

MITRATECH

“The benefits are huge.”

The Family Building Society used DataStore to drive automation and business continuity and reduce manual and paper-based processes.



The Company

The UK-based Family Building Society was established in 2014, with its roots going back to 1896. In a crowded UK financial market, it stands out as a niche provider of a range of financial services, with the personal touch. Its offerings cover savings, mortgages, insurance and later-life products.

With 180 employees and over £2 billion in assets, its competitive product range is complimented with staff who know their customers well and can provide a personalized approach. Together they mean the Society thrives in the face of larger competitors.

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Extensive Use of Manual Processes

In common with many smaller financial institutions, Family Building Society has relied on tried and trusted systems and processes – often paper-based – supported by very experienced staff, to deliver its services. While its larger peers have pushed ahead with extensive process automation projects, the Society has adopted a more cautious approach, to avoid damaging its most valuable commodity – customer trust.

The Society already offered a range of digital services to its customers, and it was keen to enhance these capabilities into its back-end processes to deliver greater efficiency savings. It also wanted extend its digital services to provide more value for its customers.

As a first step, Family Building Society turned to Mitrtech, who enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Society, and which provided its DataStore solution as an enterprise-strength Content Management platform.

The Challenge: Delivering Automation Without Disrupting Business

Working with Dan Condon, the Society's Business Transformation Manager, the Mitrtech team spent time learning the Society's vision, issues and objectives. They then took the opportunity to show

Dan and his team the powerful and flexible workflow capabilities within DataStore, which users can easily learn and utilize. This insight allowed Dan's transformation team to begin identifying processes and workflows that could yield quick returns. The Society's paper-based mortgage redemption process was soon identified as the ideal candidate, as it required 3 people to work over 4 days with 25 touchpoints to consolidate data, calculate a redemption fee, and have it approved. The process required a physical checklist to which was attached all the relevant documentation. As well as being time-consuming and expensive, there was room for error, and required additional effort if the results required auditing or regulatory scrutiny.

In Dan's words, "A lot of touchpoints, a lot of people, and a lot of information. We thought that by automating the process we could dramatically reduce the number of human touchpoints and dramatically cut the process time down to just a few hours, mirroring the process time at the large banks."

While clearly a good candidate for automation, the process was an important part of the service the Society offered its customers. It also worked reasonably effectively, at least in customers' eyes, so one measure of success would be to ensure this customer experience was not affected during the transition.

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The Solution:

A Flexible, Intuitive and Secure Workflow Process

Having identified the candidate process, the next step was to start building the process in the DataStore workflow environment. Mitrtech held workshops with Society staff to help design the process, using DataStore's intuitive workflow design engine to model the process initiation stage, information collection and review, fee calculation, as well as the final approvals. Dan commented, "Everyone was able to pick up on DataStore's workflow automation within a day or two."

Once deployed, the Society found that automating the redemption process has cut the time taken from two-three days to a matter of hours, as well as providing a more robust, transparent and auditable process.

The Value:

Enhanced Customer Service and Improved Business Efficiency

The automation of this process has already seen enhancements to the customer service the Family Building Society is keen to offer. As well as a being significantly faster, it allows for people to respond to customer queries much faster too, and with less effort. It also releases valuable staff to more customer-facing activities to support the Society's focus on a high standard of customer service as a key differentiator. It's also freed up office space, so that paper-based files no longer need cupboard space and can be safely stored off site.

While still in its early days for the Society, the redemption model is serving as a use case for other business processes that can be automated. "We're going to automate our loan application process and go completely paperless," stated Condon. Right now a loan application process can well be over 100 pages. "To get all that paper and information ingested into DataStore is a huge job, but the benefits are huge."

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Postscript:

Using Automation to Support Business Continuity during COVID-19

Soon after the solution was deployed live, Family Building Society, like its peers, was impacted by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The Society's staff were forced to work from home, and in parallel, the UK government introduced a mortgage holiday program which allowed mortgage holders to postpone payment. While enormously valuable to hard-pressed mortgage holders during the pandemic, it presented an operational and reputational challenge for the Society.

Leaning on the expertise gained during the initial redemption project, Dan's business transformation team worked with the customer service team, risk management and compliance teams to establish an automated process to address the holiday program. They needed to capture the key customer information about the payment holiday – outstanding balances, interest rates, and case histories for example – and then engage with customers to present their options, capture their response, monitor follow-ups and manage all the final documentation.

While normally this would take several months to develop and deploy, the DataStore workflow environment allowed Family Building Society to address this business challenge in days, despite the risks involved. In the end, the Society was able to support those customers at a time when they most needed the help, helping to maintain the commodity the Society values above all others: customer trust.



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