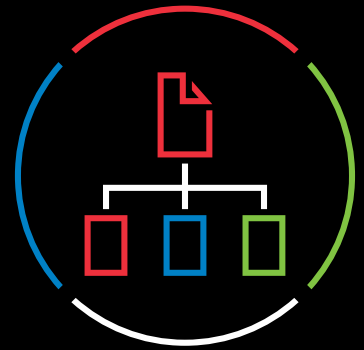




Case Study

Wolters Kluwer ClosingCenter is right on the money for credit unions' path to digitization

Today's borrowers have come to expect a digital closing process, making digital adoption a necessity for modern lenders. Yet, the complexity of managing different workflows and systems can be challenging for financial institutions. Discover how one credit union increased efficiency, accelerated processes, and reduced signing errors by streamlining digital closing with ClosingCenter.



Background



Although Centris Federal Credit Union has grown significantly since its inception in 1934, its commitment to provide members with a lifelong financial partner has never changed. As part of that pledge, the credit union prioritizes the implementation of relevant technology to support growth, increase efficiencies, and enhance member service. With 15 locations throughout Nebraska and Iowa, the financial organization currently serves more than 135,000 members.

“Our closings went from 45 minutes to 10 minutes.”

Jim Wehling

Secondary Market Manager, Centris Federal Credit Union

Goal

Become the first credit union in the state to offer electronic closing capabilities

Centris Federal Credit Union’s interest in offering its members a digital signing process was initially sparked by the drive toward digitization instigated by COVID, along with the company’s own corporate strategy of partnering with third parties to implement relevant technology and attract and retain members. Driven by the goal of becoming the first credit union in Nebraska to provide a digital closing option, Centris met with a consultant in 2021 to develop a roadmap for achieving full eClosing capabilities, starting with its mortgage department. At the time, the credit union was completing all of its signings using a traditional paper closing method.

Centris desired a simple and efficient eClosing solution that would help speed the signing process and reduce errors. In addition to ease-of-use and integration with its existing Loan Origination System (LOS), the credit union recognized the need to ensure security and compliance through every stage of the signing process.

“With ClosingCenter, we can close more loans in a day and our members spend less time at the title company.”

Carrie Pearson

Mortgage Compliance Control Specialist, Centris Federal Credit Union



Solution

Document management, review, signature execution, and automatic digital vaulting

Centris discovered a valuable solution from Wolters Kluwer — a web-based mortgage document preparation tool and ClosingCenter, which incorporates simple platforms that support any paper, hybrid, or digital closing scenario. ClosingCenter also equips lenders with the capabilities needed at every stage of the process, from pre-closing to secondary market delivery.

Beginning with pre-close, the ClosingCenter platform provides secure access to eligible closing package documents for review and eSignature. Next, an eClosing room intuitive settlement agent software enables the execution of hybrid eClosings and instant eNote vaulting. ClosingCenter also uses secure, trusted eVault technology to deliver Digital Asset Certainty as well as auditable asset management. It securely creates and stores documents, ensuring the authoritative copy. This level of assurance is something that PDFs and imaging solutions cannot provide.

Implemented at Centris in 2022, the Wolters Kluwer solution has helped the credit union achieve a flexible and efficient workflow, enabling quicker turnaround times, execution flexibility, and a more convenient process for members. Without ClosingCenter, lenders may require as many as five separate vendors just to fully complete a digital transaction, considering the LOS, eDocs, eSignature, eClosing platform, Remote Online Notarization (RON), and/or In-Person Electronic Notarization (IPEN).

Solution

(Cont'd)

With its hybrid approach, Centris members are able to sign most documents electronically, which has transformed the way the credit union completes mortgage closings, beginning with speeding the process. By breaking the process into two steps, where closing documents are shared prior for review, “Most of our closings went from 45 minutes to 10 minutes,” reports Jim Wehling, Centris’ Secondary Market Manager. “Now our members don’t have to take a full day off work to go to the title company and sign documents. They can run over at lunch and sign five docs and be on their way.”

Susan Payne, Mortgage Operations Manager for processing, closing, and compliance at Centris, also attributes a reduction in signing errors to the digital platform. Prior to ClosingCenter, it wasn’t unusual for the credit union to encounter post-close signing issues when working with certain title companies. “It has eliminated a lot of signing errors on non-critical documents because you can’t exit the closing room unless you’ve digitally signed all of them,” she explains.

