



# Patelco trusts eGain

## *Launching financial services on the Web*

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**David Cole**  
iBranch Manager, Patelco



### **Company**

San Francisco-based Patelco Credit Union is one of the largest and most successful credit unions in the country. An industry leader in convenience and innovation, Patelco delivers service through its 37 branches and nationwide network of ATMs and service centers. Chartered in 1936 to serve the employees of Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, Patelco remained a telephone company credit union until 1983, at which time it expanded its field of membership to telecommunications, high technology, and professional service organizations. When it was chartered, Patelco had just five members with assets of \$500. Today, Patelco has over 205,000 members with assets exceeding \$3.5 billion.

### **Challenge**

Patelco began providing financial services over the Internet by launching a program called iBranch. Using iBranch, members can conduct most financial transactions on the Patelco website. “We try and run this operation like a traditional full-service bank branch,” explains David Cole, iBranch manager. “There are only a few things you can’t do online, such as cash a check or make a deposit.”

Website traffic quickly rose to 3,000 emails per month. When Cole came on board, four agents were using MS Outlook to handle the 3,000 customer inquiries per

month. They were printing out every email and assigning them according to categories such as bill/pay, loan information, checking or savings. The goal was to reply to every inquiry within 48 hours.

“To me, that was unacceptable,” says Cole. “There was no way to track who was doing what, who was working hard and who was not. There was no performance tracking and no way to measure response times.” Also, Cole stresses, “Many of these emails were time-sensitive issues, such as ‘Why was I assessed this fee?’ or ‘I need to stop payment on a check.’ These were things that needed to be handled quickly or it would be costing somebody some money.”

### **Solution**

As chief of the company’s eBusiness division, Senior Vice President John Shields began searching for solutions to Patelco’s email dilemma. According to Cole, when they looked at eGain Mail, “we didn’t have to look much further. It was pretty clear that eGain Mail could do what we wanted it to do.”

“The implementation process was very smooth,” Cole says. “We were very surprised at how quickly we were able to get everything set up.” Routing schemes and operational parameters were discussed with the eGain implementation team, followed by system setup and onsite training. “It all happened within a month,” Cole recalls. “It seemed like it took longer for us to make the decision to

move forward with the system than it took to get it up and running. And it was seamless to our credit union members.”

phenomenal. Prior to that, I would have been leery of even asking those types of questions.”

Patelco has also started employing Mail as a vehicle to increase the visibility of the company’s range of services. “We’re using it to advertise special programs and services,” Cole says. “That’s been working well, but there’s a lot more we plan on doing.”

As far as Cole is concerned, the decision to implement eGain Mail has already paid off. “To be able to deliver, with significant impact, the level of service we’ve been able to generate has been impressive,” he says. “The expense of, going in this direction, to get to that next level of doing business over the Internet, has made a huge impact on our members. From my perspective, the cost has already been fully justified.”

“Sometimes, when the month is over and I look at the numbers—the emails continuing to grow and the response times continuing to decrease—I’m delighted,” Cole declares. “I keep saying to myself, ‘We’re not even using this system to its full capacity.’”

## Results

Today, two agents handle the bulk of credit union member inquiries, while two additional users use the product in a limited capacity to process bill/pay and loan issues. The two primary agents process 7,000 emails a month with an average response time of seven hours. “That’s a direct result of implementing the eGain Mail system,” Cole declares. “Without it, we would never have been able to become that efficient.”

Recently, Cole and his staff have been conducting customer surveys, using eGain Mail, to solicit feedback from Patelco customers. “We’ve now incorporated that surveying process into our corporate goal structure,” he says. “We’ve also used the system to send out group replies, which we had never been able to do before.”

“The focus was on speed and the accuracy of the response,” explains Cole about results from the first set of surveys. “We got an overwhelmingly favorable rating from our members, something like a 95% approval ratio. Previously, I would have estimated that we were in the 70–80% range. So, we saw an immediate jump of 20–30%, which is

## Key results

- ✓ With email traffic rising by more than 100% (from 3,000 to 7,000 emails per month), average response times dropped from 48 hours to seven hours or less, with many inquiries being handled within minutes.
- ✓ eGain’s high performance routing and productivity tools have enabled Patelco to enhance its online customer service without increasing agent head count.
- ✓ Special promotional messages targeted at credit union members have produced bottom line results as members order additional products and services.
- ✓ With eGain Mail, Patelco now conducts customer surveys on a regular basis.



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