

Issues & Answers



July 2024

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Perception is Reality



*By Glen Simecek,
President & CEO,
Washington Bankers
Association*

Now that we are entering the heat of the campaign season, we can expect the next three months to be filled with news reports of the endless polling that is the hallmark of modern campaigns. Pundits at both the state and federal levels will parse the data, examine every nuance, and confidently announce what it all means. Or at least their own interpretations of what it all means. After all, it's not unheard of for two talking heads to look at the same figures, with one declaring that the results are great news for one side and the other coming to the opposite conclusion.

Fortunately, the results of recent polling – one survey conducted by the American Bankers Association and another by the

Edelman Trust Barometer – provide a less ambiguous picture of how the consumer public views banks.

Let's look at the Edelman results first. In total, Edelman surveyed more than 32,000 people in 28 countries, with banking scoring a 65 on their 1-100 trust index, up three points since last year and 12 points from a decade ago. Banking is trusted more today than ever since the 2007-2008 financial crisis. Banks were also found to be more trustworthy than other financial services industry sectors, including insurance, financial advisors, and investment managers.

These results were all the more impressive, given some recent, well-publicized bank failures, which undoubtedly colored at least some opinions in the U.S. That said, the developing world still holds its banks in higher regard than those in more established countries such as the U.S., so we still have room for improvement.

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The official publication of the Washington Bankers Association is sponsored by Vericast and WBA Professional Services.

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media accounts.

On the Cover

The clouds in front of a sunset cast a shadow behind San Juan
Island as seen from Lopez Island.

Photo by Megan Managan

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The ABA survey data reinforces – and in many ways exceeds – the Edelman polling’s generally positive outlook for banks. It also provides significantly more detail on important issues that impact consumer opinions. Here are some of the highlights of the ABA results, which are based on more than 4,000 online surveys with randomly selected consumers completed earlier this spring:

- Nearly 9 of 10 US consumers (87%) are either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their primary bank
- More than 95% rate their primary bank’s service as “good,” “very good,” or “excellent.”
- Approximately 8 in 10 respondents (79%) are confident in their primary bank and feel that the money they have deposited there is safe
- 86% said that their bank takes proactive measures to protect them and their accounts from fraud
- A full 90% said that they enjoy the convenience of using their credit cards, with 80% saying they have at least one card that provides a reward program and 88% of those saying they value that program
- Debit cards were similarly appreciated, with 86% satisfied with the convenience, 81% satisfied with the security, and 86% satisfied with the speed of debit card transactions
- More than two-thirds of consumers (67%) said they appreciate bank-provided overdraft protection, and 86% said that it was easy to check their account balances to avoid any overdrafts or fees
- By a four-to-one margin (68% agree to 17% disagree), consumers say that, given the challenges in the economy, now is not the time to impose new regulatory burdens on banks

According to the ABA, the bottom line is that consumers are generally happy with their banks and the wide range of services offered in the marketplace, are confident that their deposits are safe, and value the benefits of their credit cards, including rewards programs.

They also had a few things to say about credit unions’ tax exemptions. The bad news is that only 20% understand credit unions’ tax exemption and nearly a third thought credit unions pay federal income tax. So, we have to continue to make consumers aware of that loophole. Because of those surveyed, only 19% believe that credit unions should not be required to pay income taxes, and more than two-thirds (67%) said Congress should examine whether credit unions are providing enough unique community benefits to warrant maintaining their tax exemption.

Political tea leaves and crystal balls leave plenty of room for interpretation and misinterpretation, but the results of these polls are clear. Banks, by being there for our customers and our communities day in and day out, continue to earn the trust of those we serve.

The “Other” CRA: A Lesser-Known Tool in the Policy Toolbox



*By Rob Nichols, President & CEO,
American Bankers Association*

The banking agencies are tasked with writing implementing regulations for the laws enacted by Congress, but they do not have free reign. In creating these rules, regulators must act within the boundaries of their statutory authority or

run the risk of legal challenge—and ABA has not been afraid to hold them accountable in court when they get it wrong. But Congress can also hold agencies accountable when there are policy disagreements by simply overriding final rules.

In ABA's view, regulators have exceeded their authority in several recent regulatory actions, including the 1071 final rule, the credit card late fee final rule, the new Community Reinvestment Act final rule, and the expansion of UDAAP authority via an update to an examination manual.

When I addressed bankers at the 2024 ABA Washington Summit earlier this year, I assured them that ABA would use every tool in our toolbox to push back against the “regulatory tsunami” that regulators have unleashed upon the banking industry. Litigation is obviously a tool that we've been forced to use now several times—as evidenced by our four current legal challenges against bank regulators—but it isn't the only option.

Among the other tools available is a lesser-known mechanism called the Congressional Review Act—which we sometimes refer to as “the other CRA.”

The Congressional Review Act was enacted in 1996 to provide Congress with an avenue for overturning certain federal regulatory actions, but inexperience with the new law and divided government meant it was only used once in its first 21 years. During the Trump administration, however, when Congress and the White House were controlled by the same party, the CRA was used successfully 16 times. Highlights included ABA-backed resolutions to overturn the CFPB's rule effectively banning the use of mandatory arbitration for financial products—a rule that ABA strongly opposed—and a resolution to nullify

the bureau's 2013 indirect auto lending guidance, after the Government Accountability Office issued a formal decision in 2017 that the guidance constituted a rule.

Congress passed CRA resolutions three more times during the Biden administration, and lawmakers continue to introduce them. Recently, ABA supported a CRA challenge to the CFPB's 1071 final rule. That CRA challenge was passed by a bipartisan majority in both the House and Senate—and though President Biden ultimately vetoed the measure, it sent a strong and clear signal that Congress disagreed with the bureau's rule.

