



Provident Bankshares Improves Service, Reduces Fraud Exposure and Prepares for Check 21 with Aurum's Advanced Imaging Solutions

With 113 branch locations in and around Washington, D.C., Baltimore-based Provident Bank understands the importance of operational efficiency and superior customer service. Like many midsize community-based banks, the \$4.5 billion institution considered a move to image item processing in the mid '90s. Provident understood the potential benefits to its customers, but just couldn't justify the investment in in-house technology.

However, in late 2000 Provident learned that its manual processing equipment would no longer be supported by the manufacturer. And when confronted with the exorbitant cost of replacing their check processing technology (approximately \$600,000 to \$800,000 per reader/sorter) and, soon afterwards, the requirements of the impending Check 21 legislation, the bank knew the time was right to make the move to imaging.

Business Situation

Provident carefully considered whether to implement an in-house solution or outsource to a proven provider. A detailed analysis of their business issues — including cost, time-to-market, and required in-house resources for both staff and space — led the bank to choose outsourcing as the best overall approach to entering the world of imaging.

"We wanted to get into imaging quickly, but at the same time minimize disruption for our staff," said Jay Fitzhugh, senior vice president for strategic directions for Provident Bank. "Outsourcing gave us a cost-effective alternative, eliminating the need for additional space and enabling us to leverage an experienced support staff."

The Solution

Provident Bank chose to leverage Aurum's advanced digital imaging technology, embracing a complete array of outsourced solutions delivered through the company's image item processing center in Baltimore, Maryland.

"Aurum offers the best imaging platform and service for banks our size," Fitzhugh said. "Plus, their flexible business model and proximity to our operations made them an appealing overall choice."

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Senior Vice President
Provident Bank

With Aurum leading the transition process, it took only six months for Provident Bank to move from a traditional proof of deposit shop to a fully image-enabled operation.

Today the bank leverages advanced solutions at every branch including image item processing, image archive and image statements. These digital tools have enabled Provident to increase the speed in which they service customer requests.

success in motion

a customer case study

“Imaging has transformed the way we interact with our customers,” Fitzhugh said. “It used to take us a week and a half to research and resolve customer inquiries. Now, we have the capability to retrieve transaction history on the spot. Our customers are happy with the enhanced service and our branches are happy with the improved ability to satisfy our customers.”

In addition, Aurum’s digital image archive interfaces with Provident’s custom fraud applications – creating data exchange efficiencies that help protect the bank and its customers from potential losses. Aurum’s image archive also enables Provident Bank to provide images of retail and commercial customer transactions via their Internet Banking channel – an innovative delivery solution that boosts both convenience and satisfaction.

“The move to image processing was a smart one for Provident,” Fitzhugh said. “Not only have we gained the opportunity to increase efficiency, adding immediate value bank wide, we have also prepared for the future and the impending legislation surrounding check imaging.”

Fitzhugh added, “Aurum’s advanced imaging capabilities have positioned Provident to take full advantage of the inherent benefits of the Check 21 Act.”

The Results

- ▶ Rapid time-to-market made possible with Aurum’s outsourced solution (six months as compared to average 18 months for in-house implementation).
- ▶ Improved delivery channels now feature integrated and convenient access to the image archive for customers and branch locations.
- ▶ Significant floor space – needed by the bank for other purposes – was made available.
- ▶ Customer service transformed with immediate inquiry resolution versus up to 10 days prior to imaging.
- ▶ Sophisticated fraud protection tools have increased Provident’s ability to prevent losses.
- ▶ Bank leverages next-generation item processing technology and is prepared for the impact of impending legislative changes.

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