

SIEFER REPORT

Marketing and profit-improvement strategies from top banks & credit unions



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A new series of home-buying seminars is helping this Indiana credit union better compete with Rocket Mortgage®

Attracting new mortgage loans in a highly competitive environment can pose a challenge for just about any size of financial institution today, let alone community banks and credit unions.

While providing features like instant online approvals and mortgage apps can certainly help from a competitive standpoint, Kristi Lowell, Vice President, Brand Strategy and Development at **FORUM Credit Union** (\$1.3 billion, Indianapolis, Indiana), recommends that community financial institutions should leverage their best tool—their people. “Mortgage lending is a big part of our business and a huge driver to what we do,” says Lowell. “Mortgage lending, especially for first-time home buyers, is a complicated and confusing process, and we want to remove that ambiguity and show them how easy and friendly the process can be.”

A friendly face behind the technology

She says that her job is made a little harder because of apps and online mortgage companies offering a Rocket Mortgage®.

“They want to snag customers by marketing their product as being easy, but we want to show our members that the mortgage process is just as easy with us. Plus, you can go through the process with someone who you know.”

She says that it helps to put a “face” in front of the app because it shows borrowers that not only do they have the advantage of mortgage technology, but they also have a friendly professional there to answer their specific questions.

“We started to address this challenge in 2016, when we hosted a large-scale home-buyer's showcase event at the credit union,” says Lowell.

She explains that the credit union has a large conference center that is equipped for these types of events, and last year's showcase mirrored a home-buying and remodeling trade show.

“We pooled all of our connections—which included realtors, insurance providers, remodeling contractors, and inspection services—for a one-time, large event. We invited the general public and structured the event to be more of a trade show, where people could walk from table to table and talk to each company or person.”

She says the credit union ended up getting several mortgage loans from the event. “We thought if we had something that was so successful once a year, why not do something on a smaller scale, but more often—where we presented topics and everything anyone would want to know about home buying and remodeling.”

As a result, the credit union launched a series of home-buying events this fall. Each session is held at the credit union from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. and addresses how to buy a home, home ownership, and mortgage loans.

Direct Mailer for CU's "Homebuyer Spotlight Series" (Side 1)



Source: FORUM Credit Union (Indianapolis, IN)

The event also includes a full question-and-answer session, and bottled water and pre-packaged snacks are offered to those who attend.

Lowell says that all of the topics covered at the sessions are selected based on feedback from the credit union's members. "In fact, during the session registration process, we asked attendees to include any questions they might have so that we could address them during each session."

She says that each home-buying event has been well attended, with up to 45 people checking in.

A few weeks prior to the first session, the credit union sent out a direct mail piece to members who lived near its headquarters location, and then texted out a reminder to attend. "We target those who don't have a mortgage with us and use our MCIF to identify those who are most likely to need a mortgage," says Lowell.

Direct Mailer for CU's Homebuyer Spotlight Series (Side 2)

Are you thinking of building or buying a home? The **FORUM Homebuyer Spotlight Series** can provide you with valuable guidance and resources to help you through the process. Plus, attendees will receive a **VIP Savings Pass worth \$300 off of closing costs** for your home purchase or refinance.

<p>SESSION 1 <i>September 26</i></p> <p>Homeownership – Prepare Like a Pro</p>	<p>SESSION 2 <i>October 4</i></p> <p>The Perfect Purchase Loan</p>	<p>SESSION 3 <i>October 12</i></p> <p>Homebuyer Power Panel</p>
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Location: 11313 USA Parkway, Fishers, IN 46037
Time: 7–8 pm

There is no cost to attend the Spotlight Series and participants will be **entered to win a \$250 Visa Gift Card** (one entry per session attended, winner is selected among all three session entries).

Reserve your spot today by completing the short RSVP form on our website: <https://www.forumcu.com/homebuyerhelp>. Email Maegen.Maloney@forumcu.com with questions.

NMLS ID#: 469848 



FORUM[®]
CREDIT UNION
P.O. Box 50738
Indianapolis, IN 46250

Source: FORUM Credit Union (Indianapolis, IN)

The credit union also promotes its home-buying events through pixel ads on its Website, along with specific ads driving traffic to first-time home-buyer pages.

Additionally, a **First-Time Home-Buyer Guide** is available on the credit union's Website, and it covers a variety of home-buying materials to supplement the sessions. "We also print some of them and hand them out during the sessions."

Lowell says that all attendees from the first session returned for the second one.

She adds that attendees will receive \$300 off of their closing costs if they are approved for a mortgage loan.

Source: *Kristi Lowell, Vice President, Brand Strategy and Development, FORUM Credit Union, Indianapolis, IN; phone (317)558-6252; e-mail kristi.lowell@forumcu.com.*

A Kansas bank is promoting its mobile app with a series of humorous video ads now playing at local movie theaters

Bank of Blue Valley (\$700 million, Overland Park, Kansas) has developed a series of video ads that are being played in local movie theaters.

