



# cu\$trategies

*Partnering with Credit Unions Across the Nation  
To Increase Loan Growth, Profitability, and Membership Growth*

**cuStrategies e-newsletter – October 2019**

## *Invest In Your Employees and Get Your Return on Investment (ROI)*

*How can credit unions get their return on investment (ROI) on employees? It's easy...*

*“Re-train, Re-think, and Re-inforce!”*

*Get your ROI on your most valuable assets with employee engagement that leads to increased loans, increased profitability, new members, and increased member retention/loyalty?*

As mentioned in our last e-newsletter, credit unions are challenged daily to effectively lead change and get staff engaged to deliver superior service that results in increased loans, increased profitability, new members, and increased member retention/loyalty. Great leaders understand this process is a never-ending journey that starts with themselves and goes all the way through the organization to the teller.

The first step in this never-ending journey is to get your staff to understand their role in helping the credit union grow profitably! What this means is that every employee in the credit union must understand they are LEADERS, and they influence the growth of the credit union through every word, every action, every behavior, every question, every response, etc. And it all starts with how they feel and think and see themselves. Therefore, as leaders, we

need to **“RE-TRAIN”** our staff to think differently as “leaders” not as employees with a position/title. Titles don’t make you a leader; your actions and positive impact on the organization make you a leader. So let’s train our staff to take initiative, engage in the right action, and get the right results!

If we can get staff to **“RE-THINK”** how they influence the member experience and how they can positively impact the growth of the credit union, they will begin to behave differently and engage differently! Train your staff to believe in **OUR PURPOSE** to help people, **BOOST** their **confidence** through effective training and knowledge, and then share **POSITIVE IMPACTS** as a result of our leaders’ engagement!

These strategies **“RE-INFORCE”** the right behaviors and the right results! Remember, what gets recognized, gets repeated! What does this mean? Good behavior and good results that get recognized get repeated!

Below are a few questions we, as leaders, need to ask ourselves to evaluate and continue to re-evaluate what we can do differently to get staff more engaged with greater confidence in their ability to **HELP PEOPLE** and, at the same time, increase loan growth, profitability, and member loyalty/retention:

1. Do your tellers understand how they can play a role in helping members lower their monthly payments on loans with other financial institutions, get rid of high-interest-rate credit card balances, and improve their members’ credit scores through education as well as prevent a loan loss to the credit union? Remember, preventing a loan loss on the frontline increases future loan growth to the credit union!
2. Do your loan processors understand that how they engage members and input loan notes helps underwriters make better loan decisions on quality profitable loans which impacts the bottom line...ROA!
3. Do your loan processors **PARTNER** with your members as a financial coach to cultivate strong relationships and offer solutions to help them achieve financial freedom?
4. Do your loan processors understand the importance of closing a high-risk loan through a strong close to increase probability of payment to the credit union?
5. Are your underwriters “profitable underwriters” meaning do they understand that what makes them excellent at their job is their

- profitability margin which is tied to their average loan yield in comparison to their delinquency ratio and charge-off ratio?
6. Does your Collection Team focus on “today’s payment” or solutions that will lead to increased future on-time payments and/or prevention of a loan loss?
  7. Does your Collection Team come up with creative solutions to convince people to keep their autos when they say they don’t want their vehicle any longer or can’t afford it any longer or doesn’t want to repay the credit union for an unsecured loan?
  8. Does your Collection Team proactively partner with members as a Member Solutions Partner/Financial Coach through the Bankruptcy process when they have suffered a tragedy (serious medical condition, divorce, job loss, death, etc.) that led to permanent income loss (and always paid before the tragedy) to ensure the Credit Union doesn’t take a loss so the member can continue to get future loans with the credit union?
  9. Does your Business Development Team understand their role in bringing new loans to the credit union with new members? Translation: Does your Business Development Officer have a loan volume goal and are they well-trained with the right tools to make the experience easy and seamless to increase loan opportunities for the credit union?
  10. Do you view your Business Development Team as a mobile branch?
  11. Are you marketing the credit union’s services or a partnership with businesses in the community?

Let us partner with you and your staff to help them understand their role and what they can do differently to engage members and help the credit union grow through “**RE-TRAINING, RE-THINKING, AND RE-INFORCING**” strategies provided by cuStrategies.

You can reach out to Celeste Cook at [cccook@custrategies.com](mailto:cccook@custrategies.com) to discuss in greater detail how she can 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!

***IT’S BUDGET TIME... WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?***

## *cuStrategies' Win/Win/Win Formula for Success*

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

Nothing is more exciting than to see credit unions grow as a result of their employees becoming more engaged and creating positive member experiences to increase member loyalty; bringing in more quality profitable loan opportunities; and **working hard on the frontline to prevent loan losses** by building strong relationships.

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 experience increased loan growth, membership growth, profitability, and member retention.

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 [cccook@custrategies.com](mailto:cccook@custrategies.com) or 404.783.5898. Her website is [www.custrategies.com](http://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.