Is Your Digital Banking Sign Always On?

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You've already heard the promises: The digital revolution is here, and it's ushering in a new era of profitability, velocity and efficiency.

Or is it?

While you've likely seen your bank's technology budget grow over the last few years, it may be harder to see how that spending translated into gains in business share, customer satisfaction or the bank's bottom line. You may be hearing from frontline employees that operations feel more fractured than ever before. **What's wrong with this picture?**

Your digital experience may be suffering from a chronic case of squeaky-wheel choices as competing objectives elbow for access to finite budget dollars and project resources. **Improving online and mobile offerings may come at the cost of enhancing digital lending capabilities.** Operational efficiencies — a grab bag that can include any number of disparate automation tools intended to reduce cost and improve productivity — may take dollars away from compliance and risk management. You're not building your digital business from scratch; you're methodically replacing and upgrading components across your technology stack. But as long as you still have static data siloes and bifurcated systems in your operational mix, your digital service will collide with stopping points that interfere with a smooth user experience.

Bank transaction supply chains are likely the result of decades-old decisions and solutions so entrenched within the operation that it feels inevitable. **Reimagining the end-to-end solution requires a fresh look at some previous assumptions and a fresh look at the ecosystem of fintech partners.** Executives need to determine if their providers and partners are willing to collaborate to identify and address digital stopping points.

One of the most revealing questions banks can ask their providers is about their own investment strategy. **How much are they putting back into the development of their own solutions?** Small, ongoing investments mean that your partners are spending money on things that don't sustainably deliver benefits to your bank. It also means they aren't looking ahead to solve the next round of technology challenges. If their CEOs aren't actively positioning their solutions for future viability, then you may have found the weak links in your own supply chain.

The customers your bank is trying to reach want speed, ease of use and mobile enablement in everything they do, whether it's one-touch shopping on Zappos or depositing a check into their savings account. While these requirements have defined consumer preferences in retail segments for years, they arguably define consumer preferences in every segment following the quick adaptations the industry made in digital banking in response to Covid-19.

The dream of 24/7/365 banking requires a precise definition of digital: always on. Not “mostly on” until your bank needs a compliance update. Not “pretty much on” until you need to manually advance the loan in the loan origination software or collect physical signature cards. Interconnected services are critical to the always-on digital experience.

Your digital offer should take its inspiration from innovative disrupters outside of the financial industry, like Uber Technologies and Netflix that rewrote the delivery and service aspects of their products with interconnected, cloud-based systems. **Your bank needs to be able to deliver to customers, regardless of whether someone is sitting at your service desk.** Static and bifurcated systems are, by definition, unconnected, and need human intervention for updates to keep you in business.

As your bank continues to invest in technologies to deliver digital banking, make sure you **focus on the end game for your customers**. Digital must be as reliable as turning on a light switch. Interconnected, cloud-based systems from partners who are looking forward with you will help you get there more quickly — and with fewer headaches.