The result is a unique combination of home-town advertising and digital marketing that's driving new Website traffic and checking account sales.

"We created three, 15-second spots that run among the national spots before the movie begins," explains Season Lentz, Vice President of Marketing. "We started running the ads on September 29th in two of the largest theaters in the area, and they will run through the end of December."

*The three "BBV at the Movie" spots include the following: **Cut!; Playing Yourself;** and **Junior Mints?***

Screen Still from "Playing Yourself" Movie Theater Ad



Source: Bank of Blue Valley (Overland Park, KS)

The three spots focus on how easy it is for people to use the bank's mobile banking app—and right from their seat at the theater before the movie starts.

Bank's BankBV.com/Movies Landing Page



Bank of Blue Valley at the Movies



Thanks for joining us at the movies! We are excited you want to learn about Bank of Blue Valley and invite you to take advantage of our wide variety of banking products and services, all designed to meet your specific needs. We are a locally-owned and locally-managed community bank committed to building lasting relationships with our customers and our community. Your success is our success and we are dedicated to growing our community.

We have a variety of [personal checking](#) and [savings accounts](#) to choose from - take your pick and click the "Open Now" button! All of our personal checking accounts come with the following digital services at no cost to you:

LIVECHAT

Online Banking

Check your account balances from your computer or tablet with [BlueWave Online Banking](#). Make **transfers**, **export history**, view **eStatements**, **pay bills**, or **pay a person!** You can set up custom balance and transaction **alerts** to keep an eye on your accounts.



Debit Card

Our debit cards come with [uChoose Rewards®](#). Cash in your rewards for great **merchandise**, **gifts**, even **cash back!** With [CardValet®](#), our **debit cards can be turned off and on** with the push of a button (worried you left it somewhere?), and you can place **spend limits** or get **push notifications** for specific purchases, all on your smartphone. Not near a Bank of Blue Valley ATM? No problem! With the [MoneyPass ATM Locator](#) you can find and use **surcharge-free ATMs** nationwide!

Mobile Banking

Check your account balances from your smartphone or tablet with the [Bank of Blue Valley Mobile](#) app. Make **transfers**, **view checks**, **pay bills**, and **deposit checks!**



Smart Checking

No fees and digital tools to bank anywhere:

Get all of these great features by opening our Smart Checking account. There is no **minimum balance requirement**, and **no monthly service charge**. Our Smart Checking account is non-interest bearing. No minimum deposit required when opened at a branch, \$100 minimum deposit required when opened online.

[Click here to open your Smart Checking Account now!](#)

Have a question? Give us a call at [913-338-1000](tel:913-338-1000).



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Bank deposit products provided by Bank of Blue Valley, Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

Source: Bank of Blue Valley (Overland Park, KS)

"Each spot is generally similar, but we put a new twist at the end of each," says Lentz.

The Playing Yourself video shows Bob Regnier, President and CEO, holding his phone and a box of candy, sitting next to 1st Vice President/eBusiness Solutions Sheila Stratton, with a bucket of popcorn between them.

They have the following conversation:

Regnier: *Did you know that before the movie begins, you have to time deposit a check or pay a bill—all from your phone?! Isn't that right, Sheila?*

Stratton: *That's right! Open an account today at bankbv.com/movies and see how easy banking can be.*

Regnier: *Can we do that again? I wasn't in character.*

Stratton: *Aren't you playing yourself?*

According to Regnier, the bank ran still-image ads at its local movie theaters about 10 years ago, and they produced a great response. "We had no way to really track progress, but people liked them and would say things like, *Hey, I saw Bob at the movies yesterday!*"

Regnier says that when the recession then hit, however, the bank pulled back on superfluous advertising.

Lentz says with the return of its movie theater ads today, the bank has set goals to reach more consumers and to grow deposits. "The movie ads are back, but this time they're in video form, which allows us to speak directly to the audience."

The bank also created a special "Bank of Blue Valley at the Movies" landing page—at www.bankbv.com/movies—to accompany each spot. The landing page offers more information about the bank and its convenience services. "Plus, you can read about our Smart Checking product, and can even open the account online," says Lentz.

The bank's Smart Checking is a basic, non-interest bearing account with no balance requirements, and also includes a MasterCard® Debit Card, online banking and bill pay, mobile banking, e-statements, and access to the bank's surcharge-free MoneyPass® ATM Network.

Regnier says that while the movie spots are successfully driving more online traffic to Bank of Blue Valley, the bank also recently made some changes to help increase in foot traffic. "The funny thing is, we just remodeled our main headquarters and have created a state-of-the-art branch," he says. "Someone told me we just made this huge update to the branch but, as a result of our digital efforts, are going to start seeing all of this traffic online rather than coming into the branches!"

Yet, he says that all business—whether it's coming in through the door or through the mobile app—is positive. "Our overall goal is to increase retail deposits, and we need to hit all of the channels to make that happen."

