

# Origination News

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► For Mortgage Brokers, Correspondents, Lenders and Wholesalers

Branch  
**DEVELOPMENT**

## Marketing Council Meets at 1st Metropolitan

CHARLOTTE, NC—The marketing advisor council established at 1st Metropolitan Mortgage here held its first meeting in December.

The summit was the result of several focus groups that took place during 2005 that showed the company the need for a full-service marketing and creative services department. Among the participants were seven of its branch managers who met at the company's headquarters here.

For two days, they discussed successful marketing campaigns and what resources will be needed in the future to be successful in a more competitive climate, 1st Metropolitan said.

"Our first Metro Marketing Summit was so incredibly beneficial and informative that I have decided to hold these micro-events quarterly," Corey Trujillo, the company's marketing manager, said. "This meeting will keep us informed at the corporate level and in touch with the needs of the branches as they anticipate and respond to an ever-changing market."

1st Metropolitan is getting ready to release a comprehensive marketing library to be used by all of its branch offices.

"Marketing is an important element of ongoing customer acquisition," said Daniel Jacobs, chief executive of 1st Metropolitan. "We wanted to know what our most successful branches felt were the most



**Daniel Jacobs,**  
CEO of 1st  
Metropolitan,  
said the firm  
created a  
focus group  
for managers  
to exchange  
ideas about  
marketing.

effective methods of acquiring new customers and referrals, so we created a special focus group to create an open exchange of ideas to guide our marketing department's priorities.

"We have allocated exhaustive resources to fast track implementation and prior to roll out are conducting a marketing focus group to be certain we are fulfilling the goals of our most valued asset, our originators and production managers."

Separately, 1st Metropolitan's parent company, Empire Equity Group, said it is rolling Ellie Mae's Encompass Anywhere hosted loan origination system to all of its branches.

"We were impressed with the simplicity of the Encompass system and how it offers an overall picture of where the loans are in the process," said Steven Lax, director of operations for Empire. "Encompass

will allow us to improve our level of customer service by illustrating the exact status of loans."

Empire chose to deploy Encompass Anywhere, because it freed them from the upfront and ongoing expense of running a loan origination system on company servers. "Deciding to go with Encompass Anywhere was easy after we reviewed all the security and redundancy features of the platform," said Ron Steele, chief information officer at Empire. "With Encompass Anywhere we do not need to invest in servers nor technical staff to support these servers. Instead, we get maximum uptime through the hosted model, and we can pay for the technology over a period of time rather than as an upfront investment. To us, it was a no-brainer."

For Mr. Jacobs, who is also the chief executive of Empire Equity Group, the reporting features were one of the main reasons the company decided to go with Encompass Anywhere.

"We were unable to get comprehensive, real-time visibility into our daily operations and therefore had to manually compile fragmented reports and data from our various office locations. Our compliance department will be able to assure quality originations by streamlining all disclosures at the administrator level," he said. 