

Conversion Testing

Planning and Execution

ADS Financial Services Solutions (ADS) is a strategy consulting and systems integration firm dedicated to serving the needs of the financial services industry. ADS offers cost effective solutions to its clients' business challenges through its in-depth financial industry expertise, project management expertise, and technology expertise.

CLIENT

Our Client* is a \$7.2 billion-asset bank with branches in Connecticut and Massachusetts. As part of their growth strategy, The Bank announced the formation of a new publicly owned bank and two key acquisitions. As a result of these events, the second largest savings bank and fifth largest bank in Connecticut was formed. After that event the bank purchased 2 more banks.

SITUATION

As part of the high-profile integration process, The Bank established an aggressive timeline for converting and consolidating three separate operations onto a single operating platform. As The Bank began the planning effort, it became evident that the risks associated with performing the conversion while only leveraging internal resources was too great. The Bank did not have sufficient resources to manage and execute the integration with the level of experience, leadership and bandwidth required to successfully accomplish the conversion.

CHALLENGE

The Bank engaged ADS to assist in the conversion process and consequently discovered that The Bank faced several serious challenges with their overall test strategy. Specific issues were:

- 1) The outsource software provider assigned a team of analysts to assist The Bank in converting the data from the two acquired banks to the new platform; however, this team did not have a plan or methodology in place to perform Mock Testing.
- 2) The Bank's management team had the foresight to require and schedule mock testing for the conversions. However, The Bank did not have an overall test plan strategy to execute the required mock testing.

As a result of these potentially damaging issues, ADS highlighted the risks of moving forward without proper planning, testing and resources, and recommended an in-depth plan of action to institute a solution.

APPROACH

Based on ADS' prior experience and the issues our Client faced, ADS believed that in order to achieve a successful conversion, The Bank needed to include the following key objectives in their Test Strategy:

- Validation that all bank control parameters were established properly either through conversion programming or manual entry.
- Validation that the conversion of the customers, accounts and other data would be accomplished successfully.
- Validation that the end-to-end system met all defined business requirements and that all business processes could be executed as expected.

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*For confidentiality reasons our client will not be named, rather will be referred as The Client or The Bank.

Furthermore, ADS defined a test strategy and plan that required several mock conversions. Testing teams were established, test cases were identified (grouped by application), and test scripts were written. Additionally, ADS assigned a dedicated Test professional to manage the effort, and successfully completed the testing phase of the conversion with a joint team of the software provider and bank professionals.

RESULTS

A critical component in the mock testing events for each bank conversion was the active participation key members of The Bank and the software provider. All of the mock testing was successful and met the bank's defined objectives. Additionally, ADS created a mock testing process to support the conversion of bill pay customer records to their payment system.

Moreover, ADS utilized the output of the mock test events and created a Conversion Weekend Manual. The conversion information was combined with the overall branch systems implementation and other activities including: document replacement, balancing and facilities management to document the entire weekend activity. Furthermore, ADS was responsible for co-managing the Conversion Command Center during both conversion events.

BENEFITS REALIZED

The live merging of files between The Bank and the first acquired bank occurred in the first quarter, and the second acquired bank occurred the third quarter with great success. The Conversion Command Center was able to shut down operations by the end of the 1st post conversion week for both conversions.

As a result of ADS' involvement in the testing aspect of this complex integration process, The Bank was able to minimize their operational risk and experienced a high quality conversion within their established timeframe. A side benefit of these processes was the creation of a model for future conversion efforts, which has been used in four separate conversions.

ABOUT ADS FINANCIAL SERVICES SOLUTIONS

ADS Financial Services Solutions (ADS) has been serving the critical business and technology needs of leading financial institutions nationwide for more than two decades with operational consulting, systems integration, and business alignment services.

For more than 27 years, ADS has delivered hundreds of complex projects for leading financial institutions nationwide, ranging from operational consulting and systems integration to business alignment services. Financial institutions turn to ADS for our industry insight and leading edge technology experience. Our team is recognized by our clients for consistently delivering innovative, practical, and effective solutions, on time and within budget.

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