



The Talon Group
ESCROW AND TITLE SERVICES

Industry:

Escrow and title services

Description:

The Talon Group provides residential and commercial escrow and title services from contract to closing.

Business Challenge:

To standardize processes, create efficiencies, and improve productivity to efficiently communicate with customers.

Product/Solution:

Commence Desktop CRM software consists of a suite of fully integrated business applications for contact management, sales automation, marketing, telemarketing, quoting and customer support.

Key Features:

- Web-based hosted solution
- Fast, easy set up
- Manage sales, marketing, customer service
- One central system for all customer information
- Powerful reporting and analytics
- Supports remote and mobile users
- QuickBooks integration

Results:

- Supports “Customer for Life” business model
- Enables the company to have consistent messaging
- Allows quick response to new opportunities

Commence Case Study

CRM Solution Enables Title and Escrow Company to Achieve Greater Productivity and Effectively Communicate with Customers, Loan Officers and Real Estate Agents

- Solution Supports “Customer for Life” Business Model -

For many people, buying a home is one of the more stressful life events. From packing up belongings and getting financing, to working with real estate agents, property inspectors and title officers; the process can be daunting. For real estate professionals, keeping everything running smoothly means managing every aspect of contract to closing.

To improve the customer experience and provide the highest quality escrow and title services, Bellevue, Washington-based The Talon Group supports their business processes with Commence Desktop Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. By choosing Commence’s CRM system, the company has gained a centralized solution for managing data. As a result, The Talon Group is better able to standardize processes, efficiently communicate with customers, improve productivity and support their mission to “build customers for life.”

Founded in 2003, The Talon Group, a division of First American Corporation, works with individual clients in the real estate and lending business and maintains a strong commitment to providing the highest quality escrow and title services in Washington. It offers residential services; commercial services, including commercial title insurance and endorsement coverage, commercial closing and escrow, online transaction management. The company employs nearly 100 people across its nine offices in the Puget Sound area.

Like other title and escrow companies, The Talon Group provides the insurance for the title component and ensures there are no liens, encumbrances or easements on a property. They also act as an ‘honest broker’ in the transaction

by taking the place of a real estate attorney and getting all parties to sign pertinent documents. They also hold the responsibility to redistribute them appropriately.

“One of our key challenges is getting information spread around the company quickly,” said Cliff Treat, vice president, The Talon Group Escrow and Title Services. “Our workflow is based on events so it is imperative to have robust communication between the administrative staff, real estate agents, loan officers, and home buyers to ensure we are efficient in our processes and responsive to our customers.”

With an eye on efficiency and a desire to fully utilize the Web to interact with customers and field agents, the company incorporated Commence CRM into their business model. Commence Corporation’s “best in class” CRM software offers a comprehensive suite of applications for business contact management, sales and sales force automation, marketing, campaign management, lead management, project management, customer support and analytics.

One benefit of the system is that it allows The Talon Group to automate and streamline processes such as payoff information. A property may require a payoff on taxes, homeowner dues or waste removal fees. By having the Commence system in place, administrative staff is able to view and manage multiple properties that require payoffs on a single screen.

“When we get a transaction on a property we go to the applicable county or city and ask for the payoff information,” explained Treat. “Through the system we are able to funnel that work to one person. Instead of having an individual call for one payoff and waiting on the phone for 15 minutes for information on one house, they are able to request information for 20 properties. It’s created a streamlined process that helps improve our efficiency.”

By being able to share and access information quickly and efficiently, the company is able to proactively manage their business and ensure they deliver high quality service to their customers. A copy of the database is available on all employee desktops and if someone makes a change, everyone in the company is able to see. Commence enables them to get the most up-to-date information immediately.

Another benefit of the solution is automatic alerts that improve event management. For example, when an assistant enters the date she receives a property title, an email is sent to the appropriate agent alerting them to the title availability. Instead of requiring the assistant to manually manage the process, actions are automated through the system ensuring optimal workflow. The system also “flags” potential issues which enables management to proactively address them.

Company sales professionals rely on the system for campaign management and customer communications. Through the Web site, they can send fliers for new listings and see role-based applicable activity. Home buyers are able to view pertinent information via a dashboard on the Web site. Every agent and loan officer also receives an automated summary on transaction activity for accounts they maintain. This is delivered daily to their inbox rather than requiring them to visit the Web site for updated activity.

“The HTML email with summary information is helpful because they don’t have to chase information,” said Treat. “During this last refinancing boom it was hard to get in touch with anyone due to the accelerated level of activity. Using the Commence system, agents and loan officers receive the most current information, which enables them to efficiently complete tasks and get their job done.”

The Commence solution also empowers The Talon Group to respond quickly to new opportunities in the market. Like other businesses, they are using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate company news and interact with customers. Sales success is fueled by conversation and the Commence system makes it possible for sales professionals to efficiently use new media to disseminate information. They are also using the system to populate the company newsletter that is sent directly to clients and customers.

“What Commence enables us to have is consistency of message,” added Treat. “No matter where you look – whether it’s via our newsletter, on Twitter, or a personal communication from a salesperson – the message is the same. And, because we can automatically make things happen based on events, it enables us to get to a place where we do things the same every time. When we set up an escrow and title for an agent, the communications happen the same way without requiring someone to remember to take a particular action.”

While the solution is designed for small to mid-size businesses, it has been able to support the company’s growth and serves as a centralized repository for nearly one million documents. Title and escrow companies are required to store information for seven years and through the system, The Talon Group is able to save everything from client notes and transaction details to email communications.

“The solution has done well expanding and enables us to produce discovery material when needed during legal situations,” said Treat. “We’ve prevented from paying out a lot of money because we have the entire history of events. It’s helped us because everything is documented.”

Most importantly, the solution has enabled The Talon Group to support their mission of building customers for life. When an agent sells a home, the system automatically creates communication points at the one month, six month and two year anniversary to support additional interaction with customers.

“The Commence solution allows us to support our ‘customer for life’ by enabling us to stay in constant communication with our customers,” said Treat. “In the 14 years I’ve been involved with Commence, it’s proven to be a reliable solution that has given us a fail safe way to manage all our data and be proactive and efficient in managing our customer relations.”

About Commence Corporation

Founded in 1988, Commence Corporation is a leading provider of e-business and customer relationship management (CRM) software solutions. The company’s products are designed to provide small- to medium-sized businesses with flexible solutions that leverage the Web to offer an integrated platform for e-business. Commence supports thousands of users through a worldwide distribution network, with outlets in North and South America, Europe, and Asia/Pacific. For more information, contact Commence Corporation at 732-660-0990, or visit the company’s Web site at www.commence.com.