

PerformanceIQ Case Study:

## Merchants and Planters Trust

Merchants and Planters Bank was founded in Arkansas in 1946 as a bank that was “owned by the people, for the people,” helping to facilitate local expansion in the post-war economy. At the heart of its mission was to provide financial services for the businesses, families, and individuals in a manner that they could understand and trust.

Since those early days, Merchants and Planters has grown and diversified. Merchants and Planters Trust Division was founded in 1954 to provide investment and trust services with the same commitment to transparency. This commitment, combined with Merchants and Planters dedication to personalized customer service, means ensuring clients always have a firm understanding of their investment performance.

### The Challenge

Investment services and technology have been revolutionized since 1954. In order to provide its clients with the best possible opportunities in a global, digitized financial marketplace, Merchants and Planters Trust began to partner with specific portfolio managers.

“This strategy not only expanded client options, but it also enabled our portfolio managers to focus on what they do best, which is manage the money,” said Nate Watson, Senior Vice President and Trust Officer at Merchants and Planters Bank. “It also enabled its trust officers to focus on client administration and development.”

But the added complexity of financial products made objective and non-biased performance measurement considerably more challenging. For a company committed to straightforward communication with clients, delivering granular, comprehensive reporting was a must.

“We didn’t just want to measure the total return of the portfolio. We needed a way to measure performance all the way down to the individual asset,” said Watson. “At the same time we needed a report that was professional and clear, because if clients don’t understand it, they won’t feel comfortable with it.”

The Merchants and Planters Trust Department realized they needed a solutions partner who could help empower them in the following ways:

- 1.) Robust and Nimble Reporting – the ability to customize and adapt the reporting to best fit our clients and department.
- 2.) Scalability and Flexibility – the ability to grow and evolve the scope of the performance measurement as its trust department grows and evolves.
- 3.) Reliability and Enhancement – ensure the solution can be depended upon to perform its function, while also showing a commitment to continuous improvement of the product.

### How PerformanceIQ Met the Challenge

- **Top Line Reporting Capabilities:** “I feel it has given our clients confidence that while we are a community bank, our systems, management, and reports are as sophisticated as you would expect to find in a much larger trust company.”
- **Clear and Simplified Data Presentation:** While Merchants and Planters Bank offers clients globally competitive offerings, the ability to communicate performance and analysis clearly was crucial to its mission as a community bank.
- **Well-organized, Timely Implementation:** “The implementation process went smoothly, and they worked with us to

ensure we were using benchmarks that accurately measured the performance of a particular asset or asset class.”

- **Continuous Improvement:** PerformanceIQ is both a time-tested solution and a flexible platform that lends itself to constant enhancement and modification, based on customer needs and a rapidly-changing marketplace.

### Results

“Our experience since going live with PerformanceIQ has been a very positive one. Internally, our annual review of portfolio managers and annual review of accounts takes a portion of the time it used to at our trust committee meetings. Externally, we have a slick report to present when reviewing performance with our clients,” said Watson.

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— Nate Watson, Senior Vice President and Trust Officer  
Merchants and Planters Trust

