

# Why Union Bank outsourced its IT services to Kalmer Solutions



## How bringing in an external CIO helped the bank to manage its IT systems and employees

### CLIENT DETAILS

- 8 bank branches in rural towns in Arkansas
- 80+ employees working remotely and in branch
- Financial services and support for local businesses
- Customer-focused technology

### HIGHLIGHTS OF CUSTOMER CHALLENGE

- Difficult to attract and retain IT talent in rural area
- Need to manage employees either working from home or in branch
- Stay up to date with stringent security standards and maintain uptime for customer systems

### SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

- Manage the bank's systems and IT needs
- Hire, train, and manage IT employees
- Serve as virtual CIO
- Add staff and support as the bank adds branches and grows the business
- Protect customer data
- Ensure 99.99% uptime for customer systems and staff



Established in 1934, Union Bank of Mena is a regional banking center that serves all of Polk County and the surrounding areas, with full-service locations in Mena, Hatfield, and Wickes, Arkansas. Owned by Union Bankshares (a holding company), the state-chartered bank is regulated by the Arkansas State Banking Department, Federal Reserve Bank St. Louis, and insured by the FDIC. The bank provides lending and support to local businesses across many different industries. It also takes great pride in its customer-focused technology and ensuring access to financial services for small business.



# The Business Challenge

Even prior to the pandemic, Union Bank faced a number of IT-related challenges. The bank is located in a small rural town, which makes it difficult to recruit sufficient IT talent. The banking industry depends on many different types of software and technology, so it's a challenge to hire and retain a local IT generalist with the right skills and experience.

With the arrival of COVID-19, Union Bank closed some branches and moved most of its 80+ employees to remote work. This required providing different types of IT support and security, which its in-house IT staff had never done before. The bank began searching for a Chief Information Officer (CIO) to outsource the management of its IT services and employees. Union Bank reached out to a number of resources, including banking consultants, IT consultants, and other bankers, to find the ideal solution.

"We were looking to do something a little different for banking in our area, which was to hire somebody who could serve as our CIO," said Jarrod Yarnell, Chief Executive Officer, Union Bankshares.



OUR RESOURCES PROVIDED A LOT OF NAMES, BUT KALMER SOLUTIONS WAS THE ONLY NAME THEY COULD THINK OF THAT DID EVERYTHING WE WANTED, FROM BEING THE CIO TO MANAGING OUR NETWORK TO HELPING WITH OUR CORE BANKING SERVICES TO MANAGING OUR INTERNAL IT STAFF.

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It became clear that Kalmer Solutions was the vendor for us due to their experience, depth, and breadth of their products."

# Kalmer Solutions:

## ELEMENTS OF IMPROVING EFFICIENCY



When Yarnell first met with Kalmer Solutions, it became clear they would be able to provide whatever services were needed. Kalmer Solutions was already working with 30 other banks, and had experience with major banking software providers. They had managed the same systems used at Union Bank, as well as other banks' IT staff. They used a template to evaluate the bank's software provider, online network, IT requirements, employee needs, and other key requirements.

**Kalmer Solutions proved their value before signing a contract with Union Bankshares. Yarnell asked them to visit the bank to look at its network problems. Six hours later, on a Friday night, Kalmer Solutions' reps were on site. They booked hotel rooms for the next two nights and resolved the network problems over the weekend.**

"They got our network issues fixed," said Yarnell. "That right there told me these are people I can count on when I need them. They jumped on site immediately, were able to spot our problems, took control of the situation, and worked it out. Anytime we need service like that, I know it's a phone call and somebody is on site. We get all the expertise needed, plus we get personal service."

# The Results:

## IT SOLUTIONS FOR A MODERN WORKFORCE

In mid-2019, Union Bank began working with Kalmer Solutions, who helped the bank to achieve its goals by:

### MANAGING THE BANK'S SYSTEMS

Kalmer Solutions ensured the bank's systems and security were up to date and compliant. They applied their experience in managing the bank's infrastructure and systems. They raised the uptime percentage for customer and employee systems.

### MANAGING THE BANK'S EMPLOYEES

Kalmer Solutions implemented strong accountability standards in hiring and training their employees. They focused on providing top-quality customer service, holding weekly meetings to ensure expectations were being met. Their ticketing system kept management apprised of how issues with staff were being resolved.

### SERVING AS THE BANK'S VIRTUAL CIO

Kalmer Solutions applied their knowledge and experience of auditing requirements, cyber-security, software solutions, technology needs and trends, and more. They provided consulting and advice that made ownership more comfortable with how the bank and its systems were being run.



A COMPANY'S IT DEPARTMENT CAN EITHER BE A WEAKNESS OR A STRENGTH," SAID YARNELL. "I ALWAYS FEEL COMFORTABLE KNOWING THAT, IF WE NEED TO GROW, WE CAN, THANKS TO OUR IT DEPARTMENT. WE CAN ADD BRANCHES AND STAFF, AND THEY ALLOW US TO DO WHAT WE NEED TO DO. WE CAN TAKE ON NEW CHALLENGES BECAUSE I KNOW WE HAVE THE IT INFRASTRUCTURE TO HANDLE WHATEVER COMES UP."

# Best Practices Used

Kalmer Solutions employed the following best practices when working with Union Bank:



Implemented strong training and accountability standards for employees.



Ensured security and protection of customer data.



Improved uptime for customer and employee systems.



Performed auditing and review of banking systems and processes.



Managed and upgraded bank's IT systems.



Supported growth of staff and branches.

Kalmer Solutions is a managed IT services provider for the modern workforce. Whether it's compliance support for FFIEC, HIPAA, or PCI, technology upgrades to help businesses with cloud services, or implementing modern workforce solutions. Kalmer Solutions' services enables clients to achieve compliance, measure efficiency, and promote accountability. Contact Kalmer Solutions today to learn how we can help you.

**We'd love the opportunity to visit with you about your needs and goals.**

[BOOK A CALL WITH THE KALMER TEAM](#)