

Background

NEXT Home is a division of the NEXT group, selling furniture and accessories through a network of stores. Interest free credit is available on larger purchases through Clydesdale Financial Services (CFS).

NEXT have a strong focus on customer service with years of investment in their prestigious brand. To this end they expressed a wish to streamline the sales process to incorporate the credit application into their ordering system.

With a proven track record for delivering online credit solutions on behalf of CFS, Redline were asked to assist in defining and delivering a service that would best satisfy the brief.

Business Requirements

NEXT Home needed an electronic consumer credit proposal system that would integrate into its recently implemented furniture ordering system. The system already captured name, address and product details at point-of-sale as part of sales order processing.

It was important that the enhancements to the screens were intuitive and sensitive to the existing data capture mechanisms.

Having captured the additional data, the system needed to securely transmit these details to CFS for an immediate credit decision and then have a document returned to the store in a readily printable format.

In summary the key objectives of the project were:

- Integration into NEXT's existing in-store ordering system
- Delivery of excellent Customer Service through quick credit decisioning
- Resilience
- Security of customer data
- Automated underwriting

The Solution

Initial consultation established each party's unique requirements, and brought together a collaborative working partnership.

Redline was requested to provide project management on behalf of its client, CFS, and share technical expertise with NEXT's in-house development team. Redline proposed a Web Service solution, which would allow NEXT's ordering system to tightly integrate with CFS behind the scenes, preserving the look and feel of the existing system.

The data items required for a credit application that were not being captured already, were quickly identified and incorporated into the ordering system by NEXT's own development team.

A combination of Rapid Application Development techniques and close liaison with NEXT's development team enabled a proof of concept to be established just three weeks after the initial meeting. This allowed NEXT to approve project funding and schedule development.

Nurturing this supportive technical environment, NEXT's development team progressed with the front-end system enhancements whilst Redline developed the Web Service. Development progressed quickly and within 12 weeks the project team were replicating the store environment and performing initial testing ahead of the commissioning of a live environment and the first in-store pilot.

The pilot scheme extended rapidly to busy stores enabling fine-tuning within a contained environment. NEXT were then able to work autonomously, to control the rollout programme across all of its stores.

- Proof of concept established in 3 weeks
- Utilisation of existing ordering system
- Seamless integration avoids re-keying of data
- Configuration meets unique client requirements
- Automated processes make little demand on manual resources
- Auto decision process
- Credit agreement documentation printed at POS
- Project management and sharing of technical expertise
- Replicated store environment for initial testing
- Ability to work autonomously enabled NEXT to control the rollout programme

Major project achievements

Utilising cutting-edge technology to design a robust Web Service, Redline worked in partnership with NEXT's development team, achieving an integrated system.

The average user time to complete an in-store order and credit application is approximately 15 minutes, with the automatic underwriting process returning a decision in less than 30 seconds indeed users have praised the speed with which the process is concluded.

Within these timescales a credit agreement is created in PDF form and made available for printing in the store. This improves the take-up rate, as customers are available to sign documentation without the inconvenience of any significant delay.

Major project features

- Integrated solution with cleaner data being captured just once at POS
- Seamless process promotes excellent customer service
- Underwriting resource can be focussed more effectively thanks to automated processes
- Average processing time including ordering the furniture is just 15 minutes
- Auto-Accept decisions return in 30 seconds including the Agreement for POS printing
- Highly competitive SLAs
- System user friendliness and ease of training
- Delivered to tight deadlines and within budget

Operational benefits include a high percentage of Auto-Accepts, which has enabled delivery of 5 minute underwriting SLAs on more complex applications.

This level of service has been a major factor in maintaining a high take-up rate. The tight integration and the automating of many system processes has lead to competitive advantage through lower operating costs.



Redline Software

Redline Software provides solutions and services to the Consumer Credit industry. Our industry experience, understanding of technology and our proven track record in Change Management give us a unique ability to bring about our clients' objectives in efficiency, customer service and cost savings.

Cognition our flagship product, embraces a customer-centric approach to managing the entire credit agreement life-cycle from new business data acquisition, automated underwriting and decision making, through document production and workflow, agreement inception and payment processing to ongoing account management as well as debt recovery.

Extensive system configuration throughout delivers competitive advantage through flexibility and faster times to market. Automation of repetitive tasks allows operators to utilise the system to focus on delivering the highest levels of customer service.

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