



TOP TEN COMMUNITY BANK IT INITIATIVES

Even though community banks are smaller than their regional and national brethren, the competitive pressures are similar. What is different? Their much smaller IT staff and budget. This month, BTN examines 10 community banks that have overcome market obstacles through innovative IT initiatives. The projects, which range in size and scope, include security, customer acquisition, data management and imaging. The institutions profiled have found ways to capitalize on evolving business demands in a tough economic environment with a limited amount of financial and human capital.

**BY JOHN ADAMS, GLEN FEST AND
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ASIAN BANK Philadelphia, PA

INITIATIVE: Web-based Courtesy overdraft service

TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYED: BSG Financial's CourtesyConnect™

STRATEGIC GOAL: Offer an overdraft privilege service with the assurance of remaining compliant.

With about \$60 million in assets, Philadelphia-based Asian Bank doesn't have a huge amount of human capital. So when it saw an opportunity to shave workload and provide a service that's popular with consumers at the same time, it jumped at the chance.

By deploying BSG Financial's CourtesyConnect™, the bank is able to outsource overdraft services, remain compliant with regulatory guidelines, and reduce strain on its employees. That's a big deal when you only have one branch.

"We only have 20 people," says Bonnie Schulz, vp and compliance officer at the bank. Because CourtesyConnect™ is completely outsourced, the bank didn't have to invest in additional personnel or equipment, such as a server, printer or

software seat licenses. In addition, BSG Financial manages all security back-ups, software upgrades, secure file transfers and server maintenance, and provides ongoing compliance updates.

Courtesy overdraft services, which were once heavily scrutinized by consumer advocacy groups, have been increasing in popularity to a point where they are now expected by accountholders. Being able to meet these expectations with limited resources was high on the bank's interest list.

Also of interest to the bank was BSG Financial's product simplicity, a particular advantage for the institution's primarily Chinese-speaking customer base. "It's pretty uncomplicated to use," Schulz says.

—JA



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