Lentz says that she initially posted the movie ad launch on the bank's **Facebook page**, and she boosted the post so that it reached 1,000 people. "From the post, about 71 people were engaged and we actually heard from some who saw the spot."

She says the campaign landing page has had 45 unique visitors since the end of September, and people have also clicked on the bank's MoneyPass ATM locator, its "Meet Our Team" page, as well as on its online banking and personal checking pages.

"We plan to watch what happens over the next few months with the movie ads, and then we'll re-evaluate to see if we want to move onto more theaters or revise our ads," says Lentz. "So far the campaign is working well!"

Source: *Bob Regnier, President and CEO; Season Lentz, Vice President, Marketing Director, Bank of Blue Valley, Overland Park, KS; phone (913)338-1000; e-mail slentz@bankbv.com.*

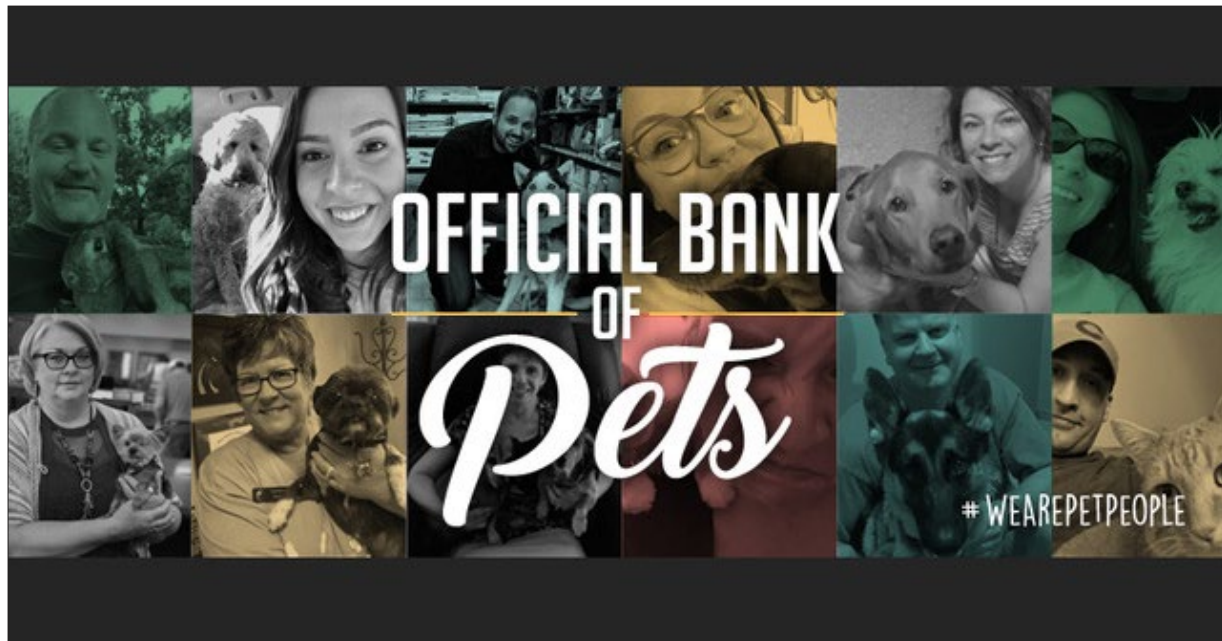
A Missouri bank is increasing branch traffic and sales with ads saying it's "The Official Bank of Pets"—plus other themes

Equity Bank (\$2.4 billion, Kansas City, Missouri) has launched a series of "The Official Bank of..." promotions that are helping develop more Primary Financial Institution relationships with people from the community.

John Hanley, Senior Vice President/Director of Marketing, says The Official Bank of... concept began at the beginning of this year, and it's the bank's way of telling customers it can address all of their needs on a variety of life events—from buying a house to starting a business. He says the brand also gives the bank an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the community. "We started off the year with themes like *The Official Bank of Home Buyers*, followed by *The Official Bank of Newlyweds*, and *The Official Bank of Adventure*. We've changed up the messages monthly, with quarterly refreshes for media and advertising."

Recently, the bank saw tremendous success with its "The Official Bank of Pets" campaign, which kicked off in August and ran for 60 days.

Ad for "The Official Bank of Pets" Campaign



Source: Equity Bank (Kansas City, MO)

Whenever a customer opened an account during the campaign, the bank donated \$25 to a local animal shelter or cause, plus gave new accountholders a water dish for their pet.

Throughout the promotional period, the bank also held several in-branch pet adoption events, which helped drive branch traffic, says Hanley. "The adoption days did really well. The two-hour event we had at our west Wichita location resulted in 35 dogs being adopted."

Hanley says The Official Bank of... campaigns have exceeded his expectations, with new account growth at a new high. For instance, he says that during The Official Bank of Pets campaign, the bank opened 25 percent more checking accounts than forecasted.

The bank is marketing The Official Bank of... campaigns primarily through digital marketing, along with radio ads in its smaller markets and outdoor ads in its larger markets.

