU philosophy in action
24. What you do on the Hill

# Shaking the Dust Off of Strategic Planning



## Three Ways to Revitalize Your Next Session

*Mark Arnold, CCUE, President, On the Mark Strategies*

“**Strategic planning**” are two words that can strike cynicism and frustration into the hearts of any credit union executive or board member. Credit unions spend a great deal of time, money and energy on strategic planning, all too often with sketchy results. The refrain goes a little something like this: “Year after year, it’s the same old thing. We talk and talk, and nothing gets done.”

Unfortunately, these are often the results of traditional or old school credit union strategic planning sessions. A group of leaders get together, share a good meal, and brainstorm ideas for the future. Somebody takes notes, compiles the report, and shares it later with the participants. There are about 97 action items to complete, all in the first quarter of next year.

But what if strategic planning isn’t that way? What if you could shake the dust off the typical strategic planning session, turning it into something from which real and substantive results could come?

**Here are three ways you can revitalize your next session:**

1. **Throw out the SWOT**
2. **Interject fun**
3. **Use experts**

### **Throw out the SWOT**

The most overused tool in strategic planning is the traditional SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). What if we just threw out the SWOT? While that may sound sacrilegious, it may be time to consider such a bold move.

Removing the SWOT means using other planning tools to build your strategic plan. We use various new mechanisms, including The Myth of Excellence and our trademarked Five Star CU Analysis.

With the Myth of Excellence, you choose one area (price, product, service, experience, or access) you’re going to dominate and one other area you’re going to be good at but not necessarily great. This tool quickly requires you to set strategic priorities.

With the Five Star CU Analysis, you strategically analyze your credit union in five key areas: member service, staff, marketing/branding, finances, and operations. This exercise will also identify what areas need strategic concentration in the coming planning cycle.

### **Interject fun**

When people are enjoying themselves, the output tends to be better. There’s no doubt that incorporating fun into a planning session can yield outstanding results. But how do you do it?

Opening the session with some type of team building exercise gets people out of their seats, up and moving. It sets the tone that we're here to get results but will also have fun while doing so. One tool we use to "bring the fun" is playing the game Toss Up, which helps you see how risky or risk averse your group is. It also illustrates the point that when it comes to strategic planning, there are times to take risks and times to avoid risks.

Other team-building tools include doing the Marshmallow Challenge, playing Jenga, or throwing two rounds of darts (one with a target and one without to demonstrate that hitting a specific target—like planning—is more difficult).

### Use experts

Having a third party facilitate your strategic planning process elevates your session to an entirely different level. A good facilitator will push and encourage you. For example, we tell our strategic planning clients that we're going to be your frenemy: we will love you like a friend but challenge you like an enemy.

You can also bring subject-matter experts to the session for additional insights into your strategies. This could include local or national economists, generational authors (every credit union is trying to get younger), or experts in the branding field. As a credit union, you have many experts at your disposal through various partnerships. The Cornerstone Credit Union League, your core processor vendor, the Southwest CUNA Management School faculty, and Catalyst Corporate FCU are just a few.

In today's fast-paced environment, it's extremely difficult to keep pace with the trends in our industry. Having third parties at your session offering their insights will spark discussion and give you fresh ideas on how to tackle your upcoming strategies.

The good news is your credit union strategic planning process doesn't have to be the same old, same old. By shaking the dust off of the strategic planning process in three key areas (throwing out the SWOT, interjecting fun, and using experts), your plan can take on new life and vitality.

### About the Author

*Mark Arnold, CCUE, is a keynote speaker, brand expert and strategic planner. He is also president of On the Mark Strategies, a consulting firm specializing in branding and strategic planning. Some of the services Mark provides include strategic planning, branding, leadership training, marketing audits and staff training. His web address and blog is [markarnold.com](http://markarnold.com). You can also contact him at 214-538-4147 or [mark@markarnold.com](mailto:mark@markarnold.com)*



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# Why You Should Mentor a Student at Cornerstone Leadership Academy

*Kimber Cockrill, Publications Manager, Cornerstone Credit Union League*

One of the best-kept secrets of the credit union movement is its fondness for collaboration. “People helping people” isn’t just a mantra; it’s a philosophy that includes not only members, but also the giving of our time and expertise to those among us who aspire to leadership. We must share the breadth and scope of our hard-earned knowledge and experience and benefit from the ripple effect that expands the movement as a whole with a tour de force of new leaders.

