



First Service Credit Union, Which Started Small with Outsourced ATM Management, is Now All In With Dolphin Debit

When First Service Credit Union of Houston started working with Dolphin Debit in 2007, the credit union had some very specific ATM objectives. It was looking to expand its influence and do it as cost-effectively as possible.

"We wanted to grow our footprint as best we could, and one of the lower-cost avenues was to go with an ATM," explains Mike McWethy, Executive Vice President of First Service Credit Union. At that time, the credit union was known as Right Choice, taking on the First Service name after a 2011 merger.

Dolphin Debit came to the credit union with a proposition: place ATMs in key areas and then have several local credit unions share the ATM and its branding, as a very cost-effective option for each of them.

"It was a great way to improve brand recognition and provide more convenience for our members," McWethy says. "That was just one of the concepts Dolphin Debit presented to us that cost us very little. That led to placing some ATMs in areas where we were planning



**First Service
Credit Union
Houston, Texas
Members: 60,000
Assets: \$600 million
ATMs: 24**

or considering a branch, in parts of Houston that we had our eye on."

After the merger, First Service Credit Union continued with a mix of outsourced and credit union-driven ATMs, an approach that worked until it came time for serious upgrades to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as other software requirements.

"That was when we decided we had to get out of the ATM business," McWethy says. "For our size, driving our



own ATMs just wasn't the most cost-effective strategy."

To outsource the entire First Service ATM network, the credit union considered proposals from Dolphin Debit and several other companies. Dolphin Debit won the business, in large part because of how well it had performed with the ATMs it had been handling for First Service.

"From the time we started working with Dolphin Debit, they had offered us the best experience," McWethy says. "They simplified our ATM delivery for our members, and streamlined our operations. They are very sensitive to our needs. For instance, we had someone try to break into an ATM. As soon as we called them, they were out there and took care of it quickly with very little down-time."

The First Service-Dolphin Debit relationship started with just two ATMs, and has now grown to 24, all over the credit union's service area. First Service, with some 60,000 members and assets of \$600 million, serves Harris and

Waller counties and about 140 select employer groups.

With an outsourced operation, McWethy says all First Service has to worry about now is making sure it has enough cash in the account for the armored car company.

"It is nice that all it requires is a phone call to Dolphin and they find an area and place an ATM for us. That allows us to build brand awareness before we locate a branch in a new area," he notes. That includes the option to place ATMs at Murphy USA fuel stations, high-traffic locations adjacent to Walmart stores. Dolphin Debit can leverage its exclusive multi-state relationship with Murphy USA to its clients' advantage.

"They understand the credit union business and our struggles, and that comes through in how quickly they respond and communicate with us," McWethy says. "At the end of the day, I have the confidence that their product is working."

First Service Credit Union (www.fscu.com) has 12 full service and three client-specific branches in the Houston metro area. Founded in 1977, it is community chartered.

