NEFA NOTE

BRINGING YOUR ASSOCIATION TO YOU

Q2 2026

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A Message from the CEO

Chad Sluss

Q2 2026 Update: Shaping the Future Together

As summer is upon us, NEFA continues to make meaningful progress on our mission to connect, educate, and empower professionals across the equipment finance industry. The energy and engagement we've seen throughout the year reflect the strength of our membership and the value of the relationships that define our association.

One of the most important initiatives underway this year is NEFA's 2027-2029 Strategic Planning process. Guided by our Board of Directors and informed by member feedback, this effort is focused on identifying opportunities to strengthen the association, enhance member value, and ensure NEFA remains responsive to the evolving needs of the equipment finance industry. The strategic plan will serve as a roadmap for the years ahead, helping us prioritize initiatives that support our members and the industry we proudly serve. We hope you will participate.

Membership growth remains steady, with new companies joining NEFA and contributing to the strength and diversity of our network. Just as importantly, member engagement continues to be exceptionally strong—evident in participation across our Knowledge Exchange sessions, regional events, educational programs, and conferences. This ongoing involvement reinforces what makes NEFA unique: a collaborative community committed to sharing expertise and supporting one another's success.

Expanding Educational Opportunities

Education continues to be a cornerstone of NEFA's mission. This year, we launched two exciting educational initiatives designed to provide members with practical, timely knowledge:

The Professional Broker/Lessor: A Comprehensive Originators Guide to the Equipment Finance Industry

Presented by industry veteran Scott Wheeler, CLFP, of Wheeler Business Consulting, this seven-part series includes five virtual programs and two in-person sessions offered at the 2026 conferences. Designed for experienced and emerging brokers, originators, and operational professionals, the curriculum covers the full transaction lifecycle—from origination channels and credit underwriting to documentation, collections, professional ethics, and relationship management.

AI Virtual Series

Presented and facilitated by RJ Grimshaw, *The AI CEO*, this four-part virtual series explores how artificial intelligence is reshaping equipment finance.

NEFA Note

NEFA's monthly Knowledge Exchange sessions have also continued to deliver strong attendance and engaging discussions, covering timely topics members can immediately apply within their organizations. Additionally, our Learning Management System continues to expand, providing members with on-demand access to educational content that supports both professional and organizational growth.

Regional Events Continue to Grow

NEFA's regional events remain an important part of our mission to bring members together through education and networking. Recent events have generated strong participation and enthusiasm, and we look forward to additional gatherings throughout the year.

Upcoming 2026 Events

- **Monthly Knowledge Exchange Sessions**
- Held the third Tuesday of each month at 1:00 PM ET, featuring timely and practical industry topics.
- **Regional Events**
  - August 12 – Southwest Regional: Education & Baseball Outing (Anaheim, California)
- **NEFA Fall Conference**
- September 28–30, 2026 | Atlanta, Georgia

To see all upcoming virtual and in person events, please visit www.nefassociation.org/events/upcoming

As we continue through 2026, we remain focused on expanding opportunities for connection, delivering relevant education, and enhancing the overall member experience. The enthusiasm and engagement we have seen throughout the year are strong indicators of another impactful year ahead.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement. We look forward to connecting with you throughout the remainder of 2026.

Sincerely,
Chad Sluss, MSA
Chief Executive Officer
National Equipment Finance Association

Leverage Is the Point

by Amur, IT Department

How organizations can handle more volume, complexity, and opportunity without overwhelming their teams

In the first two articles of this series, I argued that successful innovation starts with decision focus. Before adopting a new tool, automating a process, or applying AI, organizations should be clear about which decisions they are trying to improve.

But better decisions alone do not create scale.

The real test comes later.

Can the organization handle more volume, more complexity, and higher expectations without requiring the same increase in effort?

That is the question operational leverage answers.

Too often, growth and complexity are treated as inseparable. More deals require more people. More customers require more support. More exceptions require more oversight. At some point, organizations begin adding layers simply to manage the layers they already have.

The result is a business that grows larger without becoming stronger.

Operational leverage is the opposite. It's the ability of a business to handle more work without adding an equal amount of cost, headcount, or complexity.
. Then the organization can continuously improve its ability to absorb complexity, scale expertise, and make decisions without its people working harder.

Many organizations confuse productivity with leverage. Productivity asks people to accomplish more within the existing system. Leverage improves the system so that the work itself requires less effort and produces better outcomes.

One approach is temporary. The other compounds.

In equipment finance, the absence of leverage is easy to recognize. Information is entered multiple times across systems. Documentation moves through manual reviews. Back-and-forth questions slow paperwork as employees clarify what is missing, confirm which version is correct, or track down answers that should already be visible. Exceptions accumulate because no one has addressed the underlying cause. Knowledge lives with experienced employees instead of being embedded in the process.

Individually, these inefficiencies seem manageable. Together, they become expensive.

The challenge is that complexity rarely arrives all at once. It accumulates gradually. A new product line. A new compliance requirement. Another integration. Another exception process. Each addition makes sense on its own. Over time, complexity becomes a hidden tax on growth. Teams spend more energy navigating the business than advancing it.

The organizations that scale successfully are not the ones that avoid complexity. That is impossible. They are the ones that build systems capable of absorbing it.

This changes the conversation. Instead of asking how to manage growing complexity, leaders begin asking how to prevent complexity from reaching the people doing the work.

Instead of adding another review step, they eliminate unnecessary variation. Instead of creating another report, they surface information when someone needs to act. Instead of relying on individual expertise, they embed knowledge directly into workflows.

The goal is not efficiency for its own sake.

The goal is creating capacity for better decisions.

The most valuable work in equipment finance has never been processing transactions. It is understanding risk, structuring solutions, supporting partners, and allocating capital effectively. Those activities create value because they require judgment.

Innovation should create more capacity for that work, not less.

This becomes increasingly important as organizations adopt new technologies. Artificial intelligence, automation, and workflow tools can create tremendous value. They can also accelerate complexity if applied without discipline. A faster process that still containsunnecessary work is simply an inefficient process running at higher speed.

Technology creates leverage only when it improves the organization's ability to make decisions and handle more moving parts. Otherwise, it is simply moving work from one place to another.

