



Centier Bank Automates its Small Business Lending with BizMark from Cypress Software

CHALLENGE

Small business lending is big business at Centier Bank. As one of 15 banks in Indiana certified by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as an advocate of small business development, this Merrillville, Ind.-based institution promotes the American dream, ensuring that independent entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground.

With humble beginnings itself, Centier was founded in Whiting, Ind. in 1895 when Henry Schrage sold some of his family's land to Standard Oil. Thus he began the Bank of Whiting with total capital of \$35,000.

As the City of Whiting grew, so did the bank. After more than a century – and a name change – Centier has grown and remains an independent, family-owned and family-managed institution. Its central mission is providing hometown banking by building relationships with families, businesses and communities in northern Indiana.

Once the decision was made to turn to Cypress Software Systems and its Mark IV loan-decision software, the training occurred in January 2003. "Within two months, we had a complete and successful rollout, and we're very happy."

Today, Centier holds more than \$1.8 billion in assets, with 700 employees in 44 branches across the state.

To further illustrate its business banking prowess, the bank was recently named "Best Bank for Business" by Northwest Indiana Quarterly for the fourth consecutive year.

As Centier's small business lending portfolio continued to grow, it recognized the need for a smoother, more efficient loan application process

John Misióra, vice president and manager of installment loan production at Centier, says the company's incumbent small business credit application system just wasn't meeting the bank's requirements.

"At Centier, we focus on building customer relationships, and we were looking for a software solution that would streamline our small business lending process, provide faster decision turnaround and ultimately increase customer service," he said.

Since 2003, Centier had been using Mark IV loan application software from Cypress Software Systems LP to automate its consumer lending operations. When Misióra was informed in 2005 that Cypress had developed a new application for small

business lending -- called BizMark -- he agreed to test pilot the software as a potential solution to the bank's needs.

SOLUTION

"We've become very familiar with the Cypress team and their products, and knew that BizMark, if it was like Mark IV, would be a quality application that would significantly impact our small business lending," said Misióra.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Name: Centier Bank

Location: Merrillville, Indiana

Founded: 1895

Branches: 44

Assets: \$1.8 billion

Employees: 700

About:

Centier Bank was founded in 1895 by Henry Schrage in Whiting, Ind. More than a century later, Centier has grown and remains an independent, family-owned and family-managed institution. Centier's central mission is to provide hometown banking by building relationships with families, businesses and communities of northern Indiana.

"Cypress shares our service-oriented philosophy and they understand our business requirements."

"BizMark makes the small business lending process more efficient by eliminating cumbersome manual processes, cutting the cost of origination and helping institutions better comply with regulations," said Stephen G. Sargent, president and chief executive officer of Cypress Software Systems. "Centier has been a big supporter of our Mark IV consumer lending software, and we look forward to meeting their small business lending needs with BizMark."

The beta solution went live in February 2006, and after several tests and updates, the full application was installed in Centier's nine commercial lending locations in July 2006. Applicant information for loans of \$500,000 or less is collected by Centier commercial loan officers and entered into BizMark.

The customer's data is then compared against scoring models and sent to underwriting for review. Within minutes, the loan officer can reach a decision.

RESULTS

BizMark has helped Centier change the way it processes small business loans, while providing a user friendly, productive solution.

"Efficiency. Speed. Higher customer service. BizMark achieves those goals," said Misiora.

ABOUT CYPRESS

Headquartered in North Richland Hills, Texas, USA, Cypress Software Systems, LP is a leading developer of automated credit application decision support technology. Cypress provides community and regional banks, finance companies and credit unions with loan application decision and tracking tools equivalent to those used by the largest national lending institutions. Clients, nationwide and in 16 countries, use the company's flagship products, Mark IV, BizMark and AppMark, to quickly and consistently process consumer and small commercial loan applications. Mark IV and BizMark may be licensed in the bundled Cypress Suite. Web Site: www.go-cypress

ABOUT BIZMARK

BizMark is based on a Cypress-delivered .NET/Microsoft SQL Server platform. It runs in a customer relationship management (CRM) environment, enabling lenders to take credit requests including principal and financial statement data; retrieve and interpret consumer and business credit reports; perform ratio analysis; and score the results. The software handles small business commercial credit requests for lines of credit, term loans, commercial mortgages, corporate leases and corporate credit cards.

"It is better than any commercial lending software we've evaluated. It brings consistency and control to our underwriting process, and offers a user-friendly interface for our employees.

"Like the Mark IV system, BizMark is very smooth, and our users have adapted and accepted the software in a short time. It's a big jump from our previous loan application automation software."

Looking forward, Centier expects BizMark to provide added benefits.

"We've just scratched the surface as far as benefits," he said. "As we continue adapting the software with our lending processes, we will reap great rewards."



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