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Summer 2010

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**Go Out and Lend
It is time for action**

By Brian Shaw, CEO

Bankers' outlooks, no matter optimistic or pessimistic, all have one thing in common: the economy will regain solid footing and will grow. The big debate is how long it will take. The general consensus is that we have weathered the brunt of the storm already and things are slowly starting to look up. Thankfully, many banks are beginning to once again generate profits. That, combined with solidifying financial reforms, is giving the marketplace some added clarity and stability. With this newfound momentum, we should begin turning our focus to strategic planning and executable actions.



During the last couple of years, banks have been in a self-preservation mode, virtually boarded up to protect themselves from plummeting conditions and struggling consumers, who could hurt the bank's bottom line. Even banks that wanted to lend had a hard time finding credit worthy causes. As a result, many banks redirected their lending funds into secure investments such as government securities. It made perfect sense to borrow from the Fed and invest back [into the Fed] at a small spread, making a slight profit with virtually no risk. The problem with that strategy, however,

Survey Reminder

We want to hear from you!

Recently you received our annual survey. It only takes a few minutes to answer the 10 questions, and the feedback will provide you insights on emerging trends and will greatly help us improve our ability to serve you.

If you did not receive one and you are interested in participating in this important survey opportunity, please contact wmills@customcreditsystems.com.

News Release

[NBT Bank Selects Custom Credit Systems' Collateral Management Software](#)

is profitability suffers and will eventually come to an end. As the economy recovers, rates are changing and banks are going to have to return to higher yielding investments for their money – by allocating it back to loans. As an industry, we can only keep our doors and windows boarded up for so long until the time comes to revive ourselves, and by doing so, revive the economy.

Howard Atkins, Wells Fargo's chief financial officer, told *The Wall Street Journal*, in July, "We believe credit quality has indeed turned the corner." And many other institutions believe this also. Those with the assets ready to invest into lending are at a distinct advantage, but they still need the infrastructure in place to support this strategic shift. An increase of loans will require technology and support staff that have not flexed their muscles in some time. With the proper alignment of funds, technology and employees, a bank can position itself up for great success – it is the perfect storm.

Banks that do not have an excess of assets ready to reinvest need to be more creative in order to compete. Lending should be one of an institutions' main lines of business, its core function. Somehow many of us become so risk averse during this downturn we have forgotten that prudent lending is still a profitable, worthwhile endeavor that can help generate positive economic momentum. Waiting much longer, or until the economy is fully rebounded to repair the foundation of lending processes, technology and strategy will likely be too late. Competition is still fierce, and the leading lenders that have survived the storm will be taking advantage of all the growth opportunities about to arise. Banks that have begun or begin now will have the tactical advantage and will be prepared to handle new loans while bringing in new customers. Therefore, even though full recovery has yet to occur, most believe we have passed the midpoint of this business cycle and banks should be preparing for the inevitable end of this very difficult time. As the great motivator Zig Ziglar once said, "Others can stop you temporarily – you are the only one who can do it permanently."

Conference Reminder

Don't miss this year's user conference, Explore: Examine Every Possibility, Aug. 23 - 24. For the first time ever, we will feature a hybrid format. You can enjoy an in-person visit at our offices in Richardson, Texas or join us electronically.

This year's conference will feature sessions on commercial real estate management, a review of CustomLender Administration and Configuration, 12 habits of successful CCS clients, how to address portfolio challenges, customer service updates, how CCS can help lenders with gap analysis and strategic planning and much more. CCS president Brian Shaw will offer his review of what happened last year and his vision of the future.

Our guest lunch speaker, John O'Connor from Praxis Advisors, will discuss the latest trends and how business lenders are approaching the current challenges.

In-person participants can join us Monday, Aug. 23 for a day of golf, dinner and networking. Sessions start 9 a.m. CT on Aug 24. Virtual participants, please log in using Microsoft Office Live Meeting.

If you have any questions and to register for the conference, please contact Marta Ransom at mransom@customcredit.com.

Meet Part of the Team

Marc Billanti has been a vice president of sales at CCS since January and has seen many changes in the financial industry while working for companies such as DST Systems and Baker Hill, an Experian company. Here are a few thoughts from Marc about the industry:



Q: Today's market is like no other that we have faced. What are some trends are you seeing among your customers?

A: Most organizations are looking for ROI and more value than ever out of their solutions providers. So in today's market, CCS' 20 years of experience in the industry resonates well with clients/prospects who need to show executive management a hard dollar ROI.

Q: What barriers to success have you seen in your career and how could they be altered?

A: In the last 15 years, we have seen a couple of major disturbances in the economy; however, these things are beyond our control. The way I have always approached this is, "I can only control my own destiny." You can't worry about the outside factors and if you are confident in your abilities and passionate about the solution you are selling, then that will come across to others. The fact of the matter is I've experienced some of my best sales years in what was considered a bad economy. Stay positive and continue to do the right things and good things will happen.

If you have questions you would like to ask the team, please send them to heather@williammills.com, with the subject line "newsletter."