Each campaign is also promoted on social media, which Hanley says was an especially effective communication channel during the pet promotion. "Customers were excited on social media with our adoption events and it starts a conversation."

Photo from One of the Bank's Pet Adoption Events



Source: Equity Bank (Kansas City, MO)

Hanley notes that messaging and diligently observing a campaign is the best way to find success with digital marketing. “We have a position dedicated to actively monitoring search traffic into the site and search terms being used, so we can adjust and update along the way.”

He says that it's important to have a dedicated digital media specialist on board. “There’s no quick fix with digital—you can’t just order a campaign from an agency and let it run. You have to be monitoring it almost minute to minute so that you can tweak as you go.”

According to Hanley, The Official Bank of... campaigns will run through the end of the year and will continue to address new topics.

Source: *John Hanley, Senior Vice President/Director of Marketing, Equity Bank, Kansas City, MO; phone (913)216-0061; e-mail jhanley@equitybank.com.*

A Maryland CU's sweepstakes promotion encourages customers to log onto their account multiple times each month

Johns Hopkins Federal Credit Union (\$400 million, Baltimore, Maryland) is increasing online banking usage with a sweepstakes that rewards members for simply logging onto their account.

During the campaign, which runs from August through December, users who log onto online banking at least six times during the month are entered into a monthly drawing to win \$500.

One \$500 winner is randomly drawn on September 1st, October 1st, November 1st, December 1st, and January 1st.

Holly Shek, Marketing and Outreach Manager, says the credit union ran a similar sweepstakes last April, and again in December. "But for those campaigns, we only held them for one month," she says. "The prize was the same, but members had to log on 12 times during the month instead of six. We didn't see as much traction during those two campaigns, so this time we reduced the number of required transactions, increased the promotional period, and are seeing some great results."

The credit union is tracking active users, and Shek reports that within only two months, it has boosted its active number by 1,300 users, and some members are logging on 128 to 300 times per month.

"What typically happens when we hold a promotion is that we see numbers increase at the beginning of the promotion, but then they taper or level off. However, this time we saw engagement spike at the beginning, but then slowly and steadily continue to climb."


Shek says that for the credit union, boosting engagement with online services means that more members can be served in a variety of ways.

“There are still going to be people who want to do their banking in the branches, but driving more people to e-services provides more avenues for us to help all of our members.”

Ad for Online Banking Campaign (Side 1)


Log in for your chance to

WIN \$500¹



Log in to your account at least six (6) times each month from August through December.

There will be one winner each month.



JOHNS HOPKINS
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
Built by and for the Hopkins community

Source: Johns Hopkins Federal Credit Union (Baltimore, MD)

The credit union is primarily marketing the sweepstakes electronically. "We are doing a lot of SEO with our new Website, so that's helping drive traffic."

Ad for Online Banking Campaign (Side 2)

How to Enroll in Online Banking

1. Visit our homepage, jhfcu.org.
2. Click "Register" under the "Log In" box.
3. Enter your Account Number, the Random Code and your TeleBranch24 PIN².
4. Follow the next few steps, and you'll be banking anytime, anywhere!

Forgot Password? Locked Out of Online Banking?

1. Visit our homepage, jhfcu.org.
2. Click "Forgot ID/Password" under the "Log In" box.
3. Click "Go to Password Reset."
4. Enter the required information.
5. Click "Submit."

The information you enter must match our records. Upon submitting the form successfully, a temporary password will be sent to your email address on file.

Need Help?

Call us at **410-534-4500, press 2**, or stop in any of our branches.

Online Banking Benefits

- Browse and activate your Ca\$hPerks rebate offers – Earn cash with your debit card!³
- Check your account balance(s)
- View your account transaction history
- Deposit checks with DeposZip^{®4}
- Transfer funds between your JHFCU accounts
- Pay bills with our free Bill Pay
- Apply for a loan or Visa[®] credit card
- Set up automatic recurring transfers, payments or email alerts
- Send secure wires
- Track/manage your budget
- Get your statement even faster with E-Statements
- Print your tax forms the day they are available
- View images of cleared checks
- Request a check withdrawal

¹Visit jhfcu.org for Sweepstakes Rules. ²Your TeleBranch24 PIN (personal identification number) was given to you the day you signed up for the Credit Union. It is used to access your account via telephone. It was printed on the paper your account card was attached to. If you do not have your TeleBranch24 PIN, please call or stop in any of our branches. If at any time you changed this PIN, please use the most recent one. ³Each offer comes with terms and limitations. Some retailers limit the amount per offer, but there is no limit on the total amount you can earn from multiple offers. Minimum purchase may be required, see offer for details. Cash back will be credited to your account the last day of the following month the cash back was earned. Some rebates may take longer to process. ⁴Must meet eligibility requirements.

Federally insured by NCUA

Source: Johns Hopkins Federal Credit Union (Baltimore, MD)

"We also have large posters in the lobby, and our member service representatives hand out flyers with each teller transaction."