In addition, a resolution of disapproval under the CRA was also passed in May to invalidate the Securities and Exchange Commission's Staff Accounting Bulletin 121, which changed the way that banks and other publicly traded entities are expected to account for digital assets held in custody. ABA is also supporting a CRA challenge to the CFPB's recently finalized credit card late fee rule. The House Financial Services Committee favorably reported that resolution of disapproval in April.

The Congressional Review Act is so powerful because resolutions can move to the Senate floor quickly through an expedited “fast track” procedure and that, once on the floor, a resolution requires only a simple majority vote to pass—not 60 votes, like most legislation. This fast-track process stipulates a specific timeframe during which rules issued in this Congress can be invalidated by the next Congress: the rule must be issued during a window of 60 session or legislative days prior to Congress' adjournment at the end of the year in order for the next Congress to have an opportunity to invalidate the rule. We are now nearing the window where any final rules that are issued by the agencies could be challenged under the CRA in the next Congress—yet another reason why electoral outcomes matter.

However the elections shake out in November, ABA's focus will remain unchanged: supporting a policy environment that supports America's banks in their mission to supply credit to their customers, clients and communities. And we'll continue to use every tool in the toolbox to ensure that our broad and diverse banking sector can continue to thrive.

PNW CAPITOL HILL VISIT

September 23-25 • Dupont Circle Hotel

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN: www.eventleaf.com/e/2024PNWCHV



Join a WBA Peer Workgroup This Fall

The Washington Bankers Association (WBA) is excited to announce that our Peer Workgroups are open for new members! As we approach the fall season, we have an exciting lineup of guest speakers scheduled to share their expertise at various meetings. This is a fantastic opportunity for WBA members to engage, learn, and contribute to the future of our industry.

The WBA Peer Workgroups are designed to be a collaborative network for bankers from member institutions. These groups serve as a platform for sharing expertise, addressing industry challenges, and shaping the direction of banking through advocacy, training, and educational programs. Each workgroup focuses on different aspects of the banking industry, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive approach to professional growth and development.

Why Join a Workgroup?

- **Collaborative Community:** Workgroups offer a supportive environment where members exchange knowledge and insights, fostering a collective effort to advance the banking industry.
- **Professional Development:** Members can enhance their skills and stay updated on industry trends through regular meetings and discussions by participating in a workgroup.
- **Influence and Impact:** Workgroup members are crucial in driving the WBA's mission, contributing to policy development, educational programming, and industry advocacy.

WBA Workgroups:

- Agriculture
- Compliance
- Credit & Lending
- Education
- Government Relations
- Future Leaders
- Financial Technology & Security
- Human Resources
- Retail Banking



WBA Workgroups are open to any WBA member banker and can always send another representative if they can't attend a meeting.

Most meetings are held virtually, with flexible participation, meaning bankers can join when it works for their schedule and can use meeting transcripts to catch up.

Meetings are held monthly or as needed, providing a consistent opportunity for engagement and contribution.

We are thrilled to announce that our fall meetings will feature a series of expert guest speakers. These speakers will bring valuable insights and knowledge, enriching our discussions and helping us address current challenges and opportunities in the banking sector.

Joining a WBA Peer Workgroup is an excellent way to connect with peers, expand your professional network, and make a meaningful impact on the banking industry.

To learn more about how you can get involved, contact WBA Director of Education & Operations, Sherry Krainick at sherry@wabankers.com.

Head to the Ballpark for Future Leaders Series Events

We are excited to announce two fantastic summer events designed for young and future leaders in the banking industry.

These events provide excellent opportunities to network with peers, learn from industry experts, and enjoy summer fun!

Each event is \$50 and includes your ticket to the game, plus food and drinks onsite.

July 30 – Spokane Indians

- Location: Bud Bullpen, Spokane
- Time: Starting at 5:35 p.m.

Held in the Bud Bullpen, right behind the first baseline, this event offers a perfect blend of casual networking and entertainment.

August 8 – Seattle Mariners

- Location: Edgar's Home Run Porch
 - Time: Starting at 5:30 p.m.
- Cap off the summer by joining us at the Seattle Mariners game from the exclusive Edgar's Home Run Porch.

Why Attend?

- **Networking Opportunities:** Meet and connect with fellow leaders in the banking industry.
- **Professional Growth:** Meet other bankers and learn about WBA programs.
- **Fun and Relaxation:** Enjoy top-tier baseball games in exclusive, comfortable settings.

To register and find more details, visit wabankers.com/leaders.

Pacific Coast Banking School Names Joan Reukauf New President & CEO



The board of directors of Pacific Coast Banking School (PCBS) is pleased to announce the selection of Joan Reukauf as its incoming President. Reukauf is succeeding PCBS President and CEO, Gretchen Claflin, who plans to retire at the end of 2024 when Reukauf will assume the title of President and CEO.

Reukauf comes to PCBS with deep connections to the school and a wealth of experience from her 20+ years in the banking industry. A PCBS graduate and current instructor, Reukauf most recently served as Chief Operating Officer of People's Bank of Commerce after a successful merger with Willamette Community Bank where she served as President and CEO. Reukauf also teaches for the American Banking Association and for Willamette University where she received her MBA.

"I am honored and excited to lead PCBS as the new President and CEO," Reukauf said. "This institution has always had a very special place in my heart, and I am committed to building upon our very strong foundation to drive innovation, growth, and success. I look forward to embarking on this journey and contribut-

ing to the ongoing legacy of excellence forged by those before me along with the talented team at PCBS."

Reukauf was selected after an extensive search process managed by the executive search firm, Korn Ferry. Her experience as both a banker and an educator were considered by the search committee to be key in making their final decision.

"Joan's ties to PCBS and her experience as an instructor and as a leader in the banking industry make her uniquely qualified to lead PCBS into the future" said Board Chairman, Jack Heath. "Joan's experience and energy will drive new initiatives that will benefit future generations of leaders in the banking and financial services industry."

