

Coordination and cooperation are essential to completing any project. The merger of EROC with the Philadelphia Fed's check processing was no exception. Arun Jain and Jack Kelly managed the overall consolidation.

Actually, Kelly was involved in the consolidation long before the official announcement was made. About two-and-a-half years ago, Kelly was asked to analyze the impact that absorbing EROC would have on Philadelphia's check operations. The request was motivated by the Retail Payments Office (RPO) initiative to examine the Federal Reserve System's check infrastructure, given declining volumes.



Arun Jain, Vice President (left), and Jack Kelly, Assistant Vice President, Retail Payments

COORDINATING *the* MERGER

Once the decision to merge was made, Kelly, along with Bill Barker, test project manager, helped identify the resources needed to complete the testing for consolidation. Kelly also participated in the workflow analysis and helped revamp the department's scheduling. Perhaps most important of all, Kelly kept Retail Payments managers and supervisors on schedule and focused on the consolidation.

As it was for everyone in Retail Payments, 2006 was a busy year for Arun Jain. As the consolidation site manager, he was the primary point of contact with all Federal Reserve entities. In addition, Jain continued to run day-to-day check operations. Jain oversaw the consolidation's many dimensions: customer communications, products and services, transportation, renovations on the fifth floor and loading dock, migration of data, and new equipment. He also ensured that EROC's financial institutions were briefed about changes to deadlines, products, and transportation logistics to minimize the impact on these new customers. Reconfigured software and new equipment also had to be tested.

Another step was assembling teams and assigning specific tasks to each. To keep the teams on target, Jain held weekly or bi-weekly meetings at which each team reported its progress to date. This made it easier to spot bottlenecks in the process and allocate resources to ensure everything stayed on track for the final consolidation. Team leaders also met with Jain to confirm that all of the project's components were in sync. These meetings were critically important to the smooth functioning of the merger.

Before the final cutover, Retail Payments conducted four readiness tests that simulated the consolidated production environment. These tests were crucial to ensuring that workflow, processing capacity, staffing, and the customer service setup were correct.

In the end, the hard work and extra hours put in by Kelly, Jain, and all Retail Payments employees paid off. Federal Reserve colleagues have declared that all future consolidations will be measured against the overwhelming success of the Philadelphia/EROC venture.