

North Shore Bank Offers Personal, Digital Choices

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Community bankers are at the forefront of disruptive change—especially technological—in the way they conduct business. Banks located in larger municipalities, such as North Shore Bank, have seen the demand for online and mobile services skyrocket. They're working hard to balance the differing expectations between the generations while vetting the latest in technology and social media.

Headquartered in Brookfield with 47 branches scattered throughout eastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, North Shore Bank looks to provide its customers with choices, said Gary Messing, vice president, branch administration. "As we interact with our customers and develop better and deeper insights, we see how things are beginning to change in terms of consumer expectations and the generational implications."

With its \$1.7 billion in assets and \$1.4 billion in deposits, the bank has significant groups of customers representing Millennials, Gen-Xers, and "bifurcated" Baby Boomers—those below 55 and those above. Each group has very different comfort levels with technology.

Older Boomers and the Silent Generation haven't adopted the self-

service approaches that younger Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials have. They want to interact with a banker at a branch. Some complicated transactions are only accomplished satisfactorily through the connection with a human. The bank understands that and looks to leverage its technology in order to give great service.



Early Adopter

North Shore could be considered an early adopter in its engagement with technology and social media. "We were into social media early before some financial institutions were even knowing how to think about it."

With the bank's overarching strategy being customer engagement and service delivery, it seeks to make its digital strategy as personal as its face-to-face activities. "North Shore's point of differentiation is that we're high touch," which is reflected in its tag

line, "The Bank of You."

The bank launched its first "remote" teller in the Mequon branch when it connected a lobby customer with a banker who was behind a wall in the drive-through. From there, "we extended what we learned into a different environment," Messing said, connecting customers in the bank's Kenosha branch remotely to a live banker located in the Brookfield office.

Social media allows the bank to "go where people congregate." Messing likens it to the real world. "It provides us with an opportunity to inform different communities of things that would be helpful to them." To prevent problems, the bank has developed skills in how it interacts with its customers using social media.

Messing admits that the bank spends a lot of time thinking about security to ensure it has the best tools and protection in the business. "It's vitally important to us to prevent a breach. Our reputation is jealously guarded and protected." Fiserv provides the bank's online banking core platform.

The bank moves electronic interactions to a different channel when warranted to protect confidentiality and protect proprietary customer information. "Personal relationships with customers are sensitive."

Mobile Banking Popular

Over the past couple of years, North Shore has launched an online

account opening process using technology to validate who is at the other end of the connection. It's finding that its customers' rate of adoption of mobile banking is "staggering."

Currently North Shore offers mobile deposit and

a digital wallet, acting as the principal agent bank with MasterCard on the



latter. The MasterPass Digital Wallet enables customers to conduct a retail transaction without the need for coupons, rewards cards, and credit or debit cards. If all of those items are contained in a digital wallet, the customer does not need to carry them and the transaction will reflect it.

While North Shore rolled out its digital wallet for online purchases, the bank hasn't yet fully committed to its use in the physical world. Currently, it's watching to see if its customers are using it and how they are using it, waiting to judge whether or not the tool adds value to the customer's relationship with the bank. "We have a ways to go if we're going to increase our commitment."

Messing notes that the bank does a lot of piloting before adopting new technology. "We have done things that



we've decided really don't add value and have

moved away from them." For example, the bank launched My Money on Facebook, which allowed its customers to access their account balances while on the social media site instead of having to leave the site and move to online banking. Lack of customer adoption led the bank to drop the service.

Products are regularly measured in a disciplined way for their performance and adoption rate. Decisions regarding a product's expansion or termination are made on solid data. "We're learning from everything we do."

The bank markets its technology

and social media products through traditional brochures, statement messaging, e-mails, and banner ads on its website. Newspaper ads also reference the website. North Shore Bank has a

YouTube video and a Twitter account. It sends out a monthly digital publication to its customers with

e-mail. All are designed to integrate the marketing message instead of separating the digital from the physical. And most are low- or no-cost.

Regardless of the specific technologies involved, North Shore Bank will continue to learn from its customers. Said Messing, "All we're really doing is becoming acclimated to the way things are trending. We're sort of adapting to what our customers' preferences are." 🐼