Retiring President and CEO, Gretchen Claflin, added, "I am thrilled that the board has selected Joan to carry on the tradition of excellence that is the hallmark of PCBS. As the Premier National Graduate School of Banking, PCBS attracts the best and brightest future leaders in the industry. I've had the privilege of working with Joan as a PCBS instructor over the years and I am confident that under her leadership the school will continue to thrive in providing the best banking education in the industry."

WBA Welcomes New Board Officers for 2024-2026

At the 2024 Annual Convention at the end of June, the WBA voted on a new slate of officers who will lead the association from 2024 to 2026.

The Washington Bankers Association (WBA) announced that Brent Beardall, President and CEO of WaFd Bank, was elected and installed as chairman of the WBA Board of Directors.

The Board sets policy and is responsible for the prudent stewardship of the association's fiscal resources. Bankers are nominated by their peers to serve on the Board and are selected from institutions diverse in size, type, and geographic location.



The officers are:

- Chair: Brent Beardall, President & CEO, WaFd Bank
- Immediate Past-Chair: Mark Mason, President & CEO, HomeStreet Bank
- Secretary/Treasurer: Bryan McDonald, President & COO, Heritage Bank
- Government Relations Committee Chair: Eric Pearson, President, Community First Bank
- Education Chair: Matt Deines, President & CEO, First Fed Bank
- WBA PROs Chair: Cindy Purcell, EVP/Chief Strategy & Administration Officer, Banner Bank

The board also welcomed Purcell, who joined the board as a new director as the PROs chair.



MENTORSHIP MONDAYS

Every Monday at 2 p.m.

WBA Hosts Quad-State Convention at Skamania Lodge at end of June

The Washington Bankers Association (WBA) hosted its highly anticipated 2024 Annual Convention from June 26 to June 28. The event was packed with insightful sessions, networking opportunities, and engaging activities, making it a memorable experience for all attendees.

After a welcome reception on Wednesday evening, during which local lawmakers were invited to meet and mingle with bankers, the second day began with a hearty breakfast at 7:00 AM, setting the stage for a full day of sessions.

The general session commenced with opening remarks, setting an enthusiastic tone for the day's proceedings.

Chris Nichols, Director of Capital Markets at South State Bank, delivered an enlightening talk on the strategic use of generative AI in banking. He discussed how AI can revolutionize client experiences and streamline back-end processes.

As a renowned author and speaker, Scott Welle captivated the audience with his dynamic presentation on peak performance strategies. He shared insights on challenging performance standards, establishing routines, boosting positivity, and enhancing communication, equipping attendees with tools to elevate their personal and professional excellence.

Rob Nichols, President and CEO of the American Banking Association, provided an update on the latest activities in Washington, D.C., including priorities and potential future developments in the banking industry.

Just before lunch, Federal Reserve Governor Michelle Bowman joined Brent Beardall, President & CEO of WaFd Bank, for a fireside chat. Bowman shared her insights on the industry's current state and future, providing valuable perspectives to attendees.

After a lunch buffet, the convention continued with three breakout sessions:

- **Demographic Disruption: Banking in an Aging America** led by Joe Sullivan, President & CEO of Market Insights, who explored the impending demographic shifts and their implications for the banking industry. He emphasized the need for banks to adapt their strategic plans to address the changing needs of an aging population.

- **Capital Planning and Capital Raising** with Zachary Davis and Steven Lanter from Luse Gorman where they discussed the current regulatory and economic environment for capital planning. They offered insights into different capital raising options



and their benefits and limitations, providing practical guidance for financial institutions.

- **Navigating the Tax Maze: Unveiling Investment Tax Credits for Financial Growth** with Adam DeZego from Moss Adams and Ed Rossier from Enhanced Capital who delved into the complexities of Investment Tax Credits (ITCs). They shared strategies for identifying eligible investments, maximizing tax savings, and navigating regulatory nuances.

Charlie Clark, Chair of the CSBS and Director of Washington DFI, and Paul Worthing, Regional Director of the FDIC, provided a comprehensive update on federal regulations, helping attendees stay informed about the latest developments.

In the day's final keynote, John Maxfield from Maxfield on Banks presented a thought-provoking session on the workings of the banking system and what it takes to be an exceptional

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Events Calendar

July 9 – Understanding Bank Performance Program

July 30 – Future Leaders Networking Night at
Spokane Indians

August 6-8 – KBA Fraud Academy

August 8 – Future Leaders Networking Night at Seattle
Mariners

September 23-25 – PNW Capitol Hill Visit

October 7 – Credit Analyst Development Program

October – Retail Branch Manager Development Program

October 29 – Understanding Bank Performance Program

January – 2025 Executive Development Program

February – Virtual Commercial Lending Development Program

To register or to learn more about any of the listed events, please visit www.wabankers.com/calendar.

CareerWork\$® Reorganizes to Become Affiliate of Washington Bankers Association

The Washington Bankers Association (WBA), the largest trade association for banks in Washington state, is pleased to announce a new chapter in its history. CareerWork\$, a distinguished 501(c)(3) dedicated to career development, will reorganize to become an affiliate of the WBA.

CareerWork\$ operates BankWork\$, a long-standing WBA partner program. The program provides free job training focused on the banking and general job preparation. The WBA first endorsed the BankWork\$ program in 2015.

“This collaboration is a testament to our shared vision of empowering community members within the banking industry and beyond. By joining forces, we leverage our collective strengths to enhance the quality and accessibility of career development programs, financial education, and professional training services. The BankWork\$ program has been at the forefront of career advancement, providing resources, mentorship, and training to individuals aspiring to a new career in the banking industry. Their dedication to creating pathways for success aligns perfectly with the state banking association mission to support the banking community through education, innovation, and community service,” said Glen Simecek, president and CEO of WBA.

Under the reorganization, members of the banking community and participants of the BankWork\$ program will benefit from an expanded range of resources designed to foster professional growth and industry innovation. Together, both organizations will work to ensure that individuals across the country have the tools and support they need to thrive in their careers.

