CONSUMERS CREDIT UNION CASE STUDY

Where being first is the culture, and Lumin Digital is the partner

lumin DIGITAL

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Many financial institutions wait for someone else to go first. Consumers Credit Union has built an institution serving 156,000 members by doing the opposite.

"Our CEO often says, 'If it's not beta, it's boring,'" said Lindsay McCall, Chief Operations Officer. "It's so true. We love being first."

Consumers was the very first client to sign with Lumin Digital. They were the first Lumin client on the Finastra Phoenix core. They pioneered digital account opening (DAO) with Lumin and Alloy, an AI-powered identity and fraud prevention platform, and were the first to launch business banking on the Lumin platform.

That posture of innovation, deep partnership, and no patience for stagnation has compounded. Today, Consumers opens 200+ memberships a month digitally with effectively the same team that used to process 50 to 60. Sixty percent of approved applications are auto-decisioned. Their digital office holds $68 million in deposits, on par with a mid-sized physical office.

Organization Consumers Credit Union	**Founded** 1951
Headquarters Kalamazoo, MI	**Members** 156,000
Assets $2.9B	**Branches** 34 throughout Michigan

Community Involvement

Consumers loves supporting its communities through event sponsorships, volunteering and charitable giving. In 2025, we invested more than $500,000 in local sponsorships and contributed over 900 volunteer hours, showing up for the people and causes that matter most.

Website

consumerscu.org

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Lindsay McCall
Chief Operations Officer
Consumers Credit Union

Signing before there was a product

In 2017, Consumers had been on another digital banking platform for four and a half years. The platform worked, but it was legacy—and the team knew another conversion would need to carry Consumers into the future.

"We needed a system and a company that could scale with us indefinitely," Lindsay said. "We knew we had to make a decision based on having something radically different than what we had at that time."

Lumin's cloud-native, microservices-based architecture was the differentiator on paper. But there was no product yet—just screens and a roadmap.

"There was no system built, so it was the people and the team that really sold it," Lindsay said. "We had a high level of trust in the talent Lumin has, and we knew we'd build something amazing together."

"99% of everything touches the core, and we were Lumin's first client on the Finastra Phoenix core," said Abby Stears, Business Analyst, who manages Phoenix at Consumers. "For us, the key was finding a company that wanted to hear our input and wanted to know what our members needed and expected. That turned out to be Lumin, and it's why we were willing to be first with them, and why our partnership works."

Why the previous DAO had to be replaced

Consumers launched digital banking with Lumin in 2018, and within a couple of years, the team turned its attention to digital account opening. Their previous tool worked, but it had ceilings on every axis: volume, fraud, user experience, and staff efficiency.

Brenna Dennis , Online Membership Specialist, ran applications on the old system. She remembers the verification screen that kept applicants from ever becoming members.

"You would put in your cell phone number, and it sent you a code to verify that your phone number was indeed your number," Brenna said. "But it didn't work 50% of the time. Our call center would get calls, and we couldn't do anything other than tell people to try again. We were losing a lot of potential members to that process."

On the admin side, the workflow required juggling five systems: digital banking, the DAO platform, the funding tool, Experian, and the old fraud product. Information came back written in code that staff had to decipher.

"It took more employees to work significantly fewer applications," Brenna said. "One other person and I worked primarily on this, but we also had a separate role in lending. We were opening 50 to 60 memberships a month with the two of us."

On the fraud side, the analytics team was watching the threat landscape outpace the tooling. That team owns the workflows, risk tolerance, and data sources that determine who gets through the door.

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Abby Stears
Business Analyst
Consumers Credit Union

"What we had was a very cookie-cutter solution," said India Hoskins, who leads the Consumers Analytics Team. "It was really good at third-party fraud. But toward the end, we were seeing a lot of synthetic fraud, a lot more account takeover, even first-party fraud. Our old provider didn't work anymore. Fraudsters were getting in and taking multiple products before there was any point of friction."

Membership, according to India, is the gateway.

