



cu\$trategies

*Partnering with Credit Unions Across the Nation
To Help Them Grow!*

cuStrategies e-newsletter – May 2021

Getting More Strategic about Strategic Planning!

**2022 can be our biggest year of opportunity if we build
a SMART strategic plan for success!**

Remember, HOPE is NOT a strategy...

- We hope we get back to normal.
- We hope our members pay us.
- We hope we get new members.
- We hope our employees re-engage with our members.
- We hope we increase member engagement.
- We hope we keep our members engaged in a virtual environment.
- We hope our members come to us for their next loan.
- We hope our Capital Ratio improves
- We hope we reach our goals for 2022.

Turn hope into a **SMART strategic action plan** to ensure (not hope) you achieve the goals you establish for your one- to three-year plan.

cuStrategies provides a strategic planning framework that allows the Management Team and Board to engage and collaborate effectively and build a succinct plan of action to excel and achieve the objectives of the credit union.

Create a SMART Strategic Plan with a focus on the 7 P's all of which impact the credit union's financial strength and its growth; the member experience; and

employee engagement. An assessment of the following as well as other key areas that affect the overall growth of the credit union will help you succinctly identify key opportunities for success. Then developing a SMART Plan of Action to ensure your credit union achieves the desired vision and success is the final step in the Strategic Planning Process.

- **Financial strength** – Key Performance Metrics to measure financial success.
- **People** – Do we have the right people; are we attracting the right people; are we retaining the right people; what do we need to do differently?
- **Products** – Do we have the right products to attract new members particularly Millennials and Gen Zs...the future of credit unions?
- **Pricing** - Do we have the right pricing structure to manage risk and increase profitability?
- **Programs** – Do we have the right programs to increase employee engagement, member engagement, new membership, new money?
- **Policies** – Do we have the right policies in place to ensure we are mitigating risk and, at the same time, making it easy for our members to do business with us?
- **Processes** – Do we have effective and efficient processes in place to help reduce expenses?
- **Procedures** – Do we have the right procedures in place to create efficiencies and make it easy for members to do business with us?

During the Strategic Planning process, there also needs to be a **clear focus on key elements** that will take the credit union to the next level:

Vision: What do we want to look like in three years?

Mission: What is our purpose, and do we communicate a compelling message?

Branding Promise: What do we want to be known for and are we living up to our promise?

Leadership Promise: What do we promise to be and do as leaders of the credit union for our employees and our members?

Strategy: How do we get there?

cuStrategies provides you a robust framework for your Strategic Plan. As the facilitator, Celeste Cook will guide you through an engaging process to help you build a succinct SMART strategic plan with key strategies to help you achieve success.

Contact Celeste Cook today at cccook@custrategies.com to facilitate your next Strategic Planning Session which may be the most important strategic planning session since the 2007 to 2009 Great Recession. Celeste will provide you the Scope of Work to be provided for the Strategic Planning Process.

cuStrategies also provide additional programs and consultative services to help you achieve increased member engagement, loan growth, profitability, new members, and more engaged and enthusiastic employees. The programs have been PROVEN to work taking “HOPE” out of the equation of success!

You can also reach out to Celeste Cook at cccook@custrategies.com to discuss in greater detail how she can partner with you to help you achieve greater success in getting your staff engaged as leaders that take initiative with confidence to cultivate strong relationships and offer creative solutions that help our members as well as help the credit union grow especially post COVID-19!

Testimonials

“This was the best overall strategic planning session I have attended in my 12 years at the credit union!”

Julie Gamblin, True Sky Credit Union

“Our credit union recently contracted with Celeste’s firm and WOW, what an immediate impact did it have on our organization. Her enthusiasm plus her knowledge was absolutely astonishing. I would not only recommend her to any other organization, but I would also encourage you to check her out. It was well worth the money.”

Travis Kasten, President/CEO Service First Federal Credit Union

cuStrategies' Win/Win/Win Formula for Success

Credit Union	HELP Members	Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased quality loans • Increased profitability • Increased membership • Increased retention/loyalty • Staff engagement • Staff enthusiasm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help raise their credit score • Eliminate high-risk credit card balances • Lower monthly payments on loans with other financial institutions • Protect against predatory lending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intangible reward of making a difference in people's lives • Engagement • Enthusiasm • Tangible rewards: incentives, surPRIZES, recognition, etc.

Nothing is more exciting than to see credit unions grow as a result of their employees becoming more engaged as leaders and creating positive member experiences to have a positive impact on your culture/brand, and the member experience as well as the growth of the credit union.

Credit unions who have used cuStrategies' programs and services have experienced a **transformation in their culture with enthusiastically engaged employees, enhanced leadership, positive synergy amongst teams, and raving fans from their membership** as a result of their member experiences!

cuStrategies proudly partners with credit unions across the nation to help them grow.

cuStrategies offers executive leadership coaching; leadership development; strategic planning; and an array of training programs; lending strategies; marketing strategies; a business development program; a performance goal program; compensation and reward program, lending assessment program; and other services.

For more information on how to create and maintain a strong and vibrant CARING culture for growth and profitability, please contact Celeste Cook, CEO/Founder of cuStrategies, today at cccocook@custrategies.com or 404.783.5898. Her website is www.custrategies.com.

Celeste C. Cook

Speaker, Consultant, Trainer

Bringing you her credit union experience, expertise, proven strategies, positive energy, and passion for service!!!

Celeste Cook is founder and President/CEO of cuStrategies LLC. As a **credit union industry strategist, Celeste provides strategic planning services, experienced consulting services, and expert training programs to the credit union industry.** In addition to being a consultant and trainer, she is a keynote and motivational speaker with a dynamic and engaging style that have made her highly sought after within the credit union industry. Celeste has also served as an industry expert as well as a motivational and keynote speaker for credit union associations and leagues nationwide.

Along with being CEO of cuStrategies LLC, she has been involved in the credit union industry for more than 20 years and a professional speaker and trainer for 15 of those years – also working for a \$1.6 billion credit union in Atlanta, Georgia, and working as a consultant and trainer with Rex Johnson of Lending Solutions Consulting.

Celeste's expert training programs/schools in lending, marketing/business development, leadership, and sales and service for credit unions have helped credit unions with assets ranging from \$20 million to \$2 billion. She brings her credit union expertise, experience, and **proven strategies**, which have fostered her credit union clients' increases in loan growth and profitability. For instance, one credit union experienced 33% loan growth in 12 months using cuStrategies' lending strategies. Celeste also increased loans by 215% in nine months through SEGs during her tenure in Business Development at MAX Credit Union in Montgomery, Alabama.

Celeste has a degree in business management and a Certification in Sales Leadership Strategies through the Credit Union National Association. She has been a contributor to industry publications such as CUinsight, Credit Union Executive Society, Credit Union Times, and Credit Union Journal as well as **Branch Managers Letter**, a national publication. Celeste is also writing a book on leadership and service.