“We are excited to embark on this journey with CareerWork\$,” said Simecek. “Throughout our longstanding partnership with the BankWork\$ program, we’ve seen the powerful opportunity it provides to enrich the lives of those



BANKWORK\$
FREE CAREER TRAINING PROGRAM

looking for a new opportunity while offering the banking industry eager talent excited for a new career. We look forward to our combined efforts’ positive impact on our communities and the banking sector.”

Les Biller, founder of CareerWork\$ and co-founder of the Sheri and Les Biller Foundation added, “I’m proud of how we have been able to expand the program over the last two decades. Together with our training partners, we have helped thousands of individuals land careers in the financial services and healthcare industries. I believe Washington Bankers Association will bring the leadership, expertise, and networks to support CareerWork\$ to help even more people across the country. I am confident that this

transition will not only maintain but accelerate the momentum of this important work, supporting the launch of many more careers for deserving individuals. The Biller Family Foundation looks forward to continuing to invest in the program.”

The WBA and CareerWork\$ are committed to a seamless collaboration, ensuring that all existing and future programs operate at the highest level of excellence. CareerWork\$ currently operates programs in 14 cities across 8 states. CareerWork\$ will operate as an affiliate of the WBA, with access to expanded partnerships through the WBA’s network. Further details will be announced in the coming months.

For more information about the WBA, please visit wabankers.com. To learn more about CareerWork\$ and its programs, visit careerworks.org.

Industry News

New Hires

Jessica Wade Parks
Branch Manager at U.S. Bank

Jaylen Gilmore
VP/Commercial Banking Relationship Manager at 1st Security Bank of Washington

Nicole Sherman
President and CEO at Riverview Bank

Chad Marting
Vice President and Commercial Deposits Relationship Manager at Bank of the Pacific

James Vanderholm
Chief Financial Officer at Olympia Federal Savings

Simona DeVries
Senior Vice President and Senior Commercial Banking Officer

John Chambers
Relationship Manager at Washington Trust Bank

Promotions

Lonnie Noble
Middle Market Leader at Wells Fargo

James Greathouse
Small Business Relationship Manager at Washington Trust Bank

Rachel Dunger
Branch Manager at Kitsap Bank

Jim Costa
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Banner Bank

Have Industry News to share with WBA? Email megan@wabankers.com or call (206) 344-3472.



Kitsap Bank Supports Kitsap Humane Society

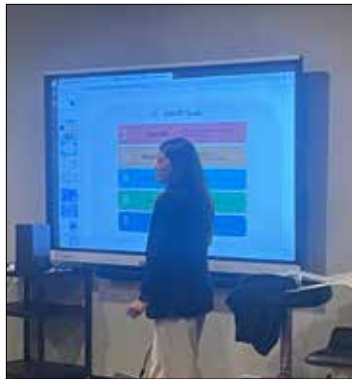
Kitsap Bank recently hosted a booth at the Pets Walk in Poulsbo for the Kitsap Humane Society.

The Kitsap Bank corgis helped raise awareness and donations for the organization, which works with needy animals.

Bank of America Partners with Financial Beginnings for Class

Over several weeks, the Bank of America Seattle team recently partnered with Financial Beginnings and Vine Maple Place to offer a financial literacy class.

The class allowed the bank to provide expertise to community members.



First Financial Northwest Bank Volunteers with Clothes for Kids

The First Financial Northwest Bank auction team recently volunteered with Clothes for Kids.

The Starry Night Auction is a fundraiser for the organization that collects and donates clothing to local students in need.



Peoples Bank Supports Farmers Day Parade

Peoples Bank in Whatcom County recently supported the annual Farmers Day Parade.

The bank volunteers shared candy and bubbles with attendees despite the wet weather.



Baker Boyer Bank Hosts Finance Class For Elementary Students

In partnership with 21st Century Learning and the Finance Academy, Baker Boyer Bank hosted a financial education class for elementary students this spring.

The bankers visited Prospect Park to help students in first through fifth grades learn about finance.



Sound Community Bank Volunteers at Food Lifeline

The Sound Community Bank Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee volunteer at Food Lifeline.

The group packed and sorted 1,620 pounds of oats for needy families and individuals.

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BankWork\$ Celebrates Two Graduations in Puget Sound

BankWork\$ welcomed two classes of graduates following celebrations hosted by the YWCA Seattle King Snohomish and Career Path Services programs.

During the YWCA graduation event, which featured 14 students, Jenn Gladish, First Interstate Bank's community development lending manager, congratulated and encouraged the group.

The same week, the 10 Career Path Services program students were celebrated.

BankWork\$ is a free 8-week training program that provides students with the necessary skills to join the banking industry. The program finishes with a job fair where the students are interviewed for jobs in the industry.

First Fed Foundation Awards \$300,000 in Grants

This spring, the First Fed Foundation announced it awarded \$300,000 in grants to 19 local nonprofits in Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, Whatcom Counties, and the City of Bellevue.

"With the volume and quality of the grant applications we received in this spring grant cycle, our board and advisory committee had to make tough decisions about which projects to fund," said Norman J. Tonina, President of the Foundation's board. "We're pleased with the outcome of our deliberations and privileged to support initiatives that help avert homelessness and build supportive and permanently affordable housing; deliver life skills and job training for youth and marginalized community members; provide emergency financial assistance, critical hygiene supplies, and household items for families transitioning from homelessness; and so much more."

"I am amazed by our nonprofit grantees' work despite overwhelming need and limited resources. They are truly superheroes," said Karen McCormick, First Fed Foundation's Board of Directors member. "Our board is inspired by their passion and dedication and proud to provide funding to assist them in

reaching their goals."

As of this spring, the foundation has exceeded \$7 million in giving and focuses on organizations that work in housing and homelessness, community development, economic development, and community support.