One of the most overlooked forms of leverage is the ability to scale expertise.

Every equipment finance company has individuals whose judgment consistently improves outcomes. The challenge is that expertise does not scale on its own.

Organizations create leverage when they capture what their best people know and embed it into how decisions are made, how work flows, and how new employees learn.

The goal is not to replace expertise. The goal is to make it available more consistently across the enterprise.

The strongest organizations will not be the ones with the most technology. They will be the ones that use technology, process, and expertise to make the business easier to scale.

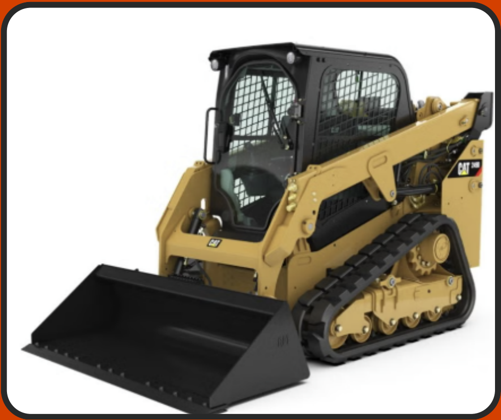
That is the real promise of leverage. Decisions become stronger. Work becomes clearer. Complexity is handled before it overwhelms the people doing the work.

The question is not whether complexity will increase. It will.

The question is whether your organization becomes more capable as it grows.

The firms that win over the next decade will be the ones that turn knowledge into better processes, better systems, and better decisions across the business.

In the next issue, I will explore the final characteristic of successful innovation: native adoption. Because even the best idea creates no value if it lives outside the flow of work.



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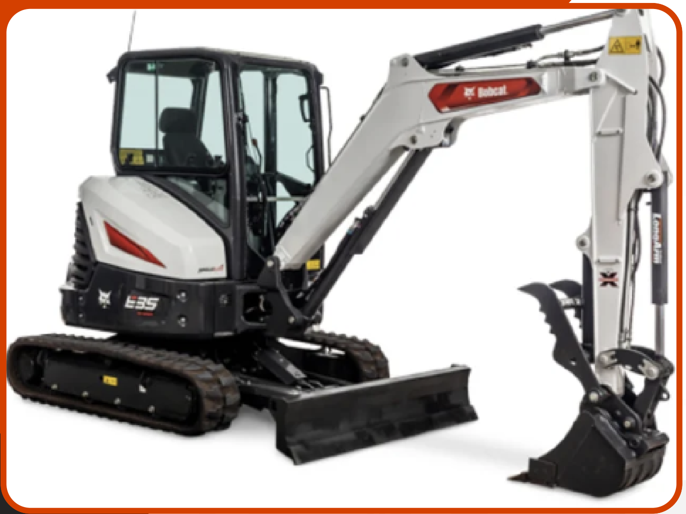

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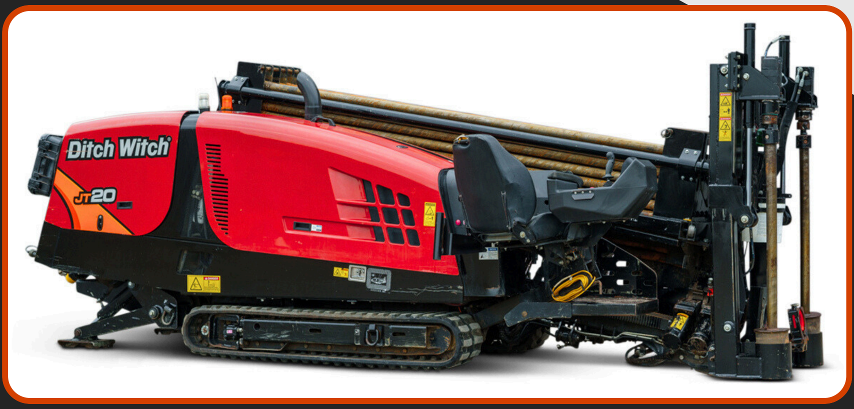

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Article

The Fraud Hiding in Your Cleanest Deals

Written by: Kaaj

People love the idea of a clean file. Everything neatly stacked, all documents present, no obvious red flags. It feels safe, predictable, easy to approve. But all that glitters is not gold.

There is a pattern: the files that look the cleanest often deserve the most scrutiny, because "clean" is still treated as the absence of issues.

That's where the risk quietly builds. A recent study points to a more than 10% rise in equipment finance fraud, even as files look more complete on paper.

Here is when underwriting teams should pause before calling them safe.

"Too Perfect" Is Usually a Red Flag

Real businesses are messy. Documents get scanned crooked, dates drift, formats vary. Fraudsters don't replicate that messiness well - they overcorrect, producing documents that look clean in a way real documents rarely do.

Then you notice smaller things: missing signatures, dates that don't line up, forms that feel complete but not grounded in reality.

And these documents are not sloppy anymore. Fraudsters use editing tools to modify PDFs — changing numbers, dates, and transaction descriptions without leaving obvious traces. Industry fraud reports consistently show a meaningful share of digitally submitted financial documents contain manipulation or inconsistencies. That alone warrants a closer look.

Consistency Matters More Than Volume

With AI, fraudsters can generate large numbers of similar, realistic documents. What they struggle with is consistency across all of them.

That's why the right questions matter more than the volume of documents collected. Does the address on the invoice match the bank statement? Is the business name identical everywhere, or does it shift between documents?

Industry reports suggest 94% of fraudulent applications involve modified or inconsistent details. Fraud today hides in context mismatch, not document authenticity.

Then there's the bigger question underwriters skip: does the deal even make sense? A restaurant applying for heavy construction equipment. It sounds obvious, but it slips through more often than it should.

NEFA Note

Verify the Source, Not Just the Document

The core issue isn't what a document shows — it's who controls the information behind it. When the borrower or vendor is the sole source, you're trusting a closed loop with no independent validation. That's exactly where fraud hides.

Breaking that loop means operationalizing three things: vendor validation at the source level, confirming existence and legitimacy beyond the invoice; independent business verification through registries, web presence, and third-party data.

