

Members, regulations and disaster recovery – oh my! Credit union faces triple threat

“Members are everything to us. The number one benefit of OnBase is that it has helped us increase member satisfaction.”

– Sarah Lawson, IT Specialist
Alcoa Tenn Federal Credit Union

OnBase
a Hyland Software solution



The Challenges

- Increase member service
- Meet Check 21 regulations
- Resolve disaster recovery worries

The Results

- Member wait times, fees reduced
- Compliance with Check 21 standards
- Complete disaster recovery

The Customer

Some things never change. Even in its early days when the teller drawer was made out of a cigar box, Alcoa Tenn Federal Credit Union (Alcoa) has focused on member service. In the more than 70 years since it was founded, the credit union has grown to serve more than 18,000 members.

The Challenges

Even though member service has always been the top priority for Alcoa, the credit union found it needed to offer new tools and services to stay competitive. Complaints about wait times and concerns about disaster recovery plagued the minds of Alcoa leaders. The credit union also needed to find a way to keep pace with new laws, like the Check 21 Act, which made it legal for credit unions to rely on digital check images instead of a paper check.

The Journey

Alcoa implemented OnBase in 2003, but was only using the system to process reports – not to increase member service. Member complaints and a deluge of paper led Alcoa leaders to find a solution. IT and business managers reached out to other credit unions for suggestions to solve their problems. After reviewing their options, Alcoa leaders realized they wouldn't need to look far to find the best solution.

The Solution

Credit union needs single solution to address multiple problems

Alcoa was using OnBase to process internal reports, but soon turned to the solution for member service, compliance and disaster recovery concerns as well. "We looked at other solutions, but nothing compared to OnBase," says Sarah Lawson, IT Specialist.

OnBase increases member satisfaction for Alcoa

"Members don't like to wait," Lawson says. "We needed something that would help us meet their needs as quickly and easily as possible." Alcoa serves members through its main location and three branch offices. Some existing processes kept members waiting for up to 15 minutes, even for simple things, like check cashing.

"If a member came to one of our branch locations to cash a check, we would need to compare their signature on the check with their signature card that we store at the main office," Lawson says. "That meant an employee had to call the main office and wait until an employee there was available to help them. The main office employee then had to go to the file vault, find the signature card, make a copy of it and fax the copy to the branch. It was tedious and time consuming."

Additionally, this process put Alcoa – and its members – at risk for fraud. "We would have people come in to cash checks – especially through our drive-through – where people would be in the backseat and we couldn't see them very well," Lawson says. Often, tellers had to make a judgment call about whether to cash a check.

Now, Alcoa relies on OnBase to solve both problems. “We want to make a difference in our members’ lives and OnBase enables us to do that because we get them in and on their way faster,” Lawson says. Alcoa stores all member information – from images of signature cards and driver’s licenses to debit card requests – in OnBase. Employees access this information instantly and don’t need to leave the member or keep them waiting.

“The number one benefit OnBase has brought us is that our member satisfaction has increased,” Lawson says.

OnBase also helps Alcoa keep costs low. Each year, the credit union saves more than \$43,000 from simply utilizing OnBase for Check 21.

Check 21 solution helps Alcoa meet regulations, keep costs low

Even behind the scenes, OnBase helps Alcoa serve members better. OnBase helps Alcoa meet federal Check 21 regulations. Check 21 allows credit unions to capture and transmit checks to the Federal Reserve at each branch location instead of physically shipping all of the checks.

Before OnBase, Alcoa managed all check processing manually. This was time consuming and provided less reliable member service. Now, Alcoa scans checks immediately and OnBase automatically captures all required information. This reduces data entry and the electronic checks clear quicker, so members get their money faster.

“With the Check 21 solution, we have a faster turnaround time,” Lawson says. “We’re saving more money because there is less handling involved.” In the end, this reduces transaction and return fees for members.

OnBase solutions ease disaster recovery worries

Alcoa also receives peace of mind through OnBase Disaster Recovery (DR) Services. “Before OnBase, our DR plan was to back everything up on tape and keep one copy of the tape in the vault at our main location and a second in storage about five miles away,” Lawson says. “We always knew it wasn’t the best solution, but when we started bringing member information into OnBase we knew we had to find a better answer.”

Alcoa did its homework on DR options, as well. “We looked at other products for DR, too, but once we found out we could call on Hyland Software, the decision was made for us,” Lawson says. “There really wasn’t a comparison because all other solutions required at least one member from our IT team to leave the area if there was a disaster. . . If we were in a true disaster, we could not afford to lose a member of our IT team from on-site.”

Hyland Software, the developer of OnBase, offers DR and business continuity options for customers to protect their OnBase investment. After evaluating its needs, the credit union selected several OnBase DR Services. First, Alcoa opted for a fully-synchronized, hosted disaster recovery site that could instantly provide a back-up of its OnBase system in the event of a disaster.

Additionally, OnBase DR solutions help Alcoa meet Check 21 requirements. If something was to happen to the OnBase server, the credit union wouldn’t be able to process the Check 21 files from the Federal Reserve.



"We have a very short turnaround window to comply with," Lawson says. "If the server went down, we would need a way to process those files or lose a day's worth of deposits with the Federal Reserve." This loss could add up to more than \$400,000 for Alcoa – a significant loss.

Now, should anything happen to the OnBase server, Alcoa is protected. The Federal Reserve would automatically push the deposits to the Check 21 processor online for Alcoa so nothing would be lost.

Alcoa leverages OnBase Disaster Recovery Services to not just back up its database, but keep a watchful eye on it as well. "With OnBase managing our DR, I don't worry about anything," Lawson says. "I know the backups are being done and if anything gets out of synch, I know somebody is going to contact me to fix it."

Before this solution, Lawson says it was easy for Alcoa to overlook DR. "It was something we knew we needed to do, but once you check the backup a few times and nothing is wrong with it, it's easy to assume that will always be the case," she says.

Why OnBase?

More than once, Alcoa researched other products, but every time the credit union came back to OnBase. Offering many solutions in one product, OnBase offers a one-stop-shop for information across departments and requirements. From member service to disaster recovery, Alcoa employees turn to a single location to find answers.

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