In addition, the credit union mentioned the sweepstakes in its newsletter during the first month of the campaign, and it sends e-mail blasts to members—one during the first week of the month and one during the last week.

The sweepstakes is promoted on social media as well, including posts that feature each monthly winner. "We also post a photo of the winner on the Website, along with the past winners. Every time we have a new winner, we send a message alerting the membership of the new winners. People like to see the past and present winners because sometimes they'll see their friends and people they know."

Shek says that since the campaign has been so successful, the credit union may repeat it. "People are still very engaged, so if we do something like this again it might be later next year. What we are creating now is a habit, because once you start something like logging in just once a month or once a week, it can become a habit that continues long after the promotion is over."

Source: *Holly Shek, Marketing and Outreach Manager, Johns Hopkins Federal Credit Union, Baltimore, MD; phone (410)534-4500, ext. 260; e-mail hsherk@jhfcu.org.*

A "We Love Our Community" campaign helps this Massachusetts bank showcase its commitment to local residents and businesses

Main Street Bank (\$980 million, Marlborough, Massachusetts) is running a series of "We Love Our Community" campaigns to help develop relationships with local residents and businesses.

For example, most recently some of the bank's employees attended a Friday night high school football game in Marlborough and gave out 500 prizes to the fans.

According to Ellen W. Dorian, Executive Vice President–Retail Division, the We Love Our Community concept was inspired by the success of a "We Love Hudson" campaign that was run by Marlborough Savings Bank prior to merging with North Middlesex Savings Bank to become Main Street Bank.

The campaign introduced Marlborough Savings Bank to the Hudson, Mass. community, where it was opening a new branch, and included pay-it-forward events at local businesses about six months leading up to the opening.

"We would contact the business ahead of time and ask if we could give something away to their customers at their place of business."

The events ranged from purchasing a local bakery's cookies that said "We Love Hudson" and handing them out, to paying for the first 100 customers to order corned beef and cabbage at a local restaurant.

At another restaurant in Hudson, Marlborough Savings Bank purchased customers' lunch. "Instead of having the wait staff present the bill at the end of the meal, one of our staffers walked the bill over, introduced themselves, and then said that the bank covered their meal. The responses we got were amazing. I think people were worried they were going to get some sales speech since we were dressed in our bank shirts. But when they found out we were just there to introduce ourselves to the community and buy their lunch, they were thrilled. In fact, one person said it was the best day of their life!"

The pay-it-forward events weren't just limited to food. "One was a spa day that was held at one of the nicest spas in Hudson. We gave out goodie bags with hand cream and chocolates, along with a scratch-off ticket where the customer would receive 20 percent off their services that day, or a free massage or mani-pedi."

Dorian says Marlborough Savings Bank's We Love Hudson efforts resulted in meeting its goal—which was to reach \$6 million within the first year—six months ahead of time.

"The last grand opening we had was in 2006 and, like with most new branches, it took a while to meet our goal."

She says it seemed only natural to continue with the We Love Our Community concept after the merger, which took place earlier this year.

"When a campaign is successful, it has the potential to work in other markets," says Dorian. "Our intention is to carry the We Love campaign to every one of our market areas over the next year or so."

Currently, Main Street Bank is running a "We Love Ayer" campaign that features pay-it-forward events in the town of Ayer, Mass.

"We brought the concept to Ayer, since we know that we do best when we are in front of people," says Dorian.

She says that before the merger, North Middlesex Savings Bank's headquarters was in Ayer, so it's had a large presence in the community since 1885.

"The merger to become Main Street Bank is the perfect time for us to show our continued commitment to the Ayer community. Once again, we're able to tell our story and engage our audience when we can speak with them. The campaign also builds teamwork among our employees, since we get volunteers to help who are not just from the branch staff, but from other areas of the bank as well."

She says the bank held a brainstorming event with several teammates and came up with different locations in Ayer that bring people together.

"The objective is to find a location where people from the community will be, partner with a local business, and bring our team in for some fun."

In September, for instance, Main Street Bank held a “Coffee, and Trains, and Ayer, OH MY!” event, where employees spent the morning at the Ayer Train Station and passed out complimentary coffee from Union Coffee Roaster to commuters on four trains.

Dorian says the bank partnered with Union Coffee Roaster since it's not only a customer, but also a popular local business that sells delicious coffee. “The train station is within walking distance to our Ayer branch and to Union Coffee Roaster.”

Sign Shown at "Coffee, and Trains, and Ayer, OH MY!" Event



Source: Main Street Bank (Marlborough, MA)

"Once we had the idea, we approached them about providing the coffee at our expense. They loved the idea and worked with the team on the logistics."

The coffee cups for the event included a custom sleeve that people could later bring into a Main Street Bank branch and open a Kasasa Checking account to receive \$50. "We want people to come into our branch and check us out," says Dorian. "So far, we have one new customer relationship who is switching all of their big bank accounts to us!"

