

Surefire Case Study

University Federal Credit Union

University Federal Credit Union Nurtures Member Relationships with Surefire's Award-Winning Email Marketing for Credit Unions

Company Profile

HEADQUARTERS:

Austin, TX

FOUNDED:

1936

WEBSITE:

www.ucreditu.com/

LOAN OFFICERS:

25

PURCHASE VOLUME:

80%

ANNUAL LOAN VOLUME:

\$1.6 billion

Chartered in 1936, **University Federal Credit Union (UFCU)** has deep roots in the Central Texas and Galveston County communities. The not-for-profit, Member-owned cooperative has always operated a mortgage lending division laser-focused on providing Members personalized, consultative services and desirable interest rates. Over the years, word of UFCU's dedication to Member service and education has prompted frequent referrals and fueled steady organic growth.

Today, UFCU is Austin's top mortgage company by residential mortgage volume and has been voted best **credit union** by the Austin Business Journal and Austin American Statesman for several years running. With a lean team of just 25 loan officers (LOs), UFCU originates nearly 5,500 conventional, government and portfolio loans totaling \$1.6 billion in volume for its Members annually.

In 2018, as UFCU's mortgage lending division was responding to greater Member demand, it became clear to Mortgage Sales Manager Terrie Doggett that it would need the help of an **automated marketing** platform to maintain the high-touch service the **credit union** was famous for.

Although UFCU already had a **customer relationship management (CRM)** platform in place that covered the organization's other lines of business – from checking and savings accounts to auto and business loans — Doggett selected Top of Mind's **Surefire CRM** for its “set it and forget it” workflows, award-winning **email marketing for credit unions** and mortgage technology **integrations**. **Surefire CRM** has a dedicated following among its mortgage lending customers and a reputation for providing **creative content** that nurtures emotional connections and engagement from homebuyers throughout the homeownership lifecycle.

Keeping Members Informed and Engaged Throughout the Homeownership Process

Doggett's primary motive for implementing **Surefire** was to improve Member experience with the platform's enhanced **email marketing for credit unions**. So, her first move was to enable Surefire's automated workflows at each stage of the customer journey, from pre-qualification to post-closing.

Pre-qualification

“Surefire's integration with our **loan origination system (LOS)**, **Encompass®** has made it so easy for our LOs to stay connected to prospects,” said Doggett. “Once a Member receives a pre-qualification letter from UFCU, all LOs have to do to stay in touch is click a button in our **LOS** to enroll the Member in the pre-qualification campaign.”

UFCU has achieved astounding ROI from Surefire's pre-qualification workflow. Of Members who received a pre-qualification communication, 23.8% converted to funded loans, amounting to 4,555 units and \$1.45 billion in volume.



To create a uniquely memorable, engaging experience for our Members, we leveraged Surefire's integration with our LOS to deliver Surefire's fun in-process video emails.

In-Process

“Before **Surefire**, our loan status update emails were not impactful,” said Doggett. “Because we want to create a uniquely memorable, engaging experience for our Members, we leveraged Surefire's integration with our **LOS** to deliver Surefire's fun **in-process video** emails.”

Since adopting **Surefire**, UFCU has sent more than 90,000 messages to borrowers during the loan process. Overall, UFCU garnered an astounding 88% open rate for in-process emails — 267% higher than the financial services industry's benchmark open rate of 24%. Member engagement with in-process videos was exceptionally high, with a video watch rate of 30.5% — a whopping 1120% higher than the benchmark click-to-open rate of 2.5%.

Closing

“Closing disclosures are a notorious bottleneck in the mortgage lending process,” said Doggett. “So we’ve begun **texting** Members when we email their closing disclosure to remind them that signing the document is a time-sensitive task.”

Surefire's Power Messaging makes it easy for lenders to engage Members with personal and timely **text message communications**. Lenders control when, to whom and under which circumstances messages are sent, even automating **text communication** with conditional rules and advanced workflows. **Power Messaging** can be customized with **dynamic content** and external links, and what's more, LOs can receive and respond to text messages from a dedicated chat window within **Surefire**.

In the three-month period beginning in January 2021, UFCU sent 1,430 closing disclosure reminder texts to its Members through **Surefire**.

Post-Closing

After seeing great Member engagement in Surefire's pre-qualification and in-process marketing workflows, UFCU added Surefire's post-close **Client for Life Workflow**. The **Client for Life Workflow** creates over 100 distinct opportunities for UFCU to send personalized outreach to each Member over a 5-year period based on individual landmarks such as closing anniversaries, holidays and refi opportunities.

Fully automated, the **Client for Life Workflow** kicks off with a **closing gift** (for Members who have purchased a home) and continues to deliver a steady stream of engaging communications over multiple channels including specialized **email marketing for credit unions** that includes **video** and **interactive content**.

Within one and a half years, Surefire's **Client for Life email** campaign prompted 95 previous clients to submit a loan application (amounting to \$31.6 in loan volume), ultimately resulting in 41 funded loans (amounting to \$11.7 million in loan volume).

Centralized Marketing That Allows LOs to Soar

Mortgage Services Business Development Specialist Patricia Perez administers all of UFCU's marketing campaigns. Centralized marketing deployment is essential to UFCU's model since LOs are so immersed in mortgage volume. Perez's ownership over UFCU's mortgage marketing program serves the dual function of ensuring brand consistency across the business while freeing LOs to originate. But best of all, Members love the personal touch.

“Our LOs receive positive responses to Surefire’s birthday emails,” said Perez. “Even though I’m sure most of our Members know the emails are automated, they still take the opportunity to say thank you and ask how things are going.”

With innovative **new features** launching from Top of Mind on an almost monthly basis, Doggett and Perez look forward to a partnership that continues to improve the mortgage experience for the **credit union** and its Members.

Among Top of Mind’s latest product launches is the **Retention Center**, an online retention gift store that enables LOs to curate a gift-receiving experience for clients in lieu of (or in addition to) corporate-level client retention initiatives. Within the **Retention Center**, LOs can build automated **retention gift** campaigns based on rules such as loan type, loan amount and occasion.



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Individual, Focused Team, and Enterprise Solutions

About Top of Mind Networks

Founded in 2003, Atlanta-based Top of Mind Networks (<https://www.topofmind.com>) started as a bootstrapped direct-mail marketing company. Today, the company is recognized as the mortgage industry's most-relied-upon provider of marketing automation and creative content solutions. From individuals to enterprise lenders, Top of Mind's **Surefire CRM** helps thousands of mortgage professionals win new business, earn repeat business and deserve referral business. With intuitive, "set it and forget it" workflows and award-winning content, mortgage professionals can effortlessly maintain and deepen their emotional connections with clients.