

As the CEO of a credit union, it is a challenge to be noticed, especially when competing against big banks. There are several reasons credit unions lack the number of members leading banks have, including the fact that the Federal Credit Union Act was not signed until 1934. However, there are many things that can be done to have a substantial impact on the growth and understanding of credit unions to Americans right now. I would introduce a system that includes education, community outreach, and marketing. With many citizens disappointed and outraged with banks because of the vulnerable economic situation the country has been in, many American's are open to hearing more about credit unions today than in the past.

First and foremost every employee should be educated about the company history, credit union history, and benefits of credit unions over banks. Semiannual training is a must due to the fluctuation of the financial market and fast paced environment. Having knowledgeable educated employees is essential for any business. Educated, well trained employees will be able to educate the members and community.

An important group of people to educate are children and young adults; after all, they are the future members. One way to reach out to the youth is through schools; a representative could give presentations teaching basic financial skills and tips on saving money. Another alternative is offering classes targeted at teaching children and young adults about a variety of fundamental topics such as credit, saving, student loans, retirement, and investments, to name a few. These are all things many people are never taught, or they wait to learn about it when it becomes a problem.

Another way to improve credit union recognition and membership is through various community outreach programs. Starting a charity or partnering with a popular local charity to do fundraising is a fantastic way to get people to notice the credit union. Do anything and everything to promote the credit union as a positive business for the community. Adopt a city block for clean up and encourage employees to participate and volunteer regularly at various activities and events in the

community.

With all of the credit union's knowledgeable helpful employees and the positive image the community has on the business, the marketing aspect of the plan can be implemented. Each branch should have a member education section, which has posters and brochures that tell about the savings and rates versus leading banks. There should be literature reiterating the fact to the members that they are part owners and also inform them about what that means for them. The more educated members are about their benefits, the more likely they will be to recommend the credit union to their friends and family.

The credit union and its campaign for growth have the potential to be mega successful if it gets to the right people. It is a must to contact the various financial websites, talk shows and periodicals with a story on the credit union containing all of the above information. Being able to tell the story to a large media outlet would breathe a new life into the financial institution.

Therefore, all the above information would be incorporated into fliers, pamphlets and press kits and distributed via the media and word of mouth (from my preexisting customer base). To incentivize the media's cooperation, I would emphasize the consumer interest and ratings enhancing effect the story would have for their program. When dealing with my customer base, I would remind them that they are also the owners of the credit union.

The keys to a successful business campaign are educating the workforce, having a positive community image, and marketing. Credit union growth will be inevitable with the right policies and marketing implemented. Americans are ready for a change with their banks, it is up to the credit unions to reach out and offer them that change.