



Case Study:

Wintouch[®] eCRM Solution Puts Lender in Closer Touch with Its Clients

Touchtone's Wintouch eCRM Helps Preferred Credit Simplify Activities Management

For Preferred Credit, Inc., a leading indirect consumer lender, managing customer relationships is critical. The company does no indirect marketing, relying solely on long-term relationships with its clients and word-of-mouth advertising to bring in business.

Preferred Credit, based in St. Cloud, MN, specializes in the direct sales market. The 115-employee company, which has about 46,000 credit customers, receives its credit business from about 600 clients across the country that sell items such as vacuum cleaners and cookware directly to consumers.

Providing Clear Communication

In dealing with its clients, VP of Operations Greg Windfeldt said that the company face several problems. The company's clients, he said, "have different products, different needs, and different issues, and we did not have a system that would let different parts of our company know what might be happening with a particular client."

Primarily, Windfeldt said, "we wanted to create clear communication within the company. We wanted to be able to track discussions, conversations, emails, and special programs for each client -- and we wanted the ability to create form letters. We wanted to be able to determine whether we had followed up on a problem or request."

In addition, Windfeldt said, the company wanted to be able to more easily "create a personal relationship" with its clients. Because Preferred Credit relies on word-of-mouth to build business, it's important to know its clients intimately. "We like to know their children's names, their hobbies, their interests, and what they've done in the past,"



Windfeldt said, "so that we can send appropriate flowers, cards, and gifts." Such information, he said, has been recorded on paper and is not very accessible. "We needed a better profile of our clients at hand," he said.

Selecting a CRM Solution

It may come as no surprise, that the company decided it needed a robust customer relationship management (CRM) package. The company turned to consultants to help select the software. Preferred Credit had budgeted \$100,000 for the project, but the first consultant suggested a CRM product with a price tag twice that amount. A second consultant found Wintouch from Touchtone Corporation, a CRM product that met the company's budget.

Following a demonstration, Windfeldt said, "it appeared that Wintouch had what we were looking for at a cost we could afford." Critical to the decision process was the fact that Wintouch runs on the IBM iSeries. "That had been a sticking point with other vendors," Windfeldt said.

Touchtone, he said, easily wrote an interface to the company's legacy system, and implementation "was as smooth and as simple as any implementation I've ever gone through." Wintouch was up and running within three months, Windfeldt said, "and probably could have gone faster except that it was a busy time for us and we were slow getting information back to Touchtone." If issues arose, he said, "they were resolved within one or two days."

An Historical Reference

With Wintouch in place, "information that once was scattered throughout the system now is all in one location," Windfeldt said. The company can more easily track personal information about its clients, and Preferred Credit's employees have found Wintouch's activities function easy to use. "Everybody pulls up Wintouch first thing in the morning and can schedule their activities. Our staff really likes this, especially being able to assign tasks and then being sure that the task gets done."

A long-term benefit of Wintouch, Windfeldt said, is that Preferred Credit will have a history of its relationship with each client. Before, he said, historical client information was mostly recalled from memory, with no written record.



The technical staff at Touchtone, Windfeldt said, "is very capable. They provided the best customer support of any software development project I've ever dealt with. And the nice thing is, you don't have to go through a help desk. When you call, you get right to the people who designed and built the system."