That’s why, as part of Cornerstone Credit Union League’s Collaboration Program, we’re calling on credit union leaders to become mentors to Leadership Academy students during their nine-month training program.

## Why Mentor?

Those of us fortunate enough to have benefited from a mentor in our career may remember that we could look to them as a voice of experience, a trusted sounding board, and a brainstorming alliance. They were inspiration artists, motivation aficionados, advice givers, influence sharers, opportunity peddlers, and door openers. Quantifying the value of any of those gifts is near impossible.

If you’ve never had the opportunity to be a mentor, no sweat. You’ll benefit in numerous and sometimes incalculable ways:

- Mentors feel good about their potential to influence another person’s life for the better.
- Through mentoring, people start thinking more of others than themselves.
- Mentors help cultivate winning leaders for the future, creating a ripple effect.
- Mentors contribute to a more robust and sustainable credit union movement.
- The life you end up affecting via mentoring may be your own.

In effect, mentoring is its own reward. It is ultimately a two-way street that has the potential to change or transform not just one life, but two. Mentoring someone can lead to events, opportunities, experiences, challenges, and rewards you can’t possibly anticipate; but you will learn and evolve and grow as a credit union leader and as a human being.

The world needs more mentors.

*Learn more about the Cornerstone Leadership Academy and the Collaboration Program at [www.cornerstoneleague.coop/leadership\\_academy.html](http://www.cornerstoneleague.coop/leadership_academy.html).*



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# The Three-Legged Stool of Branch Transformation

Anthony Burnett, LEVEL<sup>5</sup>

Lobbies filled with furniture that looks as if it could double as a set from the 60s-era sci-fi show *Star Trek*. Lounging areas that are one disco ball short of a setting for a hot new nightclub. Lighting that would feel equally at home in an art gallery for postmodern ure. The branch of the future may not resemble the serious, business-minded look of the past, but what’s behind all that glitz is anything but fly-by-night.

### What’s behind all that design?

This is, after all, the place where all of your credit union’s channels converge. It’s the key cog in your service delivery network. The branch is more than just four walls, a vault, and a teller line. As the saying goes, there’s a method to the madness. The branch of the future is a three-legged stool composed of the right mix of:

1. Function,
2. Member experience, and
3. Technology integration.

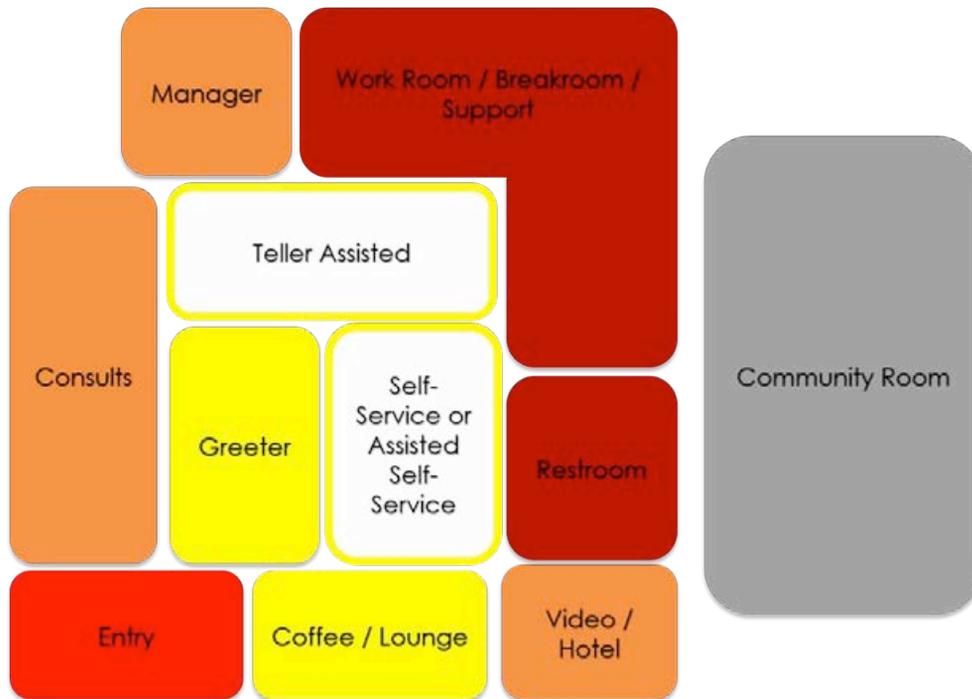
### What’s your function?

