



### FCC Services Offers Extensive Support for Mergers

The complexity of a merger cannot be overestimated, as decisions need to be made and processes developed to address everything from the name on the door and how the phone is answered to financial reporting processes and combining boards and staff. FCC Services offers a variety of solutions to support the Farm Credit System and agricultural cooperatives who are considering, going through, or have even completed a merger.

**Strategic Planning:** Determining whether a merger makes sense for the long-term success of an organization is a high-level strategic question that needs to be carefully considered by the board. FCC Services has highly experienced consultants to support these discussions, as well as assisting the board identify potential merger partners. We can also coordinate a Strategic Summit between potential partners to help both parties determine whether moving forward is the correct path and help them identify anticipated benefits and pitfalls.

**Board Facilitation:** Once a merger is being pursued, open and comprehensive conversations in the boardroom will be essential to ensure that the process moves smoothly and that customer-owners are best served by the outcome. FCC Services' skilled facilitators can encourage these conversations, asking insightful questions to reveal important information and expectations. Once a merger is approved, we can work with the combined board to establish an environment of open and effective communication, even as individual directors may be losing their positions as the board restructures.

**CEO Selection:** While many mergers are initiated due to a CEO retiring, it is incumbent upon the boards of directors to ensure that they identify the best possible leaders for the new organization, even if that CEO did not previously lead either organization. FCC Services' [CEO Selection Services](#) assist boards to identify the characteristics and experience they're looking for, builds a pool of qualified candidates, and supports the interview process so the right decision can be made.

**Employee Engagement Analysis:** Any merger is challenging for the employees of both organizations. Concerns over job security, reporting structure, new systems and processes, even a fear of change itself, can impact employees personally as well as their ability to effectively perform their jobs at the same engaged level. Employee engagement surveys of both organizations prior to a merger can set a benchmark level of engagement; a post-merger survey of the combined organization can inform leadership about how the merger was perceived, how it impacted engagement, and what they can be doing better to improve engagement long-term.



**Strategic Talent Management:** Mergers usually create duplicate roles, from the CEO through the receptionist. Determining which employee is best suited for each role in the new organization can benefit from objective personality assessments, and help the organization find new roles for displaced employees based on their skills and aptitudes, improving individual and group morale.

**Unification Studies:** Mergers are undertaken to achieve a set of established objectives; Unification Studies assess whether those objectives were achieved and the anticipated benefits obtained. In such a study, FCC Services reviews the original merger documents and assesses current performance against the stated goals. For example, if portfolio diversification was an objective, a review of the current portfolio will reveal whether that has been achieved; a customer survey will reveal whether customer-owners feel they continue to be effectively served by the merged organization. In addition to an objective assessment of the current state, the Unification Study can identify areas for further improvement.

**Board Evaluations:** The new, combined board will need to fulfill the Farm Credit Administration's requirement for annual self-evaluation, and FCC Services is available to support this process in several ways: general board surveys, custom surveys, or interactive board evaluations. You can learn more about our board evaluation services [here](#).

**Succession Planning:** The long-term success of any organization depends on having the right people in the right roles, and ideally a plan in place to fill those roles should an employee leave the organization. This can be a particular challenge after a merger, when team and department leaders will not know new team members as well as long-time colleagues. FCC Services' succession planning services can help plan for the eventual transition of key roles to the best qualified internal candidate, regardless of where that employee started. This can help ensure that all employees are treated fairly, which can help build overall morale while best supporting the organization and the customer-owners it serves.

If you're planning a merger, have one underway or have already completed the consolidation process, contact us to learn more about how we can help ensure the long-term success of your strategic decision to merge.