The grants ranged from \$35,000 to \$5,000 to help the organizations continue their missions.



KeyBank Hosts Community Mixer in University Place

KeyBank recently hosted a Community Mixer at Chambers Bay Distillery in University Place.

The event brought together local business professionals and community members to support local businesses and educate the community about local entrepreneurs.



HomeStreet Bank Supports Community Roots Housing

HomeStreet Bank recently supported the Top of the Town fundraiser for Community Roots Housing.

The event raised \$231,000 to help the organization build and create communities.



KeyBank Hosts Neighbors Make the Difference Day

In early June, KeyBank employees volunteered in their communities throughout the country as part of the bank's annual Neighbors Make the Difference Day.

Teams in Washington partnered with 18 organizations during the 33rd

annual event.

Locally, the groups worked with the YWCA of Snohomish County, World Relief Community Garden, Westside Baby,

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Seattle Food Lifeline, Quixote Communities, Backpack Brigade, Mary's Place, Greentrike, Emergency Food Network, and the Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership.

"Neighbors Make the Difference Day is another way that KeyBank invests in Washington by dedicating our collective time and talent to help communities thrive," said Matt Hill, KeyBank Seattle Cascades Market President. "On this day and every day, we take pride in showing up in our region and all of the communities we serve to brighten lives and help transform neighborhoods in a meaningful way."



Olympia Federal Savings Participates in Career Skills Program at Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Olympia Federal Savings bankers recently participated in the Career Skills Program briefing with Workex at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

The team discussed careers in banking with military members as they prepared to transition out of the service.



Mountain Pacific and First Financial Northwest Banks Support Girls on the Run of Snohomish County

Mountain Pacific and First Financial Northwest Bank team members recently supported the annual Girls on the Run of Snohomish County 5k race event.

The event hosted 1,500 people who raced in the Mill Creek Town Center as part of the program that works with girls to build confidence and provide a running curriculum-based program.



Commencement Bank Participates in Gig Harbor Maritime Parade

The Commencement Bank team in Gig Harbor recently participated in the annual Maritime Parade.

Gig Harbor Boat Shop, a bank client, made the group's sailboat float and helped decorate it for the parade.



Heritage Bank Named Longview Best Bank in SW Washington

The Heritage Bank team members in Longview recently attended a celebration where the bank was named the Best Bank in Southwest Washington.



WaFd Bank Donates to Youth Care Seattle

WaFd Bank announced in early June a \$10,000 donation to Youth Care Seattle to help the organization continue its work of helping youth transition from homelessness.

Samantha Gergland and Kristi Ellefson with WaFd Bank presented the check to the Youth Care team. The group met at the organization's newest project on Capital Hill, the Constellation Center, which provides affordable housing for youth to transition from homelessness into a thriving and stable living environment.



Banner Bank Supports Anacortes Waterfront Festival

The Banner Bank team in Anacortes recently participated in the Anacortes Waterfront Festival, hosting the pet photography booth.



Commencement Bank Volunteers at Capital City Marathon

The Commencement Bank team in Olympia recently volunteered at the Capital City Marathon.

The group hosted a water station for the runners.

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Yakima Federal Savings Announces Awards for Academic Excellence

The annual Yakima Federal Savings Awards for Academic Excellence were recently announced. Sixty-five students earned scholarships to local colleges and universities.

The awards help high academic achievers graduating from high school or home school to attend an accredited college, university, community college, or technical school.

Since the program began in 1974, the bank has provided over \$3 million in assistance to local students.



Yakima Federal Savings Donates to WSU Tri-Cities

Yakima Federal Savings announced a \$25,000 gift supporting student scholarships at WSU Tri-Cities.

The bank has previously supported the cause and recently renewed its donation.

The event raised awareness and money for the organization that helps individuals with disabilities fully participate in employment and community life.



Bank of America Participates in Seattle Dragon Boat Festival

The Seattle Bank of America team recently participated in the annual Seattle Dragon Boat Festival at Lake Union.

The team volunteered at the event with the bank's local Asian Leadership Network and raced in a boat.

The event honors the longstanding tradition of racing in dragon boats.



WaFd Bank Partners with Compass Housing Alliance

WaFd Bank announced a \$2,000 donation to Compass Housing Alliance in early May.

The bank provided financial education classes to residents at Compass' Nyer building in Ballard, offering information about money management and banking.

"WaFd has been great to work with," said Tim Keaty, Program Coordinator at Nyer. "They listen to our residents and work through their concerns."



Peoples Bank Sponsors Sorticulture

Once again, Peoples Bank sponsored the annual Sorticulture event in Everett this year.

The garden arts festival celebrates the seasons of being outside and covers five city blocks with over 100 local vendors.

Wells Fargo Donates to Black Home Initiative Network Organizations

In early June, Wells Fargo in Seattle announced a \$250,000 donation to the organizations that make up the Black Home Initiative.

The Housing Development Consortium, Civic Commons, Washington Homeownership Resource Center, HomeSight, and Tacoma Urban League all received donations as part of the gift.



WaFd Volunteers at Seattle Pride Hockey Association

On an early summer weekend, volunteers from WaFd Bank participated in the Seattle Pride Hockey Association's event at the Kraken Community Iceplex in Northgate.

The bank volunteers staffed a face paint booth and handed WalTBanks to the attendees.

Mountain Pacific Bank Supports Work Opportunities Gala

The Mountain Pacific Bank team recently attended the 22nd Annual Gala and Auction for Work Opportunities.

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Unpacking the Contradictory Behavior of Today's Consumer

By Matthew Tilley, Vice President of Growth Marketing, Vericast

Consumer behavior has grown increasingly complex, often displaying contradictory preferences within consumer segments — or even from the same consumer. Matthew Tilley, vice president of Growth Marketing at Vericast, shares insights from his recent ANA Brand Masters presentation, exploring the nuanced demands for personalized experiences and privacy protection. He dives into the dichotomy of consumer desires and provides advice for how marketers can effectively respond.