The branch houses a process for people. So, the natural first step is to understand what functions are needed within it. A common starting point is uncovering and understanding the function of a transaction. Is it teller-assisted (teller line or pods)? Self-service (ATMs)? Or assisted self-service (Interactive Teller Machines)?

Knowing these functions is the key to decisions about placement, staffing, and tools needed. Additional services offered in the branch potentially include lending, insurance, or investments and should be included in this phase.



*Is this the lobby of a credit union, or a leftover set from a 60s sci-fi show? Actually, it’s Mazuma Credit Union’s 50,000-s.f. main office.*



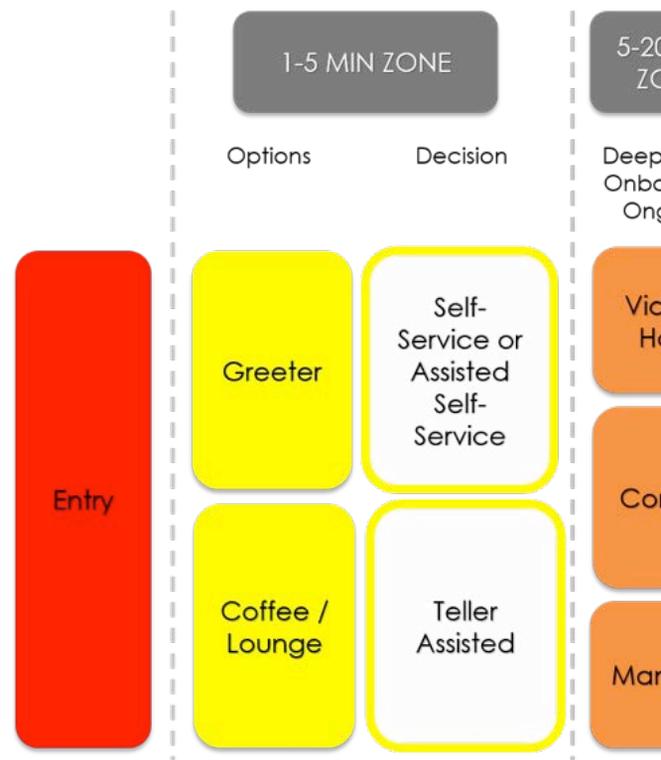
*The design process starts inside the branch and then builds layers to offer services for the membership and community*

### Think in Zones

As the function takes shape, the desired member experience is layered on top of the function. Many a credit union will skip over the branch's function and go straight for experience because that is what's considered hip, cool, or relevant. Certainly, the member experience matters—and matters a lot—but not at the expense of function first.

The member experience includes the first impression, zones of member activity, and support. Each zone accomplishes a function and experience through the branch's staff and tools. Zones are established by length of time:

- Entry zone – Where first impressions happen
- 1 to 5-minute zone – Greeters, transactions and quick decisions
- 5 to 20-minute zone – Consultation, manager access, and full screen video to solve larger problems
- Support zone – Workroom, breakroom and storage
- Add on – Something extra, like a community room



*Zones are matched with function to facilitate member experience*



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ate experience of the branch with the ship.

