

# PROPERTY TAX AND DELINQUENCIES DON'T HAVE TO BE A LOSING BATTLE



**Lori Eshoo** founded National Tax Search (NTS) in 1996. NTS provides a wide range of tax servicing solutions. NTS delivers a turnkey management solution in

research, tax reporting, tax payment and flood services to help mitigate the risks of portfolio management. As part of the solution, NTS has developed API (Application Programming Interface) and Web Service integration with the core servicing systems used today, in addition to their desktop platform "TaxQ" that offers clients access to data, reporting and communication via a web-based platform. NTS utilizes a web service-based approach to provide automated integration services to its special servicing, high volume clients, and clients using systems such as MSP. National Tax Search provides several functions through its web services, Xdata, including adding, querying, submitting refresh requests, flagging for billing and dialog messaging, cases or a variety of other files. NTS supports 2 discrete methods for web service integration: complete interaction via a single interface (polling method) and a bi-directional web service interface (real-time with both NTS and client have appropriate web services). Each customer has their own way of doing business, and the boutique style of service NTS has created, caters to all of our client's needs.

**What made you leave the corporate world and enter into Entrepreneurial Real Estate with a focus on Property Tax?** Prior to starting NTS, I worked in Corporate America managing real estate portfolios. I interacted with Lenders on a daily basis assisting them in the management of their real estate tax portfolios and communicating the liabilities they were facing under their current processes of tracking taxes. During that time, the market crashed two times. Understanding the cycle of delinquencies and how that cycle mimics a declining market, it was clear to me that a better tool was needed in the lending space to manage properties and their taxes.

Unpaid property taxes remain one of the largest risks to lenders aside from a mortgage default. Between 7-10 billion dollars of property taxes are not paid timely and go delinquent each

year (according to Brad Westover, Executive Director for the National Tax Lien Association). Taxes, which can be over-looked and sometimes under managed, especially on non-escrowed portfolios, are what can lead to bigger issues. Managing tax liabilities, payment schedules and notifications across multiple agencies can be a very complex process. Falling behind can become a very costly mistake. Updating and monitoring the status of property tax payments, in a timely fashion, can go a long way in minimizing the risk of additional fees.

According to RealtyTrac, over 630,000 homes have gone into foreclosure so far in 2016. Certainly, annual tax reporting is no longer the safe route. Monitoring your property tax payments after each installment is becoming the most efficient way to avoid costly penalties. The demanding environment the industry is facing today, with economic and market pressures pushing an even greater number of existing mortgages into the foreclosure process, lenders and servicers must arm themselves to help contain cost and mitigate loss.

## **What was the biggest challenge you faced, as a Women CEO, in a then male dominant industry?**

I had a vision to change the way the world looked at delinquencies. In any portfolio, you have errors and those errors correlate directly to dollar signs. With innovative technology I wanted to offer Lenders and Real Estate Owners or Investors a tool that can save them money. To get back to your question, I wasn't welcomed with open arms. Some of the main lines of business I have today, I had to earn by proving that NTS was capable of delivering what we offered, through our capabilities, innovative system reporting, automation and superior services. It wasn't an easy journey and the road blocks and challenges always seemed to present themselves. I created a team that consisted of dedicated people with industry knowledge, which many of them are still with me today. There were ups and downs, but my ambition and dreams continued to drive me to succeed in my goals and stay above all the hurdles; creating the company that NTS has become today.

**Why did you focus so much time and energy on building a piece of technology, TaxQ and FloodQ?** Part of my vision was driven by the technology that is now TaxQ and FloodQ to provide companies the most advanced and efficient way to service their portfolios. TaxQ, which is easily integrated with our Client's systems or accessed online, provides the needed tools, information, and flexibility to meet the demands of our Clients in this ever-changing industry.

FloodQ, evolved through requests of our Clients comfortable working with NTS as a partner and knowing NTS can deliver superior software. Our Clients were interested in streamlining their internal processes and vendor relationships. To date, FloodQ is the newest Flood Determination software available in the market, offering not only the necessary Standard Flood Hazard Certificates, but a state of the art desktop workflow tool to manage the entire process.

## **What made you decide to become a member of WBENC? (Women's Business Enterprise National Council)**

Diversity promotes innovation, corporations making decisions to work with minority companies opened up a new line of revenue for us here at NTS. While staying true to my original vision for NTS and continuing down the path that fits with our mission statement, WBENC has continued to help companies, from small to large leave a footprint, not only by offering support but by building networks and lasting relationships. NTS has been certified as a WOSB (Women Owned Small Business) since 2009, and allows us to register in Corporate Diversity Supplier Programs. The relationships and guidance you obtain from WBENC are incredible and I suggest all women owned companies become a member.

## **How does diversity affect the industry as a whole?**

Creating diversity in the work place creates a culture where people from every gender and nation can blend together in a work environment. Diversity can add different levels of creativity, by suggesting different views and using different life experiences, generating an entirely different world of opinions. By creating a team that can work through any differences, no matter how diverse, offers opportunity to change the industry. Different ideas coming together as one, engineering new policies, procedures, and technology to advance the current business marketplace, should increase work productivity, reduce costs, and achieving the ultimate goal of success. Lastly, diversity allows equal rights.