Financial Activity That Lacks Real Depth

Some files show nothing wrong individually. They simply lack depth. In real businesses, activity builds over time: layering, seasonality, repeat counterparties, ticket-size variation, operational noise.

Fabricated profiles look linear and recently constructed rather than organically evolved.
Watch for flat transaction behavior, revenue concentrated in a few counterparties, activity that doesn't reflect the claimed age or scale of the business, and patterns that don't match stated operations. This is about assessing whether the financial footprint reflects a real operating entity or a profile built to qualify.

It's Not Clean Until the Lien Is Secured

There's a structural gap most teams overlook: verifying the asset does not guarantee control over it. Two lenders can verify the same equipment and fund without visibility into each other. The conflict only surfaces at default, when priority determines outcome.

Vendor Risk Hides in Plain Sight

In asset-backed lending, vendor evaluation determines whether the transaction is truly asset-backed or effectively unsecured. The question isn't just whether the vendor exists, but whether it is operationally real, independent, and capable of delivering the asset as represented.

Warning signs show up in behavior: no transactional footprint, pricing misaligned with market ranges, minimal external presence, unverifiable contact channels, and tight coupling with the borrower.

A clean file is a starting point, not a conclusion. The absence of red flags is not the presence of truth and the discipline to keep asking questions after everything checks out is what separates strong underwriting from lucky underwriting.

How Kaaj Catches What Isolated Checks Miss

Most fraud goes undetected because verification happens in isolation. Tools check individual data points, and underwriters review documents one by one. What looks correct on one document isn't necessarily correct across the file, but no one validates the whole picture together.

Kaaj fixes this with a connected intelligence layer. AI agents work simultaneously across documents, data sources, and workflows: documents are verified against each other, external sources confirm data, and borrower, vendor, and asset relationships are cross-checked as one file.
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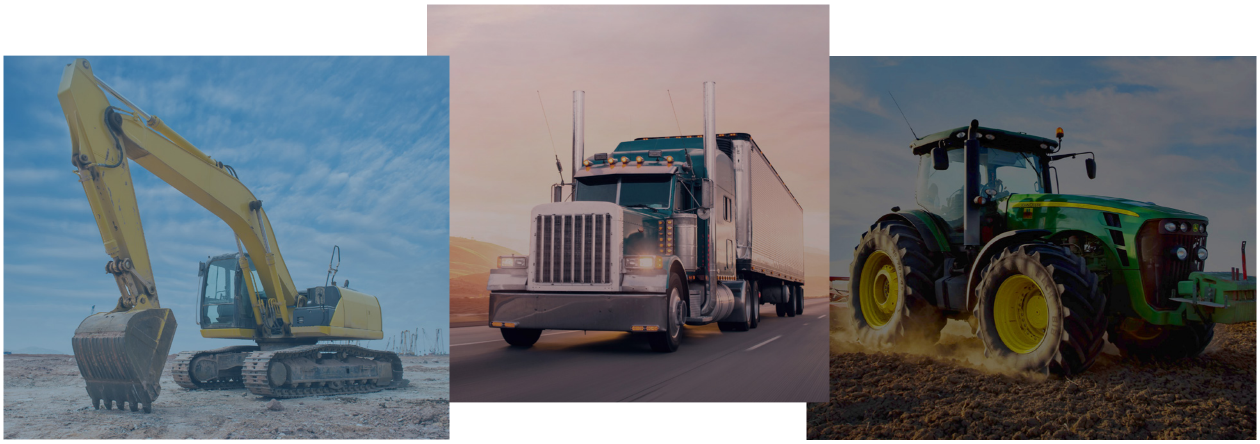

GENERAL INFORMATION

Company Type Independent
In Business Since 2002
Trade Associations ELFA, NEFA, AACFB

FUNDING INFORMATION

Funding Source Type Lender
Source of Funds Internal, Bank Line

TRANSACTION INFORMATION

Asset Categories Construction, Machine Tool Trucks and Trailers
Credit Quality "B", "C" and Start up

TRANSACTION PROFILE

Deal Size Range $15,000 –$400,000
Term 1–3 Yrs. **Avg Term** 30-36 Mos.
Products Offered True Lease & EFA's
Scope of Geography Activity National

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From Small Wins to Big Outcomes – AI as a Strategic Asset in Equipment Finance

By: Danielle Pinkelman, Strategic Marketing Specialist, Great American Insurance Group, Specialty Equipment

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can save you time on smaller, repetitive tasks - but that's only part of the story. It can also help you make faster decisions and drive better business outcomes.

The real value comes from putting it in the hands of the people who know your business best – enhancing human decision-making rather than replacing it.

While sweeping transformation takes time, small AI wins today can compound into major strategic gains. Below are three actionable ways to harness AI that boost immediate productivity and set the stage for long-term improvements in your equipment finance operations.

NEFA Note

1. Reengineer a Workflow for Big Efficiency Gains

Identify a multi-step process in your business that slows things down – maybe gathering and reviewing deal documents, or a multi-party approval chain. Then pilot an AI solution to expedite or automate key steps.

One global insurer's CEO said AI trimmed a pricing workflow from 25 steps (three weeks) to 5 steps (one day) – about an 80% efficiency boost[1]. Even automating a few steps in your process can free up significant time. In turn, your team can focus more on high-value work like client service and deal strategy instead of paperwork.

Suggested prompt to try:
"Review this process and suggest which steps could be automated or streamlined."

2. Turn Data into Strategic Insights

In a data-driven business, better insights lead to better decisions. AI-powered analytics can sift large datasets much faster than manual methods.

For instance, you might have an AI tool review your portfolio data and highlight key trends and outliers – revealing opportunities or risks that might otherwise take days to spot.

Even a quick experiment like asking an AI to summarize recent market news relevant to your asset categories can give you a strategic edge. Early pilots often show modest efficiency gains[2], but as you broaden use, the payoff grows. Faster intelligence means you can pivot or act on trends sooner than competitors.

Suggested prompt to try:
"Summarize key risks, trends, and opportunities from this portfolio or report."

