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## **First graduating class puts member advocacy to work on the front lines**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Ten employees from six Minnesota credit unions graduated on Dec. 11 from the first statewide *Member Advocacy Pathways (MAP)*<sup>TM</sup> staff development program. Through this program, employees developed skills that differentiate them from their competitors and enable them to put credit union principles into action. The Minnesota Credit Union Network (MnCUN) partnered with Strategic Solutions in order to bring this class to its member credit unions.



**2008 MAP graduates after completing their last class.**

*Member Advocacy Pathways (MAP)*<sup>TM</sup> uses a combination of highly interactive learning processes to support credit union staff in developing and using effective communication skills to help members successfully navigate through significant life events. By zeroing in on what's in the best interest of each member during each life event – or advocating for them – the credit union lives its unique principles while gaining additional profitable business from each member. The graduates' continuous skill-building throughout the nine-module program earned them the professional designation of "Member Advocate."

"The opportunities that trigger needs for additional financial services are plentiful, but most members don't get the assistance they need to make wise money management decisions," said Jeanne Murphy, President of Strategic Solutions. "Staff's lack of personal experience with many of the life events causes lost opportunities to recognize and provide appropriate solutions that really make a difference. An enormous amount of potential business is lost, affecting the credit union's bottom-line, its competitive brand and member retention."

During the program, participants took a hands-on approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the financial decisions and consequences triggered by each life event.

(more)

“Through MAP training, the credit union employees learned how to put themselves in the members’ shoes,” said Neil Christy, MnCUN Vice President of Education & Credit Union Development. “By the end of the program, participants were able to ask the right questions to discover members’ unique needs and recommend customized financial solutions to meet those needs.”

The collaboration between MnCUN and Strategic Solutions serves as a pilot to demonstrate how all leagues can help their member credit unions affordably take their sales and service cultures to the next level. A *MAP Trainer Certification Boot Camp*, held twice a year by Strategic Solutions, enables league personnel and internal credit union trainers to become certified to lead the MAP staff development program at their own sites.

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*The **Minnesota Credit Union Network** is an organization representing the state’s 163 not-for-profit cooperative credit unions serving more than 1.5 million member-owners in the state.*

*For additional information, visit [www.mncun.org](http://www.mncun.org).*

*Founded in 1982, **Strategic Solutions** provides comprehensive sales, marketing, HR and strategic planning services to credit unions of all sizes, enabling them to capitalize on growth opportunities. Reliable, timely guidance and pioneering approaches have built the company’s reputation to serve clients in 48 states.*

*For additional information, visit [www.strategicsolutions.org](http://www.strategicsolutions.org).*