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MShift

Patelco Credit Union has been serving its members well for over 70 years, and reached a major milestone in 2006 when they topped the \$4-billion mark in assets. With its roots as a telephone company employee's credit union in the San Francisco Bay Area, Patelco has had a high tech membership base from before the term 'high tech' was even coined. So it is little wonder that they have a very robust online banking program and high penetration levels of members using electronic banking channels. What may surprise some people however, is the fact that Patelco has run a successful mobile banking program since 2002. Their choice for a robust, highly customizable and cost-effective wireless banking solution: the MShift Mobile Banking Solution from Silicon Valley-based MShift.

Everyone knows that the San Francisco Bay area is the home to many of the world's most prestigious technology companies such as Google, Yahoo!, Cisco, and dozens more, but it is also home to numerous major financial services firms such as Charles Schwab, Wells Fargo and Bank of America. Yet the forward thinking management team at Patelco Credit Union was years ahead of these companies in providing 'anytime, anywhere' banking for their more than 237,000 members. John Shields, SVP & Chief Technology Officer, explains that "we responded early on to our members' demands for mobile banking. Not only are they quite tech-savvy, but they enjoy the convenience factor of truly mobile access to their financial data."

MShift allows their credit union customers to select from a wide menu of wireless banking features, as well as choose the look-and-feel of their Wireless Banking application, all of which results in a highly customized and branded solution. Shields notes that "we chose to start with basics which include Account Balances, Transfers, Transaction History, and Bill Payer. We now have thousands of members using the system." The deployment phase went smoothly because MShift hosts the Wireless Banking Application, and provides ongoing support, maintenance and upgrades. Behind the scenes, Patelco's IT Department receives detailed monthly reporting and real-time administrative access. Shields says that "we have had virtually no problems on our end – we just turned it on it has worked flawlessly since Day One."

Of course even most tech-savvy members don't have the time or desire to download and configure software, much less learn complicated new interfaces. Marc Saint-Pierre, Marketing Manager at Patelco, is pleased to report that "both our staff and members really like the clean, simple interface. It is so easy to use because we worked with MShift to design it so that the most commonly used transactions are easily accessible." Another big plus is that the MShift platform was designed from the ground up to support a wide range of wireless devices, such as WAP phones, PALM Devices, PDAs, Pocket PCs, RIM pagers, and text-only or SMS devices. When you consider the fact that about 84% of cell phones users currently have Internet capabilities, mobile banking at Patelco – and other credit unions across the United States – should be poised for significant growth.

Saint-Pierre certainly thinks so and is quick to point out that "our Generation Y and younger members all grew up with cell phones, and many have never had a landline telephone!" In fact according to Javelin Strategy & Research, almost 90% of American consumers from 18-24 years old own cell phones. Saint-Pierre confirms that "our mobile banking members love using the system, and we have been quite happy with MShift's technology platform and technical support." He concludes that "MShift has been a great company to work with on many levels: member support, Information Technology and as a corporate partner."