Photo from Coffee, and Trains, and Ayer, OH MY! Event



Source: Main Street Bank (Marlborough, MA)

Aside from the coffee, the bank raffled off a Kindle for the winner's reading pleasure on the train.

LOW-COST MARKETING & ATTRACTING NEW CUSTOMERS

As explained in the story above, Marlborough Savings Bank brought along its “We Love Our Community” campaign when it merged with North Middlesex Savings Bank earlier this year to become Main Street Bank (\$980 million, Marlborough, MA).

Ellen W. Dorian, Executive Vice President–Retail Division, says that when Marlborough Savings initially created the campaign concept to announce a branch opening in Hudson, one of the biggest appeals was that it was relatively low cost. “We were thinking about how expensive marketing is, especially when it came to really engaging and getting people excited,” she says. “We were just a small community bank and marketing can be extremely expensive—and sometimes not very engaging—so we wanted to devise a way to reach the community and let them know what we have to offer.”

She says that during the six months leading up to the Hudson grand opening, the bank documented its pay-it-forward efforts through social media. “We also ran a few ads in the local paper, but most of the marketing was through our community outreach and social media. We spent about \$9,000 for eight months of consistent activity in front of over 2,000 prospects and customers, which is a pretty good return on investment.”

Dorian adds that on the day the branch opened, the bank’s 65 employees received \$20 each to spend in Hudson. “We wanted employees to get to know each other and get to know Hudson.”

Not only did retail customers respond to the new branch, but many businesses became bank customers as well. “We were happy with the number of new business customers we got after the grand opening. Some area businesses said they were pleased with their bank, and that’s great, but some brought all or some of their business over to us, too.”

Dorian says the total cost for the event—including the purchase of the coffee, the custom coffee sleeves, and the Kindle—was around \$600 dollars.

“We probably saw about 60 people,” she says. “Thirty people submitted a raffle entry, and the feedback was great; they thought it was a cool idea.”

Dorian says Facebook marketing is a big component of the We Love Our Community campaigns, so the bank posted teasers on its **Facebook page** leading up to the free coffee event that encouraged people to guess where in Ayer it was going to be.

One post a couple of weeks before the event included a photo of the storefront of Union Coffee Roasters, beside a “Town of Ayer” light pole banner, and said, *We love the Town of Ayer! Our branch has been here on Main Street since 1885, and we are celebrating with a great community event on September 21st. More clues will come as we lead up to this event. Do you have a guess yet of where we will be and who we are partnering with?*

Another post, a week later, featured a train station photo and said, *Our event in Downtown Ayer is one week away. We have a surprise that will help make your morning commute “brew-tiful!” Hop on the train and join the fun!*

Finally, a couple of days before the coffee event, the bank posted, *Have you guessed where we will be THURSDAY morning? Coffee and Trains and Ayer, OH MY!*

The bank also shared photos and a video after the event, showing people stopping by the bank's tent at the train station to receive their free coffee.

Dorian says the next We Love Our Community effort that's scheduled is a “We Love Marlborough” event as part of the current merged headquarters, and it will run sometime later this fall.

Source: *Ellen W. Dorian, Executive Vice President–Retail Division, Main Street Bank, Marlborough, MA; phone (508)460-4153; e-mail edorian@bankmainstreet.com.*

Here are 15 questions for your officers to ask small business and commercial clients during calls

Do you encourage your calling officers to ask questions when they're out on calls?

If not, you should! Good questions can get your small business and commercial customers talking. This, in turn, allows you to find out the financial services they really want or need. Once you've gotten this information, the actual job of selling becomes much easier!

Questions can lead to new sales

What sort of questions should you ask small business and commercial customers?

Here are 15 questions for small business and commercial customers that can lead to new sales:

- 1) Do you have any expansion plans for this year or next?
- 2) Has anyone ever told you about our special credit card services for business owners?
- 3) Are you doing most of your business banking online now?
- 4) Did you know we now offer a business line of credit that can be accessed from your mobile phone?
- 5) Do you plan on hiring any additional employees this year?
- 6) Was last year a good year for your business?
- 7) Did you know that our interest rate on business and commercial real estate loans is near an all-time low now?
- 8) Do you have a son or daughter who will be working for you someday?
- 9) If you had an extra \$500,000 now, how would you use it to grow your company?

10) What are you not getting from your current financial institution that you really need?

FIVE ICE BREAKERS THAT CAN HELP START A CONVERSATION WITH PROSPECTS

Let's face it: Cold calling is what gives sales a bad name.

While everyone likes to stop and visit with existing customers—who are often old friends—few people really relish making a cold call on an entirely new prospect.

Officers who do make a lot of cold calls tell us that “ice breakers” can help. These are simply ways to get the conversation started on a friendly note and put your client at ease.

With this in mind, we've created a list of five ice breakers your calling officers can use as they simultaneously hand their business card to the prospect.