3. Enhance Customer Engagement at Scale

AI can help you deliver more personalized service without straining your team's capacity. For example, a generative AI tool can draft tailored proposals, presentations or outreach emails based on client specifics in a fraction of the time it would take to produce the contentmanually. This scalable, personal touch strengthens client relationships and supports growth without a proportional increase in headcount.

Suggested prompt to try:
"Draft a client email explaining financing options based on this customer profile."

Start Small, Scale Up

As you pursue these initiatives, start small and scale up. Early experiments might yield modest gains, but as you refine and expand your approach, improvements multiply. In fact, companies that scale AI across their enterprise are seeing productivity gains 'not seen in decades'[1].

The key is to use AI to amplify human strengths, not replace them, while keeping proper oversight[3]. With that balance, AI becomes a true strategic asset that unlocks efficiency, insight, and growth over time.

About Great American Insurance Group, Specialty Equipment

Great American's Specialty Equipment Division has delivered innovative risk and insurance solutions to the equipment finance industry for over 40 years. We believe technology should enhance the human element of business. We help companies adopt new tools responsibly, ensuring our solutions add value across the leasing lifecycle.

Great American Insurance Group, 301 E. Fourth St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. In the U.S., policies are underwritten by Great American Insurance Company, Great American Assurance Company, and Great American Spirit Insurance Company, authorized insurers in all 50 states and D.C.

Sources

1. Josh Recamara, "Swiss Re CEO Bets on AI for Productivity Gains 'Not Seen in Decades'," Insurance Business, April 20, 2026.
2. Kenneth Araullo, "AI Ambition Outpaces Insurer Readiness, AM Best Finds," Insurance Business, April 28, 2026.
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Article

The Future of Lending: AI-Powered, People-Driven

By: Zach Crutcher, Senior Sales Consultant, Quality Equipment Finance

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become one of the biggest topics in commercial lending, and for good reason. Tasks that once took hours can now be completed in minutes. From reviewing financial statements and verifying documentation to detecting fraud and analyzing credit risk, AI is helping lenders work faster and more efficiently than ever before.

There is no question that AI is improving the lending process. Faster decisions, greater consistency, and enhanced fraud detection benefit lenders and borrowers alike. But while technology continues to evolve, one thing has not changed: lending is still a relationship business. The best customer experiences come from combining powerful technology with experienced financing professionals who understand their customers and solve problems.

AI Is Transforming the Lending Process

One of AI's greatest strengths is speed. Loan applications that once required significant manual review can now be analyzed in a fraction of the time. Automated systems organize financial information, identify potential concerns, and present relevant data in a consistent format for underwriters.

AI also improves accuracy by reducing manual errors, identifying unusual activity, and helping lenders make better-informed decisions more efficiently.

For borrowers, this means faster responses and a smoother financing experience. For lenders, it frees employees from repetitive administrative work, allowing them to spend more time serving customers.

Lending Is About More Than Data

As impressive as AI has become, it has its limits.

Every borrower has a story, and not every story fits neatly into a credit model. Financial statements and credit reports rarely tell the whole picture. A business owner may have experienced a temporary downturn while investing for future growth, changed industries, or operates a seasonal business with fluctuating cash flow.

AI excels at recognizing patterns, but it cannot ask follow-up questions, understand the circumstances behind the numbers, or appreciate a business's long-term potential. It cannot build trust, interpret nuance, or recognize opportunities that emerge through conversation. Those qualities still require experience, judgment, and genuine curiosity.

NEFA Note

Experience Makes the Difference

Experienced financing professionals do far more than collect paperwork or submit an application. They take time to understand a customer's business, financing objectives, and long-term goals.

They explain financing options, anticipate challenges, and recommend solutions that fit each customer's situation.
In equipment finance, every transaction is different. A borrower may have strong management experience, valuable collateral, loyal customers, improving financial trends, or other compensating strengths that deserve consideration. Experienced financing professionals know how to present those strengths and work with underwriting teams to structure transactions that make sense for both the customer and the lender.

I've seen transactions where financial statements initially raised concerns, but after understanding the business, management team, and purpose of the equipment being financed, a very different picture emerged. Sometimes the difference between an approval and a decline isn't the credit score. It's understanding the story behind it.

Relationships Still Matter

Purchasing equipment is often one of the largest investments a business owner will make. Customers want confidence that they're making the right decision, and that confidence comes from working with someone they trust.

Customers want a financing professional who explains the process, keeps them informed, helps navigate challenges, and remains a trusted resource long after the transaction closes.

Technology can answer questions. Financing professionals provide confidence.

Technology can analyze data. Financing professionals provide perspective.

Technology can improve efficiency. Financing professionals build relationships.

The Best Approach Is Both

The future of lending isn't about choosing between technology and people. It's about using each where it delivers the greatest value.

AI is exceptionally good at processing information, identifying trends, detecting fraud, and handling repetitive tasks. Reducing administrative work allows experienced financing professionals to spend more time understanding businesses, solving financing challenges, and building lasting relationships.

NEFA Note

At Quality Equipment Finance, we've embraced AI because it helps us serve customers more efficiently. But every financing decision still benefits from experienced professionals who take the time to understand the customer behind the application.

Artificial intelligence will continue to reshape commercial lending, making the financing process faster, more accurate, and more efficient. The lenders that will be most successful will combine the speed and efficiency of AI with the judgment, creativity, and relationships that only experienced financing professionals can provide.

The future of lending isn't about replacing people with technology. It's about empowering great people with better technology. That's what AI-powered, people-driven lending is all about.

The Strategic Case for Partnership in Equipment Finance Technology

By: Randy Haug | Co-Founder & EVP, LTi Technology Solutions

After nearly four decades working alongside equipment finance organizations across North America and the United Kingdom, I've seen the industry navigate economic cycles, regulatory overhauls, and waves of digital transformation. Through every shift, one variable has consistently separated the organizations that lead from those that simply survive: the quality of their partnerships.

I'm not talking about vendor contracts. I'm talking about relationships forged in the middle of a complex integration, a portfolio conversion, or a hard regulatory deadline—relationships where accountability is mutual, communication is proactive, and both parties are invested in the same outcome. In today's[1] environment, that distinction has never mattered more.

The Ecosystem Imperative

Equipment finance organizations no longer operate with siloed technology stacks and neither can their vendors.

