THE CREDIT UNION OUTLOOK

THE STATE OF CREDIT UNION GROWTH

Featuring **Pete Hilger,** CEO, Allied Solutions,
and **Tony Hernandez,** President & CEO, DCUC

The Executive Perspective

Credit unions have a compelling story to tell. Turning that story into membership growth requires reaching people who may not yet understand the value of joining or see how a credit union fits their needs.

In this *Credit Union Outlook*, Pete Hilger and Tony Hernandez discuss the challenge of attracting members in a competitive financial services market. Their conversation explores moving beyond familiar approaches, acting on opportunities, and working together to strengthen awareness of the credit union model.

Look Beyond What Worked Before

Past success provides valuable experience, but attracting new members may require a different approach. Hernandez encourages credit unions to step outside the comfort zone of what has worked before.

Hilger connects that challenge to reaching different generations and competing with digital banking options. Leaders need to consider how prospective members discover financial institutions, what influences their choices, and whether the credit union's value is coming through clearly.

Start by examining the assumptions behind your growth strategy. Consider whose attention your institution is earning, which audiences it may be missing, and whether its messaging reflects what those people need from a financial relationship.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY:
Revisit familiar growth strategies through the needs and expectations of the members you want to attract.

Turn Opportunity into Action

Hilger emphasizes recognizing moments when credit unions have an opportunity to raise their visibility and promote their value. Taking advantage of those moments requires a willingness to act and invest.

Hernandez reinforces the importance of trying something new, even when the outcome is uncertain. An approach that falls short can still offer useful learning about an audience, a message, or a channel.

For leaders, the practical question is where a focused experiment could help the institution learn. Define the opportunity, determine what success would look like, and commit enough support to evaluate the approach. Use the results to decide what to refine, expand, or stop.

EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY:

Give promising growth ideas a defined opportunity to prove their value, and use the results to guide your next decision.



Identify an Opportunity

Find a timely reason to connect with prospective members.



Test an Approach

Define the audience, message, and desired outcome.



Apply What You Learn

Refine the approach and direct investment toward what works.

Expand Reach Through Collaboration

Growing awareness of credit unions can create opportunities beyond any single institution. Hilger encourages a broader view of membership growth, including combining resources and being less territorial about which institution ultimately earns the relationship.

Hernandez points to amplifying one another's messages through existing conferences and communication opportunities. Collaboration can give a shared message more places to be heard.

Consider where aligned organizations could support a common goal, such as explaining membership eligibility or communicating the value of the credit union model. A broader effort can build awareness while leaving each institution responsible for demonstrating why it is the right choice for an individual member.



EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY:

Look for opportunities to combine resources and amplify messages that help more people consider credit union membership.

Put the Conversation to Work

Use these questions to guide your next leadership discussion:

- Which prospective members are we struggling to reach, and what assumptions should we revisit?
- What growth opportunity could we test with a clear audience, investment, and measure of success?
- Where could collaboration extend our reach or strengthen understanding of credit union membership?

Help more people see the value of credit union membership. Give them a reason to choose yours.

Choose one audience or opportunity that deserves greater attention. Identify what needs to change, commit resources to a focused effort, and establish how you will evaluate the results. Use what you learn to make your next growth decision more informed.

Continue the conversation.

Continue exploring these insights with the companion video, "The State of Credit Union Growth," featuring Pete Hilger and Tony Hernandez as part of *The Credit Union Outlook* series.

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