Today's consumers are contradictory

Marketing is about reaching the consumer, understanding them and what's on their mind and trying to bridge any barriers so they buy more of your products.

Right now, consumers are probably sending some very mixed signals.

"Consumers often hold two very distinct but opposing opinions. Moreso, they hold these differing beliefs simultaneously to be equally true and do so without any sense of deceit or irony," says Matthew.

A prime example of this is the recent shift toward valuing the purchase of locally made goods while also valuing the speed and convenience of online shopping and home delivery. These two things generally do not go together, yet consumers highly value both.

As a marketer, what other consumer contradictions is the industry currently facing, and how can you overcome them?

Four key consumer contradictions for marketers to consider

1. Consumer attitudes toward personalization versus privacy

Generally, consumers highly value a personalized experience. However, according to the Vericast mar-

keting outlook report, when consumers were given the choice between privacy — ensuring their data isn't going to be used by anyone anywhere else — and a personalized experience, privacy won by a thin margin.

To further complicate the picture, even if consumers valued privacy over personalization, they responded positively when data was used to make a more personalized experience.

This does not mean a company should breach privacy rules and regulations to create a more personalized experience, but it's worth recognizing the more consumers see themselves reflected by a brand, the more likely they are to buy in.

2. Consumer views on brand loyalty versus choice

When it comes to marketing, consumer loyalty is a marketer's holy grail. Companies want customers to be locked into their brand and to ignore competitors. But consumers value having options and flexibility to choose to go where they want and do what they want. As a result, over the last couple of years, brand loyalty has decreased so much that many marketers fear loyalty is dead.

"Fifty-seven percent of Gen Z consumers said in a recent study they are definitely less brand loyal than they were pre-pandemic," says Matthew.

Another component of the contradiction of loyalty versus options is that the marketing industry still subscribes to a lot of old rules of loyalty.

"Loyalty is no longer just about the consumer making some kind of lifelong commitment to the brand. Instead, brands must continue to provide real and lasting value to consumers."

Furthermore, the value a brand provides must continuously evolve. Brands can no longer provide the same value year after year because their consumers and their needs change. Brands that can evolve with their consumers or provide value at various stages of life will win loyalty.

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What Is Going On With Domain Names?

By Dan Morgan, CTO, Teknologize

The domain name landscape has transformed significantly since its inception in the early 1980s. Initially serving as organizational tools for the internet, domain names gained prominence in the 2000s as businesses rushed to establish their online presence. Common practices included securing “.com”, “.net”, or “.org” domains, which served as virtual storefronts for showcasing products and services.

While websites were often developed and left relatively unchanged for years, the rise of online banking prompted businesses to make incremental updates to their digital platforms. In recent years, the domain name landscape has expanded with the introduction of new top-level domains (TLDs), providing businesses with a wider array of options beyond traditional extensions.

This proliferation offers opportunities for businesses to align their domain names more closely with their industry, offerings, or branding strategies, reflecting the dynamic nature of the internet and its increasing importance in modern business practices.

Fast Forward to Present

In 2024, the domain name landscape has evolved dramatically beyond the traditional “.com”, “.net”, or “.org” extensions. The introduction of new top-level domains (TLDs) has diversified options for businesses, with extensions like “.bank” becoming increasingly familiar. Additionally, TLDs such as “.app” have emerged, reflecting the expanding digital ecosystem.

While traditional TLDs remain unregulated, requiring only a registration fee for acquisition, the emergence of regulated and highly regulated domain names marks a significant shift. These regulated domains impose specific rules and requirements, ensuring authenticity and trustworthiness.

This evolution underscores the dynamic nature of the internet and its ongoing impact on business practices, emphasizing the importance of adapting to new trends and regulations in the domain name landscape.

What's the Difference Between Regulated and Unregulated Domain Names?

Regulated domain names are governed by specific rules and criteria. For instance, TLDs like “.games” have stringent policies regarding trademark usage, requiring proof of ownership for registration. Additionally, these domains often prohibit illegal activities and mandate adherence to data protection standards.

Contrastingly, TLDs such as “.loan”, “.mortgage”, and others offer broader accessibility, catering to both individuals and businesses without stringent verification requirements.

However, the spotlight shines brightest on highly regulated domains like “.doctor”, “.bank”, and “.university”. Governed by strict oversight bodies, these TLDs undergo thorough authentication processes, including verification of credentials and licensure, typically conducted bi-annually.

This meticulous scrutiny ensures that only legitimate entities secure these domains, enhancing trust and credibility in the online space. In the ever-evolving digital landscape, these

highly regulated domains serve as beacons of reliability, providing reassurance amidst the complexities of online presence management.

Effect on Cyber Security

Initially, the introduction of new top-level domain (TLD) options may appear to have minimal impact on an organization's cybersecurity posture. After all, the verification process for registering parties should theoretically bolster trust among end-users. However, as with many innovations, there are drawbacks alongside the benefits. Consider social media: while it facilitates communication and outreach, it also presents security risks.

Take, for instance, the availability of “.bank” domains. While securing such a domain may authenticate a financial institution's status, it can inadvertently foster a false sense of security among customers. This becomes evident when unsavory individuals exploit similar-sounding domains, such as “myBank.loan” or “yourbank.mortgage” to create spoofing pages. These deceptive sites can dupe customers into divulging sensitive information like loan numbers or social security numbers, often without raising immediate red flags.

Unfortunately, many customers may not recognize these fraudulent activities until after their data has been compromised. Hence, it's imperative to educate customers about these risks and actively mitigate them. One approach could involve defensively acquiring additional TLDs like “myBank.mortgage” or “myBank.loan” to prevent malicious actors from exploiting similar domains. Alternatively, investing in robust customer education campaigns can empower users to identify and report suspicious online activities promptly.

