

# PARAGON CASE STUDY

## Challenge

As part of their migration from their BASE24 transaction processing system to an S1 transaction processing system, Alaska Option needed to convert their ATM configuration load files for use with the new system. With their inhouse technical resources already committed to other conversion-related tasks, Alaska Option turned to Paragon Professional Services to take on the load file conversion. In addition to converting the files, Alaska Option wanted to standardize and consolidate their load files, and thus simplify and streamline all future load file maintenance.

## Customer

Alaska Option Services Corporation ("Alaska Option"), with headquarters in Anchorage AK, was established in 1983 to provide regional shared electronic funds transfer (EFT) services to Alaskan financial institutions. Owned by four Alaska financial institutions with over 120 customers, Alaska Option is now a full-service EFT network offering ATM and POS transaction switching and settlement services to financial institutions and financial service providers nationwide. In 2010, Alaska Option processed over 26 million ATM transactions and nearly 121 million PIN and signature-based POS transactions. The network consistently ranks in the top 10 in PIN POS volume nationally.

## Solution and Benefits

Paragon Professional Services technician, Bob Collins, used ATMulator Plus to automatically convert files to the required format. In two weeks, he analyzed their existing 70 ATM load files and distilled them to one base load file (of elements common to all files) and a collection of 34 load file groups (containing elements unique to certain ATM groups) that could be combined to create the 70 required configurations. Alaska Option now has fewer files to maintain and an easier method of handling future modifications. Having Bob available for development and testing meant Alaska Option's own technical resources could work uninterrupted on other migration tasks, confident that the ATM load files would be ready and waiting when they were needed.

## Peak Performance: Paragon Converts & Consolidates ATM Load Files for Alaska Option, Reducing Complexity and Cost of Load File Maintenance



The Alaska state motto is "North to the Future." With headquarters in Anchorage AK, Alaska Option has been an active participant in determining the future of financial services in Alaska. Their full-service EFT network offers ATM and POS transaction switching and settlement services to financial institutions and financial service providers nationwide, and consistently ranks in the top ten in PIN POS volume nationally.

In another parallel, migration has played an important role in the successful growth of both the state and Alaska Option. While migration from the 48 contiguous states of the USA was instrumental in the burgeoning economy during Alaska's early history, it was a different type of migration at Alaska Option — a system migration from BASE24 to S1 — that helped ensure the value, flexibility, and commitment that characterizes the Alaska Option network.

## Augmenting Technical Resources with Tools and Expertise

As the earliest Alaskan immigrants discovered, migration has its challenges. Faced with an aggressive schedule and committed to delivering high quality customer service without interruption, Alaska Option turned to Paragon Professional Services as a trusted partner in this critical project.

“We lacked internal expertise in manipulating ATM load files,” explains Timothy Silvers, Systems and Programming Manager at Alaska Option. Converting ATM load files isn’t simply a matter of understanding both the source and target formats, which is sometimes a daunting task in itself. It is also imperative to analyze the load files across the network, identify any inefficiencies or redundancies, and standardize the files to reduce the time and expense associated with future maintenance.

“The work Paragon did for us would probably have taken one fulltime employee four weeks, assuming we could actually devote a fulltime employee to that work for a month,” confirms Silvers. Paragon’s Bob Collins offered his years of experience with ATMs, as well as an intimate knowledge of Paragon’s robust software for designing and converting ATM configurations. He finished the initial conversion in two weeks.

## Meeting Project Deadlines and Minimizing Risk

“Employing Paragon’s Professional Services freed our resources to focus on other aspects of the S1 migration,” says Silvers. Collins assumed responsibility for the ATM configuration analysis, the restructuring of the load files, and the conversion to S1 format. This ensured that the overall progress of the system migration project would not be put at risk by potential delays in the ATM load file conversion.

## Employing Best Practices and Easing Future Maintenance

Silvers says, “Paragon provided contract support for two weeks onsite, analyzing our Diebold configuration loads and consolidating them into one ConfigBuilder base load and several ATM groups that corresponded to S1 load sets. This deliverable met our expectations and will be used to support a variety of ATM features and transaction sets. We wouldn’t have made the progress we did without Paragon’s involvement.”

Collins adds, “I want to acknowledge the valuable input I received from the technicians at Alaska Option who invested

time in documenting their network and organizing the data they presented to Paragon. Typically, one of the services Paragon offers is analysis of the client’s ATM network, but Alaska Option was ahead of the curve in this case. Having clear goals enabled us to convert their loads and condense the number of required configurations in a short time.”

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Silvers counters, “Working with Bob was great. He’s very friendly and knowledgeable. Having him onsite at the beginning of the project was essential to coming to an understanding of our goals and how our files needed to integrate with S1. After the first two weeks, we were able to work with him remotely on an as-needed basis.”

Silvers continues, “We expect the new load files to be easier to manage and, when our customers want to add or subtract features, we should be able to use the load sets that Bob developed to handle those requests quicker and easier.”

Silvers adds, “For organizations with a wide variety of load files that are variations on a common base, Paragon can help you develop standardized files and ATM groups that will be easy to import and use.”

### About Paragon Application Systems

Paragon Application Systems is a leading global provider of ePayment simulation, configuration and testing software solutions to the financial industry. More than 525 financial institutions in over 85 countries use Paragon tools to improve quality and reduce time-to-market. Paragon’s broad customer base includes major interchanges, processors, leading software providers, merchant acquirers, banks and credit unions. Visit Paragon Application Systems at [www.paragonedge.com](http://www.paragonedge.com) or email [info@paragonedge.com](mailto:info@paragonedge.com).