Based in Montgomery, Alabama, MAX Credit Union serves more than 100,000 members. On the front lines of member service are the institution’s 130 tellers. They perform myriad service tasks, including the handling and processing of member checks. When dealing with such a large number of members, efficient check management is a central concern.

To meet that challenge, MAX acquired a product for item processing. As the credit union grew, however, this product offered a limited potential for growth. Kimberly Ivey, Systems Analyst Supervisor for MAX said, “After reviewing the ProfitStars® platform and all it had to offer, we found that it presented more opportunities for expanding our imaging capabilities.”

The institution switched to ProfitStars’ ImageCenter Interactive Teller Capture™. “The ProfitStars install and support teams were very helpful during implementation and ensured that we understood the complete process,” said Ivey. “During implementation we encountered system issues, but the support teams were in the trenches with us to make sure we could close out successfully.”

During the implementation, the credit union relied on ProfitStars’ Enterprise Conversion Services™ (ECS) to convert a legacy data format to one that enables its use in ImageCenter. “The conversion segment of the implementation was very easy to perform,” Ivey said. ECS established the conversion process and showed employees how it worked. “The ECS group stayed connected with us until all seven years of historical data had been moved to our imaging system,” says Ivey.

After implementation, the credit union quickly saw benefits. “The ImageCenter solution has reduced our processing time,” Ivey says, “which in turn allowed our end-of-day processing to begin sooner.” A Professional Development staff member, Bethany Burger, also commented, saying that from a frontline perspective, balancing is faster and assists in ensuring that “on-us” items are properly cleared. An item in ImageCenter is automatically adjusted when it’s adjusted in Episys®.

Tellers at MAX also had positive feedback. Teller Wendy Hanlon says, “We rarely have check out-of-balances or on-us errors. It speeds up end-of-day balancing.” Another teller, Brandon Davis says, “Overall, our associates like the technology and find it easy to use.” Davis added, “In the past, a courier had to come to each branch and pick up the physical checks to take to a central location to image. This resulted in check images not being available for several days to the branches unless requested from the records department.” After ImageCenter installation, branches gained the ability to scan their own checks.

MAX CREDIT UNION
is a $1 billion institution based in Montgomery, Alabama. Founded in 1955, the credit union currently has 15 branches. Visit MAX’s website at www.myMAX.com.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE
The credit union wanted to expand its imaging capabilities but the item processing solution in place was not up to the task.

SOLUTION
MAX installed ImageCenter Interactive Teller Capture™ and ImageCenter ATM Deposit Management™. MAX added integration to ProfitStars® Enterprise Payments Solutions™ to ensure items were stored in a central location and interrogated for duplicates.

The credit union further streamlined by using ImageCenter to present to the Federal Reserve. MAX also leveraged ProfitStars’ Enterprise Conversion Services™ to put legacy check data into a compatible format.

BENEFITS
The credit union now experiences core level integration, automation, fewer errors, faster balancing and end-of-day processes, money saved by dealing directly with the Fed instead of a third party, improved fraud detection, and overall streamlined check processing.
Regarding overall gains in efficiency, Ivey stated, “Duplicate Detection has alleviated duplicate processing and assisted in fraud detection.” Other MAX employees noted faster balance times after closing, money saved by not needing a courier, and more efficient and timely document scanning in the records department. Due to faster balancing, employees are able to leave approximately 20 minutes after the branch closes. ImageCenter also enables employees to verify if checks have already been deposited, thereby avoiding double postings and significant research time.

MAX teller Brandi Taylor said, “ImageCenter definitely helps to catch check issues prior to accepting the check, such as it not having all points of negotiability or it being a duplicated check. This reduces our time spent correcting the error and trying to retrieve funds back for a bad check days later.” Taylor also emphasized the value of having a system that can detect problems with a check even if the employee doesn’t recognize the issue.

With ImageCenter, all check items at MAX are sent from their point of presentment – such as batch capture, Interactive Teller Capture, ATM deposit processing, and mobile consumer capture – and housed in a central location. Then the credit union’s computer operations department validates and ensures that all items are ready to be sent to the Federal Reserve Board in a timely manner.

“Being able to send directly to the Federal Reserve is a huge benefit,” says Ivey. “Prior to the ImageCenter/Check21 process, we had to send our items from our image vendor to another third-party vendor to convert the check items into the correct format to be processed by the Federal Reserve. The send and receive process is now a scheduled task which requires minimal manual intervention. This change gave us a cost savings by alleviating the payment to the third-party vendor. Going directly to the Federal Reserve caused our per item fee to decrease, also.”

When it comes to balancing, MAX tellers now scan all their checks and use reports provided in ImageCenter to compare against Episys. The credit union’s employees report faster and more accurate balancing overall. Davis says, “Prior to the integration of ImageCenter, any posting errors or non-negotiable items may not have been discovered for a couple of days. With ProfitStars, associates are able to identify issues as soon as they arise.”

“It may not seem like it on paper, but this really has streamlined end-of-day procedures for the branch,” added Hanlon. “We used to leave at 4:30-4:45 or later because it was too easy to take a check as cash or vice versa, causing research and corrections. Now we leave 4:20-4:30 even if a mistake was made somewhere.”

Summing up MAX’s experience with ImageCenter, Ivey said, “I would and have recommended this solution to other credit unions because it is a good solution with an excellent support team.” Ivey added, “ImageCenter has the capability to streamline your check imaging process and allow all associates to complete their daily processing in a timely manner. I eagerly await the next release of enhancements that will make ImageCenter even better.”