Ultimately, safeguarding both data and customer trust in the digital realm necessitates a multifaceted strategy that combines proactive defense measures with comprehensive education initiatives.

Brand and Reputation Management

Another significant concern stemming from the proliferation of domain name TLD offerings is reputation management. Certain TLDs, such as “.sucks” or “.fails” carry connotations that institutions like ours would prefer to avoid.

Affiliation with these TLDs could potentially tarnish our organization's reputation, attracting negative attention and distracting us from the positive work we strive to accomplish daily. Just as we diligently monitor for spoofed domains, it's essential to remain vigilant regarding websites that may misrepresent our organization or propagate false narratives about us.

In light of these challenges, adopting a defensive approach akin to that of celebrities acquiring their affiliated “.sucks” TLDs to mitigate negative press may be warranted.

Proactively securing domains like “yourbank.sucks” or “yourbank.fails” could prevent unauthorized entities from exploiting them and tarnishing our brand image. By preemptively addressing potential reputational risks associated with specific TLDs, we can uphold our organization's integrity and maintain the trust and confidence of our stakeholders.

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3. *Consumers can't decide between saving and splurging*

It's no secret that many people are having a difficult economic time. With inflation still an issue, many consumers are pinching pennies, which means saving money and getting a good deal is a top priority. When asked, consumers said they want sales, coupons, discounts or other ways to save money.

However, there has also been an increase in "fun-flation"—although want to save money on necessities like milk and eggs, they are willing to wait in line for hours to spend thousands of dollars on things like concert tickets, vacations or other experiences.

On some level, everyone needs joy in their lives. Therefore, consumers are more willing to make sacrifices and changes to do and buy the things they really want.

4. *Consumers fluctuate preferences for digital versus analog environments*

While there has been a significant shift toward digital coupons and discount codes, print offers — those that come in the mail or newspaper — remain a thriving delivery mechanism. This contradiction is less about which is better or more preferred and more about how both print and digital offers have their place.

"You can get digital offers to a lot of people over a broad area and enable nearly real-time engagement data capture, but analog continues to be valuable because we're human beings and like the tactile experience of physically interacting with something."

The value of both digital and analog spaces extends beyond distributing messages into consumption of goods and services — it's the in-store versus e-commerce debate. "It's not either-or; it's both-and," says Tilley. "Research shows that marketing leaders are prioritizing contextual commerce — the notion of making sure consumers can engage with marketing and commerce whenever and wherever it makes sense for their lives."

Navigating between digital and analog in marketing is about being in the right context and being contextually appropriate. For example, being active and available in social media channels because that's where many consumers spend their time.

Furthermore, it's about being location-aware and relevant for consumers. A consumer who is going to the grocery store in person is open to a different buying experience than one who is settled in for the night and shopping from home. Those are very distinctive opportunities for marketers to engage consumers and draw them into a buying experience.

The same is true for advertising experiences. When reading certain content on the internet or watching

certain genres of television, consumers will be open to different kinds of messages.

"To overcome this contradiction requires a continual weaving in and out of digital and analog advertising and buying experiences. It comes down to understanding context and knowing how to surround the consumer when they're available and in the way they want to engage," Matthew says.

Actionable recommendations for overcoming contradictory consumer behavior

1. *Have a clear first-party data strategy*

"You've got to have the software, the tools, the partners, the team and a plan to leverage the data you have or are collecting," according to Tilley. Make sure you have a strategy that explains how your company will use their data to make the consumer's life better.

2. *Use direct mail*

There seem to be two types of marketers: those who use direct mail and those who don't.

"Those in the 'don't use' category are missing out on an efficient way to reach a large swathe of the population with a very tangible message of things like deals, coupons, and brand messages really help you connect with the exact right people at the right time," says Matthew.

3. *Intentionally leverage social media and digital marketing efforts*

When using social media, make sure it is not just a part of your communications but a part of your commerce strategy, as well. Social media and digital marketing is not about one tactic or another—it's about leveraging the whole ecosystem of print and digital materials to surround your consumers and connect with them when, where and how they want to.

4. *Prioritize measurement as part of your strategy*

Measurement in this sense refers to the ability to get feedback from the campaign that then automatically plows learnings into the next campaign. This ensures every program is consistently starting from a more informed place than the last.

Additional advice for combating contradictory consumer behavior

"In more philosophical terms, the best way to overcome these contradictions is simply by applying nuance," notes Matthew.

Every audience deserves respect. Consumers operate in a context where they have needs and things they value. Understanding and appreciating those things rounds out who the target audience is and enables brands to meaningfully connect with them.

"The more we think of consumers as people and the more we treat them as actual human beings, the more marketing is going to embrace these paradoxical attitudes, beliefs and behaviors," Matthew says.

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banker. He shared insights from his extensive research, offering a fresh perspective on the industry.

The day concluded with a lively Casino Night Reception, which raised almost \$7,500, and a group dinner featuring a conversation with D.C. insider Geoff Gray and WBA's own Glen Simecek.

On the convention's final day, we started with breakfast and annual meetings for various associations, including the IBA, ICBA, NBA, OBA, and WBA.

During the meeting, the WBA installed a new slate of officers who will serve until 2026.

In the general session following breakfast, Dr. Vange Ocasio Hochheimer from Whitworth University provided a national and regional economic forecast, highlighting key indicators that impact the banking sector. Her session offered valuable insights into interpreting financial data for strategic decision-making.

Jeff Dufour, Editor in Chief of National Journal, analyzed the macro-political factors influencing legislation and the election cycle. He shared insights on voting patterns, key election issues, and the strengths and weaknesses of presidential candidates.

The convention closed out with an inspiring session led by Dr. Bobby Low

from Motivosity, who delivered an engaging presentation inspired by Ted Lasso. He discussed how positivity, empathy, and determination can transform team dynamics and offered practical strategies for building trust and fostering a growth mindset.