One of these five ice breakers is bound to help your officers on their very next cold call:

- 1) I've never taken the opportunity to stop by your business before—you certainly do have a nice office!
- 2) It's great to have a sunny day for a change, isn't it?
- 3) I've often seen you around town and it's nice to finally meet you.
- 4) Besides running this business, I hear you also play a good game of golf.
- 5) I think I saw you last week at a high school basketball game. Your daughter is really playing well this year.

Ice breakers, such as the ones listed above, should only be used to get the conversation started with a new prospect. Most company owners and other professionals are busy and will appreciate it if you then quickly get down to business.

11) Do you know what you are paying to process your retail credit card transactions?

12) Did you know we have a new branch just four blocks from here?

13) Do you think that you or your employees might be interested in our direct deposit payroll service?

14) If you are currently investing in stocks or bonds, would you like to visit with one of our financial planners?

15) Would you be interested in possibly reducing service charges by switching to our commercial checking account?

Don't hit them all at once

Of course, we don't recommend that you corner a business executive and proceed to ask him or her every question on your list—far from it.

What we do recommend is that you occasionally ask business customers a few carefully thought-out questions.

This approach also gives your prospects a chance to talk about themselves or their company—a favorite topic!

Try this idea: Suggest to your calling officers that they try to ask a minimum of five questions to each business owner or commercial prospect they call on.

Request that your officers simply ask these questions during the normal course of the conversation, and then carefully listen to what the prospect has to say.

We're betting that the answers they receive will lead to new business!

A Maine CU is offering a financial literacy game to attract community youth, ages 8 to 14, and their parents to local branches

University Credit Union (\$284 million, Orono, Maine) has introduced a modern financial literacy game that's helping it connect with potential youth members and their parents.

"We wanted to provide more education to our younger members in an interactive way," says Stephanie Beck, Marketing Manager.

Beck says that MoneyIsland™, which the credit union provides through **Kasasa**, is an online financial literacy game designed for children between the ages of eight and 14. It can be played on a desktop or laptop computer, or on an iPad.

To get started, parents enroll their child by submitting an online form (available [here](#)). They can then stop by the credit union to pick up a "boarding pass"—which includes an access code to begin playing the game—along with a "passport." The passport is 24 pages and includes 60 stickers matching the destinations and "gurus" that appear during the child's journey playing the game.

MoneyIsland™ "Boarding Pass"



Source: University Credit Union (Orono, ME)

MoneyIsland players go on adventures to thrilling places like the Eiffel Tower and Atlantis. Along the way, they work on different financial areas—including spending; saving and investing; and the use of credit. The overall mission of the game is to save “Stone Broke” (access a demo of the game [here](#)).

Parents receive progress reports

Parental involvement is a key piece to the game as, according to Kasasa, approximately 45 percent of high school seniors say they are not ready to manage their money. As a result, parents are encouraged to follow along with the game by tracking their children's progress through e-mailed progress reports. Parents can also access **special lesson plans** designed to supplement the child's learning.

Once youth save Stone Brook, they receive an electronic certificate they can redeem at the credit union for their choice of a MoneyIsland T-shirt or a movie pass.

MoneyIsland™ "Passport" Cover



Source: University Credit Union (Orono, ME)

"Since launching in August, we've already had a few kids win the game!" says Beck.

Children who complete the game can also continue learning and having fun with financial management through MoneyIsland games, videos, and contests (view [here](#)). In addition, parents are encouraged to open a savings account for their child, so he or she can learn how to apply the MoneyIsland lessons to real life.

Marketing MoneyIsland posed a slight challenge, says Beck, since the credit union has a large footprint and has to reach members living statewide. "We started by marketing the launch through a press release and included displays in our branches that included the passports. We also put toy gold coins and blow-up palm trees around the display to keep it fun."

Other promotional efforts include slides on lobby TV screens, and member service representatives mention the game to parents and youth whenever they visit one of the credit union's branches.

The credit union is also taking MoneyIsland to local schools. "Starting in early September, we started reaching out to educators and libraries to share the game and drum up more of a widespread interest," says Beck.

School classes that complete MoneyIsland by saving Stone Brook are rewarded with an electronic certificate that teachers can redeem at the credit union for a group pizza party or a donation to the classroom. Afterward, teachers can also access lesson plans and activities in the **Parents & Teachers** section on the site.

Beck says the ultimate goal with MoneyIsland is to create a stronger bond with parents in the community. "We want them to know we are their resource for financial literacy, and that you don't have to be a member of the credit union to receive financial literacy support."

So far, the number of parents enrolling their children in the game has grown steadily since the launch, says Beck. "We are also pleased with the level of interaction we are seeing, and the follow-up within the communities."

Source: *Stephanie Beck, Marketing, Manager, University Credit Union, Orono, ME; phone (207)889-9914; e-mail sbeck@ucu.maine.edu.*

A Wisconsin bank is running a "Kick-Start Your Dreams" digital and social media campaign to celebrate its 125th anniversary

Citizens Bank (\$715 million, Mukwonago, Wisconsin) is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year with a "Kick-Start Your Dreams" campaign that gives customers the chance to win \$125 for answering financial-related questions.

