

.BANK Success Story: Citizens National Bank

www.wercitizens.bank



Citizens National Bank (CNB) is the second largest independently owned and operated community bank in Kentucky with assets of \$617 million. Headquartered in the city of Paintsville, CNB has 167 employees and operates thirteen branches serving nine counties throughout the east and northeast parts of the state.

“The security related to .BANK is paramount. In the future, it will set us up to stand out from other competitors in branding and marketing.”

**RAMONA LANEY, AVP/
MARKETING OFFICER,
CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK**

WHY .BANK?

There are quite a few national banks utilizing the brand “Citizens,” so when the bank’s CEO, V. Burton Bellamy, first read about the .BANK initiative in American Banker he knew this was not only a move that the bank should seriously consider for the enhanced security provided by .BANK, but an opportunity for the company to update and rebrand. The .COM offerings had always been limiting for the bank, and now with .BANK they finally had the opportunity to lose the outdated URL CNBONLINE.COM and focus on its brand.

In addition to the marketing benefits, security measures are a key selling point for the .BANK web domain. According to CNB staff, security has always been a crucial component of its offerings to customers. After reviewing the security requirements and other policies that fTLD Registry Services requires for those operating a .BANK domain name, CNB decided not only to register, but to be an early adopter.

MIGRATION

Making the transition from .COM to .BANK was straightforward and included a small team from the marketing and technology departments, along with the CEO. As Ramona Laney, CNB’s AVP/Marketing Officer described, “We proceeded like it wasn’t a big project, it was just something we were going to do.”

The group began speaking with its core processor in May 2015, and the new website went live in September 2015.



@fTLD_Registry

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TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CNB's transition to the new domain name was slightly delayed at the beginning when its core processor was unsure they were able to help make the transition. Laney confided, "We had made the decision on the domain name, found it was available and wanted to secure our .BANK domain. We decided to register with one of the approved registrars and when our core became ready we would transfer, but at the 11th hour, they came thru and said they could do it."

An agreement was signed and the teams got to work.

Laney was thrilled that its core processor quickly took on the bulk of the technical configuration responsibilities, allowing for bank staff to focus their attention on the day-to-day needs of its customers. CNB would become one of its core processor's first clients to move to the .BANK domain name.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

CNB took an organic approach to the transition to .BANK by placing minimal information on its website, and only sporadically. Laney said the bank "didn't want to interrupt [the] routines" of its customers before it was necessary. However, once the change occurred, bank staff received t-shirts advertising the change as a fun way to stimulate conversation with customers about online security measures.

As for other resources, CNB only reprinted business cards because the domain name in its email addresses changed to correspond to its new .BANK domain. Other marketing materials such as letterhead and brochures will be updated as they run out, so as not to incur unnecessary costs.

LESSONS LEARNED

The switch to a .BANK domain name has definitely reinvigorated CNB's branding efforts. The bank recently started a new campaign to enhance its social media presence and will soon be utilizing different metrics to measure success and continue delivering exceptional customer service to its current customers, while working to attract new ones.

In the months since the .BANK website launched, Laney has not received any negative feedback from customers or other bank constituents. Considering the bulk of the expenses went to rebranding efforts, and was "so minimal compared to the benefits of the security you're gaining," we'd call this a true .BANK success story.