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Despite a difficult economy, 2010 saw explosive growth and interest in mobile banking and mobile payments by both consumers and credit unions. Orange County's Credit Union (OCCU), a large and progressive credit union based in southern California, took the mobile banking plunge this year after two to three years of research and due diligence. Their choice for a partner was a company formed in 2004 that connects money and mobility via a highly secure, scalable and flexible mobile financial services platform: Tyfone.

When it comes to evaluating credit union vendors, Laura Thompson, OCCU's Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer, has a stellar background-over 22 years of credit union experience. Taking a member-centric approach, Thompson and her fellow senior managers at OCCU decided to poll their members to gauge interest in mobile banking. She recalls "that interest was quite high in all age bracket and demographics, so we began our due diligence phase." She and her team carefully evaluated four vendors in three major areas:

- 1-Support for all three methods of mobile banking: text, browser and application
- 2-Ease of integration with existing core and online banking systems
- 3-A clear pathway to mobile payments

Tyfone easily met all three criteria because they supported the "triple play" of delivery methods, they had an interface already built to OCCU's core platform (Fiserv's XP2) and online banking system, and they are a worldwide industry leader in mobile payments. Thompson notes that her research confirmed the fact that "Tyfone was much further ahead in mobile payment than the other vendors and since that is a part of our longer range plans, we were especially impressed with those capabilities.

Once Tyfone was chosen as a partner, the real work began for OCCU. They ran a Beta test with their employees which went very well. This was followed by a "soft" implementation to the credit union's 30,000+ online bankers, which in turn was followed by the full "marketing" rollout. According to Thompson, "we have been really happy with what Tyfone has done for us at every step of the way. With direct access to their developers and project managers, all of our minor issues were quickly resolved."

Meanwhile member response has been extremely positive: OCCU enrolled over 3300 mobile bankers in just 3 months! The credit union's call center and e-business departments, who are tasked with supporting mobile banking, have been thrilled to report that there have been very few member calls for assistance. Thompson confirms that "the Tyfone platform is very stable. It features a very good interface which is easy and convenient to use." The e-business department also helped matters by taking a "road show" to the credit union's eleven branches to train employees and members.

With the success of their text, browser and apps (iPhone, Android and Blackberry) implementation, OCCU is looking to add more comprehensive features with Tyfone's assistance. Sophisticated alerting, bill pay and the aforementioned mobile payments are in the works using Tyfone's robust turnkey infrastructure. Thompson and her team are looking forward to these additions because she says that "the Tyfone people have great attitudes and are really good to work with. They are always helpful and flexible and take a "get it done" approach that we really appreciate." She concludes that "we have highly recommended Tyfone to other credit unions because we have been so happy about the way that our relationship has worked out with them."