**Tech is the Final Piece**

Once the functions of the branch and the expected needs of the members are identified, the all-important integration of technology is applied to make everything run. Cash automation/recycling at the point of the transaction creates time for staff to focus less on counting and balancing and more on tending to the needs of the membership.

Self-service tools like ATMs and ITMs allow members to serve themselves or with the assistance of staff during or after hours. Automation is not limited to cash transactions. It also includes video conferencing, security, and back-office equipment to accelerate the business.

**Summary**

Although research shows nearly 60 percent of members start their journey online, more than 70 percent will end up in a branch. Therefore, the credit union branch is here to stay, and the “three-legged stool” approach brings together the key pieces to hold up your branch of the future.

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

## DOWN

- 2 DESJARDINS
- 4 LOANS
- 5 COLLABORATE
- 8 AVANZAMOS
- 10 LEADERSHIP
- 12 STRATEGIC
- 13 VOLUNTEER
- 14 JUNTOS
- 15 MIRACLES
- 17 BRANCH
- 18 ROAR

## ACROSS

- 1 ADVOCACY
- 3 SCMS
- 6 MAP
- 7 HALLOFFAME
- 9 MILLENNIALS
- 11 DORA
- 16 SUSTAINABILITY
- 18 ENGAGE
- 19 SKIPAPAY
- 20 PEOPLE
- 21 PAC
- 22 HERRING
- 24 HIKE

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# CUs Continue to Make Real Gains in the Auto Lending Marketplace

*Bill Meyer, Public Relations and Corporate Communications Lead, CU Direct*

Credit unions continued to make significant advances in the auto lending marketplace in 2017, leading the industry in two key areas: market share and technology.

## Market Share

Credit unions' growing market strength is evident by the 11.3 percent year-over-year auto loan growth they experienced in 2017, expanding market share in both new and used car loans.

Credit unions' share of the loan and lease market for new and used vehicles increased to 21 percent in Q4 2017, up from 19 percent a year earlier, according to Experian. Meanwhile, bank market share declined to 32 percent, from 33 percent a year earlier, while captive finance companies fell to 28 percent in Q4 2017, from 30 percent in Q4 2016. If this trend continues, we could see credit unions make a real push to close the gap with these lenders in 2018. In Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Alaska, and Washington, credit unions own 50 percent or more of the auto lending market.

As further testament to credit unions' strong performance in auto lending, the 1,100-plus credit unions on CU Direct's CUDL platform topped all other lenders in 2017, funding 1.8 million loans and becoming the nation's number one lender in the aggregate.

The cause of this gain is twofold. There's been a shift away from leasing toward retail auto lending driven by a strong economy and changes in manufacturer lease programs that make them less affordable and less appealing. Credit unions' strong relationships with dealers and competitive auto lending programs allowed them to capitalize on the trend of increased new auto loans.

## Technology

In addition to smart risk management and strong auto lending programs, credit unions are recognizing dealers' calls for improved technology. What dealers want most is

a fast lender response to financing requests and efficiency when closing the transaction. In short, they want technological solutions.

Efficiency and adoption of new technology helps credit unions not only meet member and dealer needs but also grow auto loans. CU Direct has continued to invest in developing technology over the past few years to help credit unions achieve these goals.

CU Direct's next generation CUDL auto lending platform was released in 2017, further streamlining the financing process between credit unions and dealers and helping credit unions retain more auto loans. In addition, their Lending 360 loan origination system reached a milestone of 100 credit unions, providing credit unions with a more robust user experience.

These advances are valuable to dealers and credit unions alike, and when combined with the mutually beneficial relationship between the two, have resulted in record market share.

## Focus on Service

With a strong, and growing position in the marketplace, credit unions need to lead with service as a competitive advantage. Credit unions must position themselves as the best lenders and the best partners for dealers. This strategy will benefit credit unions with even more market share and benefit members with increased access to credit union lending.

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