The convention ended with closing remarks, leaving attendees with a wealth of knowledge and new connections to return to their organizations. The 2024 WBA Annual Convention was a resounding success, setting a high bar for future events.

The 2025 Convention will be held at Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho on July 28-30.





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SaviBank Celebrates Banker Graduating from Leadership Skagit

SaviBank recently attended the graduation event for Leadership Skagit, where Lori Bouza, a credit assistant lead and trainer officer with the bank, graduated.

In partnership with Skagit Valley College and the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, the program provides leadership development to local community members to prepare them for more prominent roles within their organizations and communities.

Bank of America Volunteers with Special Olympics Washington

The local Bank of America team volunteered with Special Olympia Washington this spring.

The annual event celebrates all the athletes who participate in the Special Olympics in the state.



First Fed Bank Hosts Community Spirit Day

First Fed Bank hosted its first annual Community Spirit Day in early June.

The bank closed branches for half a day so all team members could volunteer with their local Habitat for Humanity.

The bank had 147 volunteers who contributed over 600 hours to Habitat stores and build sites across Puget Sound.

First Fed Announces Another Member of Club 100

This summer, First Fed Bank announced that Jason Robinson joined Club 100.

The club is for those bankers who have volunteered over 100 hours in the year. Robinson has worked with the Olympic Junior Babe Ruth baseball group as a score-



keeper and worked with basketball teams at Peninsula College and Port Angeles High School.



KeyBank Women's Network Supports Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

Members of the KeyBank Women's Network and Bellevue Chamber of Commerce recently attended a Seattle Mariners game, celebrating the strong connections the group has made.



Banner Bank Volunteers with Habitat for Humanity

The Banner Bank team in Spokane recently participated in the Spokane Blitz Build with Habitat for Humanity Spokane.

The volunteers worked on a local building site, helping prepare new housing for families.



Yakima Federal Savings Sponsors Downtown Summer Nights

Yakima Federal Savings sponsored this year's Downtown Summer Nights in Yakima.

The event features free family-friendly concerts every Thursday all summer with local area musicians.

Similarly, the bank also sponsored the TriTown Get Down Festival in Richland.

The three-day event featured 10 stages and over 100 musicians downtown.

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Community First Bank Supports Boys & Girls Clubs of Benton and Franklin Counties

Community First Bank recently announced a donation to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Benton and Franklin Counties.

The donation will support the youth in the community and help young people reach their full potential.



HomeStreet Bank Donates to Ballard Food Bank

HomeStreet Bank announced a donation to the Ballard Food Bank.

The \$1,000 donation will help sponsor the third annual Ballard Bites & Brews event, which includes food, beers, and ciders from local businesses in the Ballard Brewery District. All proceeds from the event benefit the food bank.



JPMorgan Chase Support Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King County Home Dedication Ceremony

JPMorgan Chase recently participated in the Habitat for Hu-

manity Seattle-King County Home Dedication Ceremony for the Yarrow Cottages.

The event celebrated the completion of some of the new cottages at the Community Phase 1 site, where Chase team members have volunteered.



Bank of the Pacific Participates in Berry Dairy Days

The Bank of the Pacific team in Burlington recently participated in the annual Berry Dairy Days parade hosted by the Burlington Chamber of Commerce.

Scholtens Equipment donated a tractor to use during the event.



HomeStreet Bank Donates to Community Lunch on Capitol Hill

HomeStreet Bank recently announced a \$5,000 donation to Community Lunch on Capitol Hill.

The organization feeds the local community by providing hot, nutritious food, clothing, and other critical services.



First Interstate Bank Hosts Financial Education Classes with YWCA

The Seattle First Interstate Bank team recently hosted two days of financial education classes in partnership with the YWCA

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Seattle | King | Snohomish.

The bankers provide information about basic finances and money management and work to help people achieve their dream of homeownership.



Washington Trust Bank Donates to Seattle Nativity School

This spring, Washington Trust Bank announced a \$5,000 donation to the Seattle Nativity School to provide scholarships to families living below the poverty line.

The Catholic, Jesuit-endorsed STEM middle school is committed to breaking the cycle of poverty through education.

"We are grateful for such a generous gift from Washington Trust Bank and the opportunities they have provided to learn more about Community Reinvestment Act grants. Thank you for welcoming Seattle Nativity School into the Washington Trust community," said Judy Shafer, the Director of Development at Seattle Nativity School.

Washington Workforce Alliance Partners with Umpqua Bank and Financial Beginnings

The Washington Workforce Alliance and local workforce boards recently announced a new partnership with Umpqua Bank and Financial Beginnings.

The partnership will allow the organizations to offer customers matched savings accounts and financial coaching.



Peoples Bank Participates in BNCW Golf Tournament

The Peoples Bank team in Wenatchee recently participated in the annual BNCW Golf Tournament.



KeyBank Hosts 3rd Annual Sailing Event

KeyBank's local Key4Women and KeyBank's SBA team recently hosted the 3rd annual Sailing Event for local female entrepreneurs and business professionals.

The group spent part of the day on Seattle's Tall Ship, the Bay Lady, where they connected with community members.



JPMorgan Chase Participates in Bank Days at Tulalip Amphitheater

JPMorgan Chase recently participated in Bank Days at the Tulalip Amphitheater in Marysville.

The event brought together members of the financial services industry to share information with

members of the community at Tulalip Tribes of Washington.



Banks Celebrate 50th Annual Seattle Pride Parade

Banks in Seattle participated in the 50th annual Seattle Pride Parade over the last weekend of June.

KeyBank brought together team members from throughout the region to walk in the parade, led by the bank's local Pride KBING group members.

JPMorgan Chase also participated in the event, led by the Pride Pacific Northwest Business Resource Group members.

Have news to share? Send it to megan@wabankers.com - all submissions are run on a space available basis.

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