

# Credit Unions spotlight

Issue 6 December 2011

**STOP PRESS!**

## UK Card & Payments Awards 2012

As we went to press, we were delighted to hear that the ALTO card videos have been short-listed in these awards.

This is the second year that we have reached the short-list. Entries are judged on demonstration of strategy, creativity, transparency, value to customers and commercial results by an independent judging

panel which comprises representatives from the payment card organisations and various industry commentators and experts.

Commenting on the short-listing, Product Manager, Jerry Burrows said: **"This is great news, and proof once again, that the ALTO card continues to offer best-of-type support for credit unions and its cardholders."**



## ALTO becomes the go-to prepaid card

Since the introduction of the ALTO MasterCard® prepaid card, we've been gathering feedback on how credit unions run the card in practice, how members use it, and the type of questions that both they and you have.

Taking all this into account, we've made some significant improvements to the card and literature and our processes.

We've got some really useful **cardholder user guides**, which explain, in simple terms, how your members can become more self-sufficient in operating their cards. As well as that, we've produced some stickers with key contact numbers and instructions on them.

We've produced a series of **ten videos**, each about a minute long, showing the benefits of having an ALTO card, as well as showing how the card works in practice. These are ideal for your members as they explain why they might want an ALTO card and how it works.

Finally, we've brought together in one pack all the information that credit unions need to answering any question raised by cardholders.

If you've not yet considered the convenience and control that a switch to the ALTO prepaid card can bring for your credit union and members, check out the videos at [www.altocard.co.uk/user-guides](http://www.altocard.co.uk/user-guides) or give us a call on **0845 155 3355**.

“  
These are the start of a number of improvements that we're looking to make to the card and how you and your members use it going forward in 2012, as we continue to make it the prepaid card of choice for the movement.”  
”



## We're delighted that commercial insurance specialists Ansvar are once again sponsoring the National Credit Union Awards

"Ansvar has been creating specialist insurance policies for the not-for-profit sector in the UK - churches, charities and voluntary organisations which make a positive contribution to society - for more than 50 years. We are pleased to see Unity Trust Bank's awards emphasise the standards of professionalism and excellence and hope that they help to raise the profile and awareness of the valuable work of credit unions in the UK."

Derek Stancombe, Regional Development Underwriter, Ansvar Insurance

# All Change for funding

As bankers to over 40% of the UK credit union movement, we're very aware of the effect that increasing economic pressures are having on many of you.

One way that the Bank can help is through the grants that we disburse from the CUDF; so far in 2011, the fund has paid out over £20,000 to help UK credit unions.

We've solicited feedback and views from many within the sector, with a view to improve the channelling of money paid out to credit unions from the fund. We have listened to these views, and come up with a fairly radical range of changes, which we think we help make a bigger impact.

**The application form will be available on our website from 1 January 2012 - [www.unity.co.uk/cudf](http://www.unity.co.uk/cudf).**

## Major changes

- **We've made the application process much easier** – it will be via an online form. Applications will be accepted from 1 January 2012 – 17 February in 2012. No further applications will be accepted for funding in 2012.
- **The applications will be anonymously assessed against our new criteria** (see website for details) by an independent panel comprising credit union representatives, sector experts and a Bank representative.
- **We will be announcing/celebrating the successful applicants** at our National Credit Union Awards ceremony on 18 April 2012.
- As a general principle, to ensure that fund monies have the most significant impact, the grants will be aimed at smaller (<4,000 member) credit unions, with grants of between £3,000-£5,000 each.
- We think these changes will make a marked improvement, but because these changes represent a substantial shift from the current arrangements, we'll be reviewing the Panel membership and process for effectiveness and amendment at the end of 2012.

The changes are aimed at making more meaningful grants and reducing the workload for Panel members and the Bank, and we hope you agree they make a great deal of sense.

| Retailer       | Cashback |
|----------------|----------|
| Debenhams      | 4%       |
| B & Q          | 4%       |
| Comet          | 5%       |
| New Look       | 5%       |
| Halfords       | 5%       |
| Jessops        | 5%       |
| Toys R Us      | 5%       |
| My Travel Card | 5%       |
| Ernest Jones   | 10%      |
| H Samuel       | 10%      |
| Leslie Davis   | 10%      |

## An early Christmas present for ALTO cardholders

With Christmas just around the corner, there is never a better time to sign up for an ALTO card for your credit union members, as we are offering a series of cash rebates to ALTO cardholders.