NEFA Note

A modern servicing platform must connect seamlessly with accounting systems, credit decisioning engines, compliance frameworks, document management tools, and investor reporting infrastructure. As bank lender and institutional capital flows, along with syndication and securitization activity, have intensified, so have the performance and transparency demands placed on that infrastructure.

The ELFA's 2024 Survey on the Current Business Environment confirms what practitioners already know: integration capability and data quality rank as the most critical platform requirements for organizations managing portfolio growth. Those priorities didn't emerge from internal IT conversations. They were shaped by bank lenders, institutional investors, rating agencies, and regulators who demand granular, auditable data that legacy systems cannot produce.

Meeting that standard requires more than capable software. It requires an integrated ecosystem. One where platforms are designed to work together, data flows cleanly across functions, and the vendors behind those platforms collaborate with the same rigor they bring to their own products. That is the ecosystem imperative. And it's where partnership becomes strategy.

What Real Partnership Looks Like

For a technology provider, partnership isn't a customer service philosophy, it's a structural commitment. It shows up in how platforms are designed, how integrations are built, how implementations are staffed, and how problems are resolved when something goes wrong. And something always does.

This is especially consequential given the modern bank lending and private equity activity reshaping the industry today. PE-backed platforms operate under compressed timelines, heightened investor scrutiny, and aggressive growth targets. In that environment, a technology vendor that understands the business context, not just the system specifications, isn't a support resource. It's a strategic asset.

At LTi, Partnership is one of our three foundational pillars, alongside Precision and Performance, because after nearly four decades, we've seen what genuine partnership produces and what its absence costs. Strong partnerships accelerate problem resolution, align technology roadmaps with client growth strategies, and build institutional trust that allows organizations to make bold operational decisions with confidence.

Innovation That Earns Its Place

There is a version of technology innovation that generates press releases, and a version that generates operational results. Equipment finance has learned, sometimes at considerable cost, to tell the difference.

Meaningful innovation in this industry is defined by whether a new capability solves problems that matter. Reducing origination friction, improving portfolio visibility, accelerating reporting cycles, or strengthening customer experience without adding complexity. Novelty alone doesn't qualify.

Partnership-driven development changes the calculus. When technology vendors share domain knowledge and client context, new capabilities arrive pre-aligned with the workflows they're designed to improve—tested in real environments, validated against real use cases. That discipline produces technology that works on day one. It also produces product roadmaps shaped by market intelligence and client feedback rather than internal assumptions, a meaningful competitive advantage for every organization in the ecosystem.

Trust Is Infrastructure

Every equipment finance organization has experienced a technology failure: an integration that underperformed, a vendor who was responsive during the sales cycle and unavailable afterward, a platform that couldn't scale when the business did. Those experiences accumulate and shape how organizations evaluate vendor risk for years to come.

Trust, in this context, isn't a sentiment, it's infrastructure. It's built through consistent delivery, honest communication when things go wrong, and the kind of institutional knowledge that comes from years of genuine engagement with a customer's business. Customer retention in equipment finance technology is closely correlated with relationship depth, not feature releases or pricing structures.

LTi's client base reflects this reality. Forty percent of the Monitor 100 have chosen LTi's ASPIRE™ platform, not because we out-marketed our competition in any given year, but because organizations at that level don't change technology partners without compelling reason, and don't stay with partners who aren't continuously earning their trust.

