

# Regions Leasing Leverages the Power of Rapport to Achieve Aggressive Growth Goals

With headquarters in Montgomery, Ala., Regions Leasing – a division of Regions Bank – has a long-standing reputation as a “one stop shop” for every business financial need, especially for smaller manufacturers and over-the-road trucking companies in the Southeastern United States.

To meet market demands and grow the company, Regions Leasing devised an aggressive plan that required its sales associates to shift from acquiring small-ticket contracts to pursuing larger transactions. The tactical challenge was how to restructure the internal business practices of this team of 20 leasing professionals so that the Montgomery-based office staff – already stretched for time – could add booking and supporting small-ticket contracts to its workload, thereby enabling sales associates to go after new, bigger prospects.

Workflow streamlining was the answer, according to Leah Thomas, Regions Leasing Contract Administration Supervisor. “We were doing the same amount of work for \$2,000 deals as for \$2 million deals,” she explains. “That’s just not cost effective.”

Thomas believed that Regions Leasing could accomplish its objectives by leveraging the latest available technology – Rapport from International Decision Systems (IDS). “I had heard about Rapport through our IDS sales rep,” Thomas says. “Before IDS even shows you their products, they find out what your business needs are. Our sales rep is amazingly honest in telling us when something isn’t right for us. But, because he understood our business strategies, he recommended that we consider Rapport.”

Although at the time it was not yet available in general release, Rapport was ready for beta testing. “We knew the risks of being a beta customer,” Thomas says. “But, I wanted Regions to beta Rapport, because I know that IDS values our opinions and needs, and that they would make great use of our input. Any risk was mitigated by our solid relationship with IDS. To me, serving as a beta customer is a win-win.”

**Rapport Improves Information Access**  
Rapport is an automated credit application and contract origination software solution accessible to any lease/loan company around the world

<b>Type:</b>	Bank-owned Financing Organization
<b>Segment:</b>	Small-to-large ticket portfolio, primarily serving small business
<b>Challenge:</b>	Support aggressive growth goals by increasing origination capacity and achieving better customer segmentation
<b>Primary Solution:</b>	IDS Rapport™



SUCCESS STORY



via a Web browser. Rapport simplifies lease/loan procedures because it offers one system for contract origination through booking, including pricing, credit application, credit scoring and documentation, vendor/partner management, setup and booking. In addition, Rapport eliminates redundant data entry by seamlessly integrating with other software programs, including any back-end system.

“Rapport gives everyone involved in the lease/loan process real-time access to relevant information about pending contracts,” states IDS Product Marketing Manager Tom Dawson. “This means companies can optimize their entire workflow with their back-office database.” Other examples of Rapport features and benefits include these capabilities:

- Creating proposal letters with price quotes included, streamlining the sales process.
- Generating multiple price quotes before creating credit applications, allowing salespeople to offer customers the most applicable and attractive quotes.
- Enabling lessors to automatically set up renewal terms during contract origination, so customers know what the terms will be when the contract comes due.

- Applying upfront cash before booking for better tracking.

#### The Smoothest Possible Implementation

Because Regions Leasing was an existing IDS client and had beta tested another IDS product, Thomas and her team were well aware of the time-consuming nature of what they were about to go through by implementing Rapport. “However, selling our management on the idea of installing Rapport was not difficult because IDS provided such an impressive ROI statement and product brief,” she recalls.

Once the paperwork was complete and both sides had assembled their implementation teams, IDS recommended that the Regions group fly to Minneapolis for face-to-face work sessions to establish Rapport features best suited for Regions Leasing. “I would highly recommend visiting IDS headquarters in Minneapolis,” Thomas says. “Our teams met in a room and hammered out solutions ideal for our business. IDS Professional Services experts were there to deal directly and efficiently with every concern we had.”

The physical implementation process, which lasted from January through May, 2003, really didn’t bring any surprises, Thomas remembers. “It went like we expected,” she says. “Because we were beta, there were some challenges. However, IDS was there ‘holding our

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hand' through the entire process. We talked every single day. If I didn't call them, they called me to ask, "Is everything going okay?" When any type of problem came up, we knew we would work it through and find the best solution together. It was such a good working relationship."

### An Outcome Heavy on ROI

Once Regions Leasing had been using Rapport for about a year, according to Thomas, the ROI was evident. "We're meeting all of our efficiency and growth objectives," she reports. Her list includes:

- Automated database updating allows Regions Leasing employees to update customer information, such as address changes, just once. Rapport automatically updates all other documents within Regions' system that are associated with that customer.

- Rapport eliminated redundant data entry for credit applications. "This was huge for us," proclaims Thomas. Lease officers would create Word documents and spreadsheets and, send them to the Montgomery office, where employees would input the same information into the InfoLease® credit application module. "That's all gone," Thomas smiles. "This feature was one of Rapport's biggest selling points for us."

- The ability to email documents and add attachments to contracts allows Regions Leasing to assist remote

sales associates from the company's Montgomery office. "Say a customer at one of our branches needs to send a document in order to close a deal," Thomas describes. "We can produce the document here and immediately send it to the field office for the necessary signatures. It's seamless."

- Rapport enables Regions Leasing to eliminate common data entry errors by defaulting to existing customer information when originating a repeat lease. "You're not re-keying basic information, like addresses," Thomas says. "This saves a lot of time when we're dealing with repeat customers, which we do a great deal."

- Rapport also saves Regions Leasing staff time by creating documents and fields specific to the type of lease being generated. "For example, if you're doing a true lease, you select the true lease program and Rapport gives you the option to print only documents relating to a true lease," Thomas explains.

- Rapport facilitates Thomas's ability to monitor contract activity, workflow and time management throughout her department. "Everything is date and time stamped," she states. "Now, I can easily determine how long staff members took to complete their part of the lease contract, and can make staff assignment adjustments or provide additional training if necessary."

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■ Rapport offers increased accessibility to the comment section on each credit application. "I could get a phone call from a vendor asking, 'Why didn't I get paid?'" Thomas explains. "Now, instead of physically searching through paper files, all I need to do is call up that lease in Rapport and I can instantly see, for example, that the customer hasn't sent their insurance in. It's very efficient."

#### Conclusion

Regions Leasing's ability to enter new markets and pursue large-ticket deals has dramatically improved since the company invested in Rapport. The IDS solution has liberated the leasing team from numerous mundane manual and time-consuming tasks, thereby increasing employee productivity – and morale.

"Our beta experience with Rapport was a huge win for us," declares Thomas. "We are now able to build our business, including vendor programs. And, we're able to provide better service to all of our customers."

Improved sales focus. Increased productivity. Better customer service. A growing bottom line. Enough ROI proof for even the most demanding executive.

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