The turnaround time to get the documents back is also much faster. “Because of this, we are able to do the post-closing much quicker,” reveals Carrie Pearson, Centris’ mortgage compliance control specialist. “With ClosingCenter, we can close more loans in a day and our members spend less time at the title company.”

Centris anticipates that its digital closing process will be especially valuable as interest rates begin to drop and spark a resurgence in refinancing appeal. “I think it will be a game changer,” Wehling predicts, “especially for our members who have already signed loan docs before.”

The combination of convenience, error reduction, and speed of signing has already given Centris a competitive advantage, according to Wehling. “You can sign documents sitting on your own couch, it’s so convenient,” he says. The option for two people to sign independently if their schedules don’t align adds another layer of ease.

Currently, the credit union estimates that 95 percent of its applications are completed online and approximately 60 percent of its closings are digital — a percentage that continues to grow. While Centris prefers to have its members complete the process electronically, the financial organization recognizes that some members prefer an in-person experience. Thanks to ClosingCenter’s ability to support every paper, hybrid, or digital scenario, that’s never a problem. “Digital closing doesn’t suit everyone yet, and we still support all of our members, regardless of how they choose to sign their loan,” Payne notes.

By easily adapting as financial organizations evolve their closing processes, ClosingCenter enables lenders to seamlessly transition from paper to digital or hybrid solutions — on their own schedule and over time. For instance, although Centris initially planned to incorporate eNotary into its digital closing process, the state of Nebraska was unable to support the capability when the pilot program first launched. “It’s on the back burner for now, but it would be nice to have eventually,” Payne acknowledges.

The combined ClosingCenter and doc generation solution provides Centris with key advantages, including:

Simplicity

With easy setup for lenders, ClosingCenter is highly compatible with the overall mortgage ecosystem and requires no training for settlement agents



Compliance

Built-in tools supported by industry compliance experts ensure that documents meet current federal, state, and local requirements



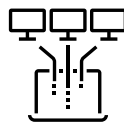
Document preparation

Custom and compliant mortgage documents can be easily produced for initial disclosures, Loan Estimate (LE), Closing Disclosure (CD), and closings with simple, compliant signing options through the doc gen systems of Wolters Kluwer



Integration

The platform seamlessly integrates with the top loan origination systems in the industry



Essential capabilities

Lenders gain document preview, document eSignature, eClosing room for settlement agents, MISMO Smart Doc® eNote, eVault, MERS® eRegistry automation, Enterprise API, and RON



In addition to the solution's advantages, the Centris team also highlights the exemplary support it received from Wolters Kluwer throughout the deployment process. "Our representative, Tyler, was a unicorn," Pearson emphasizes. "We really did have a great partnership throughout the process, and he was always willing to make adjustments based on our feedback."

Results

Both the credit union and its members cash in on ClosingCenter's value

Since implementing ClosingCenter, Centris Federal Credit Union has been able to:



Seamlessly support every paper, hybrid, or digital closing process



Dramatically reduce signing errors



Increase the number of signings it can complete per day



Reduce the time required to sign documents



Enhance efficiencies while reducing the complexity of managing different workflows and systems



Achieve a competitive edge to attract and retain more members



Position itself to scale and grow as needed

Tips to navigate the path to digitization

Considering implementing digital closing within your financial organization? Tap into the experience of a credit union that has already successfully navigated the process. Get started with the following guidance from Centris Federal Credit Union:

- ✓ Visit [MERSinc.org](https://www.mersinc.org) to learn about the eMortgage system and how to register eNotes
- ✓ Partner with a **title company** that is technology-forward and capable of supporting your initiative prior to implementation
- ✓ Establish a **plan** but stay open-minded to the process
- ✓ Be **prepared to pivot** when needed
- ✓ Engage with a **responsive service partner** who offers extensive industry expertise and proven solutions

About Wolters Kluwer Financial & Corporate Compliance

Wolters Kluwer (EURONEXT: WKL) is a global leader in information, software solutions and services for professionals in healthcare; tax and accounting; financial and corporate compliance; legal and regulatory; corporate performance and ESG. We help our customers make critical decisions every day by providing expert solutions that combine deep domain knowledge with technology and services.

Wolters Kluwer reported 2023 annual revenues of €5.6 billion. The group serves customers in over 180 countries, maintains operations in over 40 countries, and employs approximately 21,400 people worldwide. The company is headquartered in Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands.

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