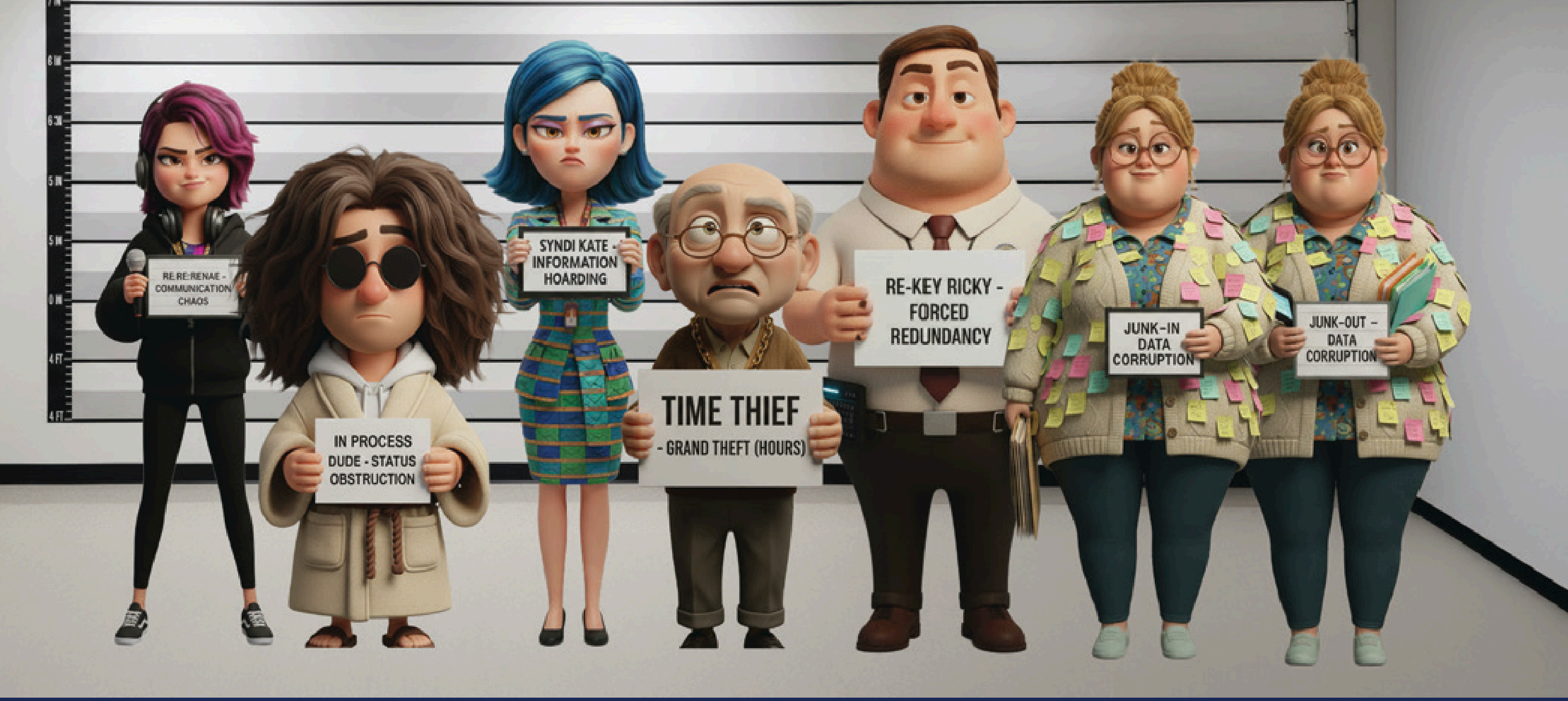
The Choice Ahead

As institutional capital, securitization activity, and heightened operational expectations continue to reshape the industry, equipment finance leaders face a genuine choice about how they approach their technology relationships.

They can manage vendors at arm's length, evaluating primarily on price and feature parity. That approach produces adequate technology and transactional relationships. It doesn't produce the integrated, resilient infrastructure that capital markets participation now requires.

Or they can treat technology relationships as strategic partnerships, selecting vendors whose platforms are built to integrate, whose teams understand the business context, and whose organizational values align with the accountability and transparency that serious equipment finance operations demand.

The most durable competitive advantage in this industry isn't capital access, product design, or even technology sophistication, though all those matter. It's the quality of relationships built on trust, shared accountability, and a genuine understanding of what the other party needs to succeed. The organizations that lead equipment finance in the next decade won't do it alone. They'll do it through partnerships.



These villains have been terrorizing equipment financeteams for years.

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Article

ZOOM OUT: Improving Daily Decisions Through Awareness

By: Laura Reed, Business Development & Marketing SCJ Commercial Financial Services

In every aspect of life, decisions need to be made, in business, in relationships, and at home. But what makes a decision a good one, and what quietly influences it behind the scenes?

The Hidden Forces Behind Decision Making

We often assume that decision-making is shaped by logic. The truth is, many factors affect the choices we make. Even at the highest levels of leadership, subconscious forces play a role in how information is interpreted, risk is evaluated, and action is taken.

As businesses continue integrating AI into everyday operations, the human element is still key. Understanding how the mind influences decision-making is just as important as understanding the technology itself. The brain is a powerhouse, constantly processing information and often wired to
rely on shortcuts. To understand it is to better guide it.

Zoom Out Before You Zoom In

In business, we are conditioned to believe that thinking on our feet is a necessary skill. And it is... but only when applied with clarity. Like driving through heavy fog, moving quickly without visibility increases the risk of missing what's right in front of you. Let this be a moment to consider how you make decisions under pressure. How are you thinking on your feet without losing balance?

How to Create Space for Better Decisions

Check your Emotional State: Emotions play a significant role in decision-making. Stress, fatigue, anxiety, frustration, and fear of loss can override long-term thinking and future gain. Sometimes the best thing you can do is pause. And sometimes, put it simply, you're just hangry or
need to step away before sending an email you'll regret five minutes later.

Recognize Cognitive Bias: The brain relies on mental shortcuts to make decisions efficiently, but those shortcuts can reinforce familiar patterns. "We've always done it that way" can box in growth and limit innovation. Challenging assumptions keeps thinking flexible and helps uncover better paths forward, while leaving behind patterns that may no longer serve the company.

NEFA Note

Reflection Over Reaction: Good decision-making requires reflection, not just speed. Urgency narrows our focus, while reflection creates space to consider broader consequences and long-term impact. Before reacting, intentionally pause and ask whether you've taken the time to zoom out. Give the situation space to breathe and allow the mental gears to fully turn before committing to action. Sit with the challenge.

Understanding how we should make decisions is only a part of the equation. The real difference comes from consistently applying those principles in real time, especially under pressure. This is where cognitive and behavioral alignment builds the framework for stronger, more intentional decisions.

Think of it like training a muscle. Knowing the correct form at the gym doesn't build strength on its own; the real results come from repetition, even when it's uncomfortable. Awareness is just awareness, with no change in behavior. It's the repeated practice of pausing, reflecting, and consciously choosing a long-term perspective that ultimately reshapes how we think and act. Over time, this discipline is what leads to better decisions, stronger outcomes, and more sustainable success.

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How Blockbuster Brokers Build on Past Success

Setting Up Systems to Capitalize on Repeat Business & Referrals

By: Noelle Cook, Vice President of Marketing – TimePayment

I was buying my ticket to Toy Story 5 recently, and it got me thinking about how summer is sequel season at the movies. And why not? Building on a foundation of past successes is a smart business strategy.

It’s also a strategy too many equipment brokers fail to properly pursue and systematize to their advantage.

The easiest path to your next deal starts with the deal you just booked. This summer, consider:

- Formalizing a process for contacting past customers as they near end-of-term
- Developing a structured referral program for nurturing new leads out of successful deals

Mine Your Funded Book

Here's a surprising stat: According to surveys from Sawbux Marketing, 64% of equipment financing brokers never proactively contact a customer again after funding a deal.

NEFA Note

That’s simply wild! Why would you ignore the easiest, highest-converting potential prospects—businesses who already know you, trust you, and have financed with you before?

Our recommendations:

- **Capitalize on the trust you’ve already built**. A previous customer already knows your process works, so there's no learning curve to overcome, little skepticism, and—especially if you reach out first—less urge to shop around.
- **Time your pitch a little before term-end**. As your customer approaches the end of their current term, they're already primed to upgrade or make new equipment acquisitions. A simple check-in at that window has a high likelihood of conversion.
- **Set reminders**. These check-ins work best when they’re systematized. It’s a best practice to log funding dates and set reminders to reconnect if you want to reliably capture repeat business. (Extra points if you can automate this process to trigger whenever you close a deal.)

Stop thinking of your funded deal as “closed” or “finished.” Instead, ask: When is the sequel coming? Building a system to reconnect with past customers as their equipment ages increases the chances that you get another chapter.