"We call Brenna the Guardian of the Galaxy, because as a member—you have access to everything. You want a credit card? You want an auto loan? We want to fund that for you. So getting membership right matters."

Building DAO with Lumin—and moving up the commercial banking timeline

The Consumers team worked together with Lumin and Alloy to build their digital account opening solution.

"We wanted a seamless process of applying for membership, getting into the platform, and becoming what we call a sticky member," Abby said.

The must-haves were specific:

- Pare down the application to make it usable on a phone.
- Build parity between desktop and app.
- Make funding configurable per product, not a single blanket limit.
- Reduce drop-off.
- Transition approved applicants directly into online banking.
- Replace the fraud tool.

Alloy, integrated natively into Lumin's platform, would enable the analytics team to build and adjust workflows in real time.

"Alloy is very customizable—point and click and deploy in seconds, rather than weeks," India noted. "Fraud changes on a daily basis, if you're lucky—if not hourly."

"We were very intentional about making sure each screen rendered in an attractive way on a mobile device," Abby said. "We recognized that most of our applicants were accessing us through their phone."

Business banking wasn't slated for launch, but the team made it happen.

"We launched in October, and business banking wasn't supposed to go until the first quarter of the following year. But we decided to roll it out right away. The Lumin team moved up the launch by about six months."

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Chief Operations Officer
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Definitive results from DAO

Consumers launched DAO in 2021. The team processes about 500 applications per month and opens 200+ memberships from that pool. Volume is up roughly 4x with effectively the same team. In 2019, Consumers was opening 50 to 60 memberships a month with two team members who also had lending duties. Today, the team opens 200+ memberships per month with one additional FTE that replaced a part-time role—resulting in a 230% increase in efficiency.

Auto-approval climbed from 20–30% on the old platform to a steady 50–60% with Lumin and Alloy, without any additional exposure to fraud risk. That shift didn't just speed things up—it changed what the manual review queue looked like.

"The manual reviews we're working on now are much more complex," India said. "We know what we need to have confidence in this evaluation. It's much harder to use social engineering against our team now because we know what the issues are."

The team trusts the auto-approvals because they're built on workflows owned by Consumers.

"Having the ability to link with Alloy and create those workflows the way we need them to be and adjust them as needed gives us the confidence that what is auto-approved is actually worthy of being auto-approved," Brenna said. "We don't have to spend time double-checking those decisions."

Brenna's team has also become an early-warning system. She's caught AI-generated IDs coming through the application queue and flagged them upstream.

"Spotting these is helping us understand what the next evolution of fraud is going to look like," India said. "Our analytics team figures out what sources we can use to counteract it—and Alloy lets us deploy those changes in real time, not on a release schedule."

On fraud losses, the dollar figure is conservative because, as India says, “it’s hard to calculate money that you didn’t lose.” The estimate from implementation: roughly $300,000 a year in fraud losses prevented on DAO alone.

The post-launch optimization loop has been just as important as the launch itself. One example: the original flow ran a duplicate-membership check only when the applicant hit submit at the end of the application.

“People would go all the way through, hit submit, and then be told, ‘Oh, looks like you’re already a member,’” Abby said. “Brenna realized that was causing frustration and more work. We brought that feedback to Lumin, and now that check is the second screen. A hit to the core is done immediately.”

That responsiveness is the pattern, not the exception.

“It’s definitely been a creative partnership,” Brenna said. “Anytime we’ve noticed something that could be changed, or things causing friction for ourselves or the applicant, Lumin has been more than open to that feedback and fixing the issue.”

A single platform with compounding value

The integration story shows up in the numbers, but it’s also reflected in the day-to-day.

“It feels like a single smooth process. It doesn’t feel choppy,” Abby said. “The fewer systems we need to have our employees access, the better.”

That cohesion drives another metric: nearly all auto-approved applicants enroll in digital banking at the moment of approval, because the workflow walks them straight into it.

Mobile-first design has compounded the effect. Seventy-three percent of active digital banking users at Consumers now access the platform from mobile only. The previous DAO tool didn’t support mobile at all—applicants had to be on a desktop device.

