

CLIENT BANK

Thurston First Bank in Olympia, Washington, was founded in November 2004 as an independent community bank with a vision to operate as a “niche bank” offering a full range of services to benefit small- to medium-sized local businesses. The bank’s initial capitalization was quickly achieved by non-institutional investors who were attracted to its lean business model, prestigious board of directors and innovative services.

In less than five years, and with only one physical home location and two mobile branches, the bank has grown from \$11 million to \$98 million in assets.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Thurston First Bank continually challenges itself to grow profitably within the paradigm of its original vision to do so without building brick and mortar branches.

Within this business model, “to bring the bank to our clients,” Thurston First Bank operates from one location with two FDIC-insured mobile branches, while it seeks other ways to bring depository conveniences and services directly to its selected customers.

SOLUTION

In September 2005, the bank added Goldleaf’s **Remote Deposit Express** solution to its service offerings which also include Goldleaf’s ACH solution—both are solutions for business customers without cash processing needs.

BENEFITS

- RDC has allowed Thurston First Bank to stay “who they are” based on their business model to bring services and benefits to their customers while expanding beyond the Olympia area.
- The bank attributes thirty to forty-five percent of its deposit base to RDC which brings in a growing \$5 million per month in deposits.
- RDC has provided Thurston First Bank annual increases in deposits of up to 115 percent since beginning the service.

Niche Bank’s Vision to Bring Banking to Its Customers Increases Deposits

For a progressive “niche” bank, holding to its original vision to deliver a full range of superior services to small- and mid-sized businesses without adding physical locations may not be the easiest path to take. But Thurston First Bank’s vision has paid off, not only for the bank, but also for its business clients who receive a level of service that far exceeds the expectations of most bank customers.

Olympia, Washington-based Thurston First Bank was founded on a unique business model designed to identify the specific services from which business customers would gain the greatest benefit, then to bring those services to them, in spite of their location. Thurston First Bank is accomplishing these goals with a strong online presence and two mobile branches that supplement its one physical location. While the FDIC-insured mobile branches will serve business customers with cash needs, the bank turned to Goldleaf’s remote deposit capture (RDC) solution, “**Remote Deposit Express**” to serve customers near and far who rely more on check-based transactions than cash. With a true thin-client architecture, Remote Deposit Express fit Thurston First Bank’s needs to offer these clients a convenient, easy-to-deploy solution with minimal ongoing maintenance, which allowed the bank to expand its market reach to greater distances and still deliver superior customer service.

Debbie Arai, Thurston’s AVP/online services manager and Accredited ACH Professional (AAP), understands the customers’ needs to improve processes and save time. She also saw the connection between Goldleaf’s RDC and ACH solutions, which conveniently operate from the same integrated platform and user interface. “Businesses don’t really want to go into a bank. Goldleaf has wonderful tools, and their RDC and ACH solutions have allowed us to bring valuable customers on board from nearly 200 miles away. Goldleaf’s solutions allow us to remain true to our business model without building brick and mortar to get there. These solutions give us the leverage to be on their desks. That’s the relationship we want with them, to be that close and to run those deposits,” says Debbie.

Today about 40 businesses use the bank’s RDC service, and 60 percent of those customers also use ACH processing for payroll or collecting receivables in conjunction with RDC. ACH and RDC are essential services the bank provides through Goldleaf’s technology to help businesses streamline processes and improve cash flow. “If we do not present a solution that supports our customers’ business needs, then we are not meeting our goal of providing products and services that not only save them time, but money. Without our Goldleaf RDC solution, many of our customers would be more susceptible to be won over by our competitors. We are forward thinking, and customer retention is a true priority,” explained Sue Lindblad, SVP of operations at Thurston First Bank. She continues, “We don’t measure the success of our remote deposit services by the number of clients that have signed up, but by the long-term value those solutions bring to these businesses—which translates into referrals.”

Regardless of how Thurston First Bank measures its success, its deposit-gathering results tell the story. Thirty to forty-five percent of the bank’s deposits are attributed to RDC, and each month their customers are depositing as much as \$5 million with the solution, a volume that continues to increase. Since the inception of the service, RDC has provided the bank with annual increases in deposits of up to 115 percent.

A progressive vision is paying off, for both the bank and its business customers through Thurston First Bank’s progressive approach to new and improved ways of delivering service and managing time and money.