Structure Your Referral Program

On the fence about seeing a film? Reading reviews is a good place to start. But you’re even more likely to listen to a friend whose taste you trust.

Of course, the same goes for equipment buyers shopping for brokers. Word of mouth matters—now more than ever, as AI turns the world of search upside down. So when you successfully close a deal, are you using that as opportunity to prompt a referral?

That’s not an idle question. Equipment financing brokers with structured referral programs generate a massive 41% of their new business from existing client referrals, Sawbux Marketing reports. That’s compared to just 12% for brokers who rely on organic word-of-mouth. If you don’t have a structured referral program in place, you’re passing up the chance to land a lot of deals.

Our recommendations:

- **Don’t wait; ask.** Customers are happy to offer a referral, but most don’t think to do it unless prompted. The optimal moment to make your request is immediately after funding confirmation, when customers are at their most satisfied with your performance and most likely to think of peers with similar needs.

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- **Be specific.** “Do you know any other [trade contractors/restaurant owners/veterinary practices/gym owners/etc.] who might need equipment financing?” generates 3x more referrals than “Know anyone who needs financing?”
- **Follow up in 90 days**. A second referral request 90 days after funding generates nearly as many referrals as the initial ask.

Remember, it never hurts to ask. You’ve already earned word of mouth through your superior business performance. Asking for a referral simply ensures the word gets out. And by systematizing your requests, you make sure you never miss an opportunity to find new fans.

Find a Blockbuster Funding Partner

Of course, every great sequel starts with a great first film. Whether you’re looking to close your first deal with a customer, build repeat business, or earn their referral, partnering with TimePayment makes it easy to win their loyalty—with an industry-leading credit band, soft credit pulls for all applications, instant approvals for qualified deals up to $25K, and fast funding on transactions from $1K–$1.5MM+.

With the right funding partner at your side, and a structured reconnect and referral program in place, you’ll be setting the scene for deal after deal after deal. Those are sequels we want to see.

Article

Data Tape to Done Deal: 6 Tips for Smarter Portfolio Transactions

by Lara Tolland, Chief Operating Officer, northteq

What if the thing standing between you and your next portfolio sale isn't the buyer, the pricing, or the negotiation? What if it's a data field somebody forgot to fill in two years ago? Every equipment finance lender has swapped a version of this story with a peer at a conference. A deal stalls out, someone digs into the file, and there it is, a blank spot where a piece of information should have been sitting since day one. Nobody in the room can say how it got there.

Northteq's latest white paper pulls from a live (very honest) conversation with Wintrust Specialty Finance, Finwise Bank, and Suru Consulting. The takeaway is one every lender should hear before their next portfolio sale. The negotiation table rarely kills a deal. Missing information, mismatched details, or an incomplete record usually does the damage weeks before anyone sits down to talk terms.

"You used to have people selling 25 to 30 percent of their originations. Now some partners are selling more than 50, more than 60 percent," noted Chris Morell, SVP of Capital Services at Finwise Bank. CECL pressure, tighter bank capacity, and a real appetite for fee income are pushing that number higher every year. U.S. equipment and software investment topped $1.3 trillion last year, with more than three quarters of that running through financing. The volume and the capital are both there. What often lags behind is the process built to handle either one well. Here's what the panel recommends instead.

1. **Treat your data tape like it's a rep and warranty, because it is** Nobody wants a buyback conversation after a portfolio closes. But if what you represented turns out to be wrong, you're the one who has to answer for it. Treat your data tape like the legal document it actually is, because buyers certainly do. Every row represents a contract, and buyers price each one based on exactly what you told them.
2. **Fix it upstream, not on your way out the door** The best time to prep for a sale is the day you book the deal, not the day you decide to sell it. Build validation rules into your workflow so incomplete records never make it past the front door. One buyer on the panel said a missing NAICS code alone can keep a file from loading into their system, essentially a dead stop before anyone even look at the deal.
3. **Quit waiting on a universal tape format** The industry has been chasing a standardized tape format for years, and it's still not here. But great news, now you don't actually need it. AI can take whatever export a seller hands you and map it to the fields you need. Build that mapping once, make it repeatable, and let it do the same job every time instead of starting from scratch with every new seller.

NEFA Note

4. **Underwrite the deal, not just the portfolio** Buyers price at the contract level whether you like it or not, so you might as well meet them there. The strongest teams take a broad pass at the whole tape for a gut check on quality, then still underwrite deal by deal. Finwise Bank does this with a team of eight people, individually reviewing 99 percent of what they originate. Small team, serious discipline, the right tools carrying the weight.
5. **Refresh your data before you sell, and be upfront about it** "If you're buying and holding for any period of time, I'd recommend doing some sort of refresh so you're not sending deteriorated transactions over to your funding partners," said Chris Maudlin, COO of Wintrust Specialty Finance. A deal you booked six months ago isn't the same deal today. Credit profiles shift, sometimes in ways you'd never guess from the file alone. Selling stale numbers costs you pricing power and trust with a buyer you're probably hoping to work with again. The panelists who buy regularly said this is just standard practice for them, no questions asked.
6. **Build the relationship before you need the capital** Portfolio sales aren't purely transactional, at least not the good ones. Sellers who show up with clean data and a track record get better pricing and more room to maneuver. Efficiency, more than almost anything else the panel talked about, is what gets rewarded. Being easy to work with is worth real money, which is a nice reminder that being pleasant occasionally pays literal dividends.

We built aurora to make all six of these easier, from validation rules to integrations with partners like Middesk, Equifax, and PayNet to a Best Practices Workflow shaped by what truly works across 175 lenders and 10,000 users.

Want the full breakdown, including where AI is best used and where it's still more hype than help? Download the complete white paper at northteq.com.