Starting from 1 December, we are beginning a trial of a scheme where all ALTO cardholders will automatically qualify for a cash rebate on their shopping every time they use their ALTO card at a range of high street names such as Debenhams, New Look and Ernest Jones, the Jeweller.

The beauty of this scheme, unlike many, is that there are no points to collect, or vouchers to redeem - the rebate will automatically be credited to the cardholder's account at the end of the following month. Neither the credit union or the cardholder need to do anything.

The full list of shops and the cash rebate the cardholder will receive at the individual retailers is set out opposite. The cash rebate applies to all spending on the card at the participating retailers (both in store and online), with no limit to how much can be earned.

**We're looking at the take-up of the scheme so we would encourage you to let us know if your members would like to see any other shops included, via [cs@altocard.co.uk](mailto:cs@altocard.co.uk).**



# A snapshot of life on the ground in November 2011

a view by  
John Brooks, Director,  
Sales & Marketing

Supermarkets are battling for their share of an increasingly changeable market, with offers changing daily and price guarantees.

The Saturday night TV viewer is beginning to question stalwarts like 'X Factor' and 'Strictly..' as rumours leak out about backstage deals and audience manipulation. Twitter comes alive on a Saturday night with people angry at being taken for a mug.

And at Barclays Bank, the Chief Exec, Bob Diamond announces that the only way for banks to regain the public's trust is for them to become "better citizens", as the public's faith in banks falls to a new low. And any business facing that kind of loss should be looking to the future and rebuilding that trust and loyalty, by meeting the challenge head on.

With the growth of digital communications, customers are more aware now than ever before that they have a voice. They can speak out, review, compare whatever the buy, and make an impact. They're savvy

about ways to find the cheapest insurance, energy provider, holiday, 'BOGOF' deals.

So a vital part of regaining trust in straitened times has to be showing the customer that you 'get it'. That you treat them with respect, as individuals, with options and the wherewithal to shop around. That you don't treat them for mugs.

Smaller players, like Metro, Virgin, Tesco, and Unity, are banks that are seen to 'get it'. Whilst we're not in business for wholly altruistic reasons, will all understand the customer has individual needs and have a modern approach to meet them.

Whatever it costs us in terms of meeting the customer face-on and moving with the times; it's time to rebuild that trust. However, what's the betting that the major banks have already found the next cash-cow, which may or may not become the next pensions or insurance mis-selling scandal?

Have you asked yourself lately about your bank?

“

With the growth of digital communications, customers are more aware now than ever before that they have a voice. They can speak out, review, compare whatever the buy, and make an impact. ”

## National Credit Union Awards 2011

There is still time to enter the National Credit Union Awards 2011. This year we have 11 categories including six new categories. One of the new categories we have introduced is the Photography award, this award gives you and your staff the opportunity to capture the work of your credit union and how you have increased the awareness of your credit union in one single photo.

We have produced a poster for you (on the reverse of this page) to display in your office and encourage your staff or members to enter. **For more information visit [www.creditunionawards.co.uk](http://www.creditunionawards.co.uk).**

Finally, for 2011, we're again delighted to have leading insurers Ansvr as a key sponsor, see the front page for details

- ★ Active partnerships
- ★ Community mobilisation
- ★ Credit Union education
- ★ Credit Union innovation **NEW**
- ★ Filene Award (overall award)
- ★ Fundraising - on behalf of a charity **NEW**
- ★ Fundraising - raising additional capital **NEW**
- ★ Marketing
- ★ Photography **NEW**
- ★ Single benefactor
- ★ Young leader of the year (17- 35) **NEW**
- ★ Young saver of the year (under 16) **NEW**

## Take a look at our trophy cabinet:



Winner  
Banking Services  
Charity Times, 2011



Five star award for Select  
Charity Account.  
Business Moneyfacts, 2011



Sunday Times Best  
Companies, 2011

### Can we help with your banking needs?

If so, please contact Neil or Remi on 0845 155 3355, email: [crm@unity.co.uk](mailto:crm@unity.co.uk) or visit our website at: [www.unity.co.uk](http://www.unity.co.uk)



# Keep your union in the picture

Could you capture the work of your credit union or wider credit union movement in one photo? Or have you used photography to raise awareness of your credit union in the local community?

If so, why not enter the photography category of the National Credit Union Awards and be in with a chance to win £150.

TAKE A SHOT  
AT WINNING  
**£150**

For more information visit  
[www.creditunionawards.com](http://www.creditunionawards.com)