The campaign runs from March through December. Every month, the bank asks a new question and those who answer have the chance to win one of two \$125 giveaways.

"Each month's theme poses a question centered on how the customer might be able to achieve one of their dreams," says Stefanie Bonesteel, Assistant Vice President/Marketing. "We selected different dreams that take funding."

The question one month was, *If you could start your own business, what would you do?* Another question was, *What does your dream home look like?* Currently, the bank is asking, *If you could buy any kind of vehicle, what would it be? Tell us what you dream of cruising down the highway in now through November 6th for a chance to win \$125!*

Bonesteel says that each contest runs for about three weeks and kicks off mid-month. The bank announces the new question through an e-mail blast to customers that provides a link to the campaign **landing page**. From there, customers can click on a link for an entry form that asks for their first and last name; mailing and e-mail address; and their response to the monthly question.

The campaign and monthly questions are also promoted on the bank's **Facebook page**. Recently, the bank posted the following for its car-related question: *As our 125th anniversary rolls on, we want to know... If you could buy any kind of vehicle, what would it be? A fancy sports car, a motorcycle, a classic car, or maybe just something with four tires that runs? Tell us what you dream of cruising down the road in for your chance to win \$125! Enter now! <https://www.citizenbank.com/125years.htm>.*

The bank also uses Facebook to posts photos of the monthly winners holding a big check. "We still like using the big check for the winners," says Bonesteel.

Branch Sign for "Kick-Start Your Dreams" Campaign



Giving Back
125 YEARS
Looking Forward 

*What are your dreams for your future?
 Is it to buy a home, send a kid to college,
 or enjoy a retirement full of travel?*

To mark our 125th anniversary, each month through December, two lucky people will

win \$125

to use as seed money to start their journeys toward fulfilling big dreams!

ENTER TODAY!

www.citizenbank.com/125year.htm

Follow us on social media: Citizens Bank - WI.   

CITIZENS BANK
For Now. For the Future.

Member FDIC NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. A PURCHASE DOES NOT INCREASE CHANCES OF WINNING. Complete rules and eligibility available on our website or upon request.



Source: Citizens Bank (Mukwonago, WI)

"The great thing is that people will see that their friends and neighbors won, which is a great way to make those connections."

In the posts featuring the winners, the bank announces the question for the next contest to help motivate people to participate.

Bonesteel says that even though the bank isn't directly cross promoting products and services with the campaign, she runs small ads along the side of the campaign landing page to remind customers of what the bank has to offer. For example, when the bank asked what people's dream home was, a mortgage ad was featured on the landing page, with details about how the bank could help make owning a dream home a reality.

To date, each monthly giveaway offer is averaging about 200 entries, says Bonesteel. "For the first one, we had about 500 entries!"

She says that if the bank decides to repeat a similar type of campaign, it may change the set-up of the prize component. "One limitation was the \$125. It would have been better to give away a larger amount of money, but we were tying it to the 125 anniversary. I'd also consider shortening the length, and maybe doing fewer giveaways."

Source: *Stefanie Bonesteel, Assistant Vice President/Marketing, Citizens Bank, Mukwonago, WI; phone (262)378-4839; e-mail sbonesteel@citizenbank.com.*

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Current Rates

CD AVERAGES (APY)

	Current	Last month
1-year	1.70%	1.65%
2-year	2.10%	2.05%
5-year	2.40%	2.40%

Source: www.bankrate.com

CHECKING (APY)

	Current	Last month
Interest checking	0.41%	0.41%

Source: www.bankrate.com

SAVINGS (APY)

	Current	Last month
MMA	0.70%	0.70%
MMA (\$10,000)	0.62%	0.62%

Source: www.bankrate.com

TREASURY BILLS

13-week (investment rate)	1.149%
26-week (investment rate)	1.286%

Source: www.publicdebt.treas.gov

STOCK INDEXES

Dow Jones Industrial Average Current	23,348.74
NASDAQ Current	6,698.96

Source: <http://money.cnn.com>
Source: www.nasdaq.com

PRIME RATE

Prime Rate current	4.25%
one month ago	4.25%
one year ago	3.50%

Source: www.bloomberg.com

MORTGAGE RATE AVERAGE

30-yr FRM current	3.92%
one month ago	3.81%
one year ago	3.41%

15-yr FRM current	3.15%
one month ago	3.11%
one year ago	2.67%

5/1-yr ARM current	3.21%
one month ago	3.17%
one year ago	2.85%

Source: www.bloomberg.com

NEW CAR RATE AVERAGE

60-month New Car current	4.30%
one month ago	4.29%

Source: www.bankrate.com

CREDIT CARD AVERAGES

low-interest credit cards	13.57%
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cash-back credit cards	17.91%
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Source: www.bankrate.com