LTi Technology Solutions

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- Industry Experts Focused on Deep listening and understanding
- Proactive solutions
- Industry-leading tenure for continuity of team

Member News

Liventus Acquires Tamarack to Become the Most Comprehensive Technology Partner for Equipment Finance Organizations

The Alta Group Announces Strategic Affiliation with Cam Krueger

Data Sales Co. Portfolio Client Ori Industries Merges with Radiant to Form Next-Generation AI Infrastructure Platform

Commercial Capital Company Reports Record Q1 2026 Originations of $59.4M

Spencer Thomas of KLC Financial Named 2026 C-Level Award Honoree by Finance & Commerce

Gordon Brothers Releases 2026 Global Asset Insights Report

Lendscape partners with JDR Solutions to bring AI-enabling equipment finance technology to US providers

PEAC Solutions Hosts 3rd Annual Charity Golf Outing in Support of Make-A-Wish

Channel Earns 2026 USA TODAY Top Workplace Award

KLC Financial Announces Leadership Transition

Seven Minnesota Companies named as finalists for the 2026 Meaningful Capitalism Awards

ECS Financial's Principal Shari L. Lipski, CLFP, Receives NEFA Significant Contribution Award

Gordon Brothers Provides Strategic Advisory & $175M Integrated Asset-Based Facility Featuring a RILO to Support Phillips Pet Food's Acquisition of Central Pet

OCS Promotes Tatum Noreen to Sales Manager

Beacon Funding, ECS Financial, and Liventus Host Exclusive Casino Night After 2026 ELFA Funding Symposium

CLFP Foundation Welcomes 15 New CLFPs

360 Equipment Finance Welcomes Ryan Chen as Director of Operations

Channel Adds 25-Year Leader to Credit, Operations

Moritt Hock & Hamroff Continues Florida Expansion

Why Experienced Industry Professionals Are Choosing Multi-Funder Platforms: Lorelei Krier Joins Catalyst Finance Company

Alliance Funding Group Appoints Jim Denning to Lead New Vendor Finance Services Division

Member News

KLC Financial Promotes Allen Glynn and Lesley Farmer to Business Development Team Leads

Channel Names Rossi as Chief Risk Officer

Fox Ridge Capital, LLC Selects LTi's ASPIRE™ Platform to Power the Launch of Its Hybrid Equipment Finance Business Platform

ECS Financial Services Named as a Best Places to Work in Illinois 2026, For Second Year in a Row

Moritt Hock & Hamroff Adds Partner Parag Parekh to Expanding Condominium & Co-Op Practice

360 Equipment Finance Welcomes Dilnara Latipova as Contract Manager

Channel Successfully Completes 8th ABS Securitization

Wingspire Equipment Finance Supports Healthcare Provider With $22 Million Equipment Monetization

CLFP Foundation Welcomes 14 New CLFPs

LAW FIRM COHN & DUSSI EXPANDS COLLECTIONS AND LEGAL SUPPORT INTO CANADA

CLFP Foundation Welcomes 21 New CLFPs

Channel Celebrates 5th Consecutive Top 200 Workplace Listing

KLC Financial's Jordan Bonneur Recognized as a 2026 Monitor NextGen Leader

360 Equipment Finance Welcomes Juliette Zamora as Accounting Specialist

Oakmont Capital Services Promotes Amanda Bialka to Syndication Manager

CLFP Foundation Welcomes 19 New CLFPs

KLC Financial Named a Star Tribune Top Workplace for Third Consecutive Year

Gordon Brothers Leads Major Industrial Asset Sale from Pace Industries with HYPERAMS, Maynards & Die Cast Machinery

Oakmont Capital Services Recognized as a 2026 Star Tribune Top Workplace in Minnesota

We're F$#%ing Ready When You Are.

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FUNDING* is ready.
Approvals are fast. Let's move.

Strategic Partnership Program

Upcoming NEFA Events

Professional Broker/Lessor Educational Series (Part 5: Leverage & Liquidity)

August 5

Southwest Regional: Education & California Angels Game (Anaheim, CA)

August 12

Knowledge Exchange: Accounting/Finance

August 18

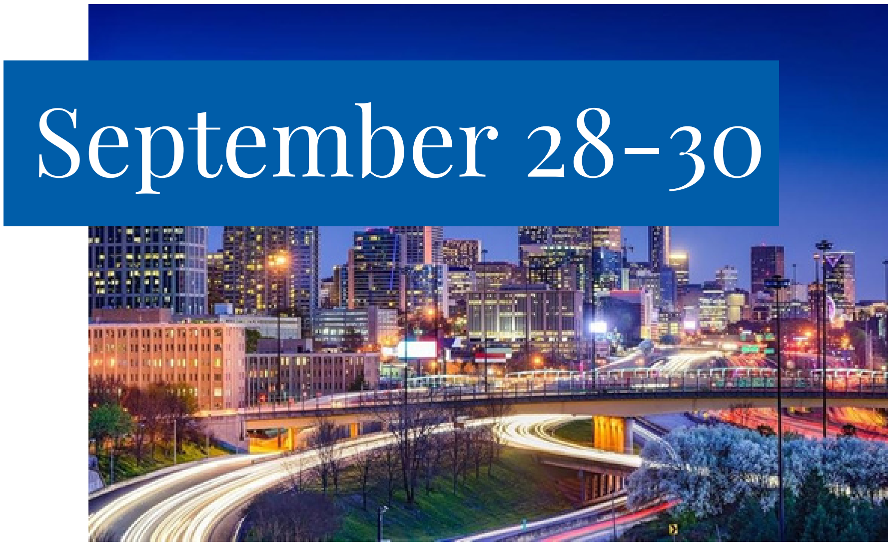
Knowledge Exchange: Credit

September 15

Professional Broker/Lessor Educational Series (Part 6: Full Transaction Cycle)

September 29 (in person at Fall Conference)

FALL 2026 CONFERENCE ATLANTA, GA



Upcoming NEFA Events

Knowledge Exchange: Leadership

October 20

Professional Broker/Lessor Educational Series (Part 7: Forward Looking & Lessons Learned)

November 3

Knowledge Exchange: Workforce Dynamics

November 17

Knowledge Exchange: Technology & Innovation

December 15

NEW NEFA MEMBERS

American Compute - Service Provider

Checkmate Collateral Solutions LLC - Service Provider

Indigo Direct Lending LLC - Broker/Lessor

I**nternational Financial Services Corporation -** Funding Source

Patriot Capital - Broker/Lessor

Parmeet Kaur - Student Member

Pelagic Capital Corporation - Broker/Lessor

Rigfi Capital - Broker/Lessor

TEL - Broker/Lessor

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