



CASE STUDY: SIGNATURE FINANCIAL

Signature Financial chooses LeaseTeam's ASPIRE to help support their business growth objectives.

Overview

Signature Financial LLC (“Signature Financial”) provides specialty finance products and services to a diverse base of nationwide clients, including equipment leases and loans, vehicle funding programs, and taxi medallion finance lending. In addition, Signature Financial partners with bank-owned leasing companies, independent finance companies, equipment vendors and investment institutions to provide financing on an indirect basis through capital markets and national third-party intermediary funding groups. Their experienced teams provide the extensive industry, asset and niche sector knowledge necessary to support business initiatives, while remaining wholly dedicated to the Signature Bank relationship-based service model.

The Signature Financial team provides the capital required to facilitate the acquisition of income, producing assets directly to commercial businesses in both the Signature Bank greater New York footprint, as well as nationwide. Signature Financial’s industry and asset expertise extends to sectors such as construction, transportation and manufacturing, among many others.

The Challenge

Signature Bank (NASDAQ: SBNY), a New York-based full-service commercial bank ranked third on Forbes' list of the Best Banks in America, made a strategic decision to enter into the specialty financing business as Signature Financial LLC. As a newly formed business, Signature Financial needed to implement a lease/loan management system.

Signature Financial planned to introduce a variety of product lines into several business channels. This diversified business plan created several unique system requirements. As a result, Signature Financial needed a system that could efficiently and effectively meet the individual requirements that came with servicing each business channel.

It was also imperative that their lease/loan management system integrated with Signature Bank's (Signature Financial's parent company) accounting system, and satisfied the Bank's internal system controls while offering the flexibility to adapt to their changing needs.

Signature Financial was not only looking for a technology provider that could address their requirements and get their system up quickly, but also a technology partner that had the experience and expertise needed to anticipate their future business needs.

The Solution

After completing a due diligence exercise on lease and loan management systems, Signature Financial selected ASPIRE from LeaseTeam. Throughout the vetting process, Signature Financial felt confident LeaseTeam understood their specific business challenges and could meet their requirements quickly and efficiently. When Signature Financial presented LeaseTeam with special requirements, LeaseTeam knew exactly what was needed, and in some cases, already had tailored solutions available.

According to Walter Rabin, president and CEO of Signature Financial, “One of the key reasons we selected LeaseTeam was their expansive history in the lease and equipment finance marketplace.”

Another important component to their decision was the input they received from their employees. Signature Financial felt it was important to provide their employees with a system that was user-friendly and enjoyable to work within. Since many of Signature Financial’s employees had a history of working with LeaseTeam, they were able to start with a basic comfort and confidence level.

LeaseTeam worked closely with Signature Financial to help frame their requirements and set up their environment. “Bringing up our system went extremely well. The partnership between our operations team and LeaseTeam was instrumental in creating a smooth launch,” said Mr. Rabin.

LeaseTeam was able to have their basic front-end system up within four days and they were running transactions through the end-to-end system within 30 days.

Results and Benefits

Signature Financial implemented ASPIRE to manage the transactions for all of their business channels, including:

- The Equipment Leasing and Finance channel, which provides the capital required to facilitate the acquisition of income-producing equipment directly to commercial businesses to sectors such as construction, transportation, and manufacturing, among many others.
- The Vehicle Funding Program channel, which provides financing to independent vehicle leasing companies located nationwide that lease specialty/commercial/work-oriented vehicles, such as buses, tow trucks, ambulances and delivery vehicles, as well as new and used high-line/luxury passenger vehicles.
- The Taxi Medallion Finance channel in New York City, as well as other metropolitan cities, such as Chicago. Financings are done on both a direct and indirect basis, and may cover the medallion only or include the taxi cab vehicle as well.

The challenge was that each business channel had very different and specific requirements from both an internal and an external processing perspective. ASPIRE's flexible architecture allowed Signature Financial to configure their system and develop operational processes that met or exceeded these requirements. Currently, Signature Financial is running a considerable amount of business for each business channel through ASPIRE.

ASPIRE's advanced architecture also supported Signature Financial's desire to use technology to gain a competitive edge. In addition to providing their clients with exceptional service, Signature Financial was able to provide their clients with the key data points and information they needed to perform at their highest levels.

According to Mr. Rabin, "The equipment leasing and finance industry has become extremely competitive due in part to consolidation, excess liquidity, commoditization and intensified regulatory scrutiny. Due to this competitive landscape, we wanted a system that could help set us apart from our competitors. ASPIRE helped us execute at a higher level and the ability to provide our clients with key information is an important component in that."

Signature Financial was also successful in integrating their system with the Bank's accounting system. This required meeting the Bank's internal system controls, providing the Bank with key data files and delivering secure reporting and analysis options.

"We are very happy with our choice to partner with LeaseTeam," said Mr. Rabin. "We are pleased with our system and we are excited with the direction their product is going. We're confident LeaseTeam will continue to be a valuable strategic partner for us."