“You don’t have to wait for quarterly or annual meetings to discuss changes you want to see. We meet weekly with the DAO product manager, and it’s really an open discussion of what’s changing, how it’s going to impact us, and how we think it could be better.”

Brenna Dennis
Online Membership Specialist
Consumers Credit Union

Why weekly releases changed the conversation

The pace of the platform matches the pace of the people running it. Consumers meets weekly with their Lumin team.

“You don’t have to wait for quarterly or annual meetings to discuss changes you want to see,” Brenna said. “We meet weekly with the DAO product manager, and it’s really an open discussion of what’s changing, how it’s going to impact us, and how we think it could be better.

“We don’t want our digital banking experience to be stagnant,” she continued. “We want it to improve and get better, and that weekly release cycle helps us stay on top of that.”

“We approach our relationships with vendors as partners,” Lindsay added. “So it’s a 50-50. We’re getting so much value from the relationship that we also want to give back—serving on advisory boards, sharing our story at conferences. We like control and having input. If we can shed our light or sprinkle our thoughts where they can be scooped up and implemented, that's a huge benefit for us."

Engagement starts with culture

Consumers' highly engaged digital banking users—those using more than five digital services—have a retention rate above 95%. They hold an average of five deposit or loan accounts. Two-thirds have an open loan with Consumers.

Behind those numbers is a workforce hired and empowered to build exactly that kind of relationship with members.

"We have a strong culture that we're proud of," Lindsay said. "We conduct cultural interviews when hiring. The culture is high on empowerment, from the top down—empowering our team members to make decisions."

Brenna translates that into how the team approaches members.

"We're not telling them about something for the sake of sales, or because it's our goal," she said. "We're doing it because it fits their situation. People are far more likely to engage when a capability or offer is customized to them.

"Happy employees result in happy members," Brenna continued. "We really enjoy our jobs, and most importantly, we get to help people along the way. We have a very 'how-can-we' attitude."

Where the next "firsts" will come from

Business banking is a strategic growth lever. Average business deposit balances at Consumers are five times higher than retail balances, increasing to seven times higher when a business lending relationship is also in place. Recent wins with municipalities and school districts demonstrate the strength of Consumers' business banking offering, but the opportunity extends well beyond the public sector. Robust digital capabilities allow Consumers to efficiently serve businesses of varying sizes and complexities.

"Credit unions have such a minor segment of the market when it comes to business and commercial customers," Lindsay said. "There's a huge opportunity for growth, so having the digital products to support banking for those businesses is critical."

Then there's what Lumin is building next. Abby came back from Lumin's client conference, Lumination, with a clearer picture of where the platform is headed.

"To hear from Jeff [Chambers, Lumin's CEO] about where Lumin is going, and to know all of Lumin's employees are on board to help push that journey along—more access to data, the intentional AI pieces—that's what gets me excited," Abby said. "It gives me even more confidence that our leadership picked the right partner."

Consumers has reached 60% automation with a 230% increase in efficiency and credits their partners with continuing to raise the bar. "Every time we ask Lumin

200+ monthly memberships opened through DAO—up from 50–60 pre-Lumin	**60%** auto-approval rate—up from 20–30% on the previous platform
230% increase in account-opening efficiency with effectively the same headcount	**$68M** in deposits through the digital office—on par with a mid-sized physical office
~$300K in estimated annual fraud losses prevented through Lumin and Alloy	**73%** of active digital banking users access Consumers from mobile only

or Alloy if we can do something, they jump right in with suggestions," said India.

"We love being at the forefront of technology," Lindsay said. "Consumers embraces innovation as a culture."

About Alloy

Alloy helps credit unions future-proof their identity risk management to accelerate the safe delivery of great financial products. Alloy's configurable solutions for fraud, credit and compliance risk, and extensive ecosystem of data partners seamlessly integrate with existing technology, keeping credit unions in control of their identity decisions. Alloy makes it possible for credit unions to deliver a great member experience while reducing fraud rates and staying ahead of the pace of fraud attacks.

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