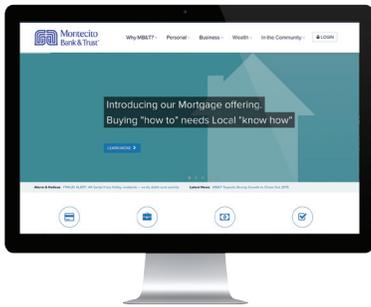


# .BANK Success Story: Montecito Bank & Trust

[www.montecito.bank](http://www.montecito.bank)



“Following the 2008 recession, robust risk management became a key differentiator to compete and win. Migrating to .BANK was a simple and logical decision as part of this strategy.”

**JANET GARUFIS,**  
MB&T'S PRESIDENT AND CEO

Montecito Bank & Trust (MB&T), an S Corporation, is the oldest and largest locally owned community bank in the Santa Barbara and Ventura counties in California. Founded in 1975, MB&T offers a variety of competitive deposit and lending solutions for businesses and consumers, as well as online services, including mobile banking and cash management. Its Wealth Management Division provides full investment management as well as trust services at all branch office markets. The bank has more than 200 associates and holds \$1.2 billion in assets.

## WHY .BANK?

Paul Abramson, MB&T's Director of Technology, was a key driver in the bank's decision to migrate from its MONTECITO.COM to MONTECITO.BANK domain name. His first exposure to the .BANK domain was in 2013 as part of a discussion about the larger gTLD expansion. Abramson acknowledged that he initially thought that the .BANK domain was a novelty. However, after researching fTLD Registry Services' (fTLD) strategy and value proposition for .BANK, inclusive of the mandatory verification process and security requirements of the domain, Abramson recognized the goals were aligned with MB&T's objectives and brought the issue to the attention of the MB&T's president and CEO, Janet Garufis.

It was after the 2008 financial crisis that Ms. Garufis first identified the value that a robust approach to risk management could play as a key differentiator to compete and win in the market. Risk management also represented a platform to engage MB&T's customers in an ongoing dialog about security, including the protection of their assets and personal information. Migrating to a .BANK domain name integrated seamlessly into MB&T's broader cybersecurity program.

## MIGRATION

The decision for MB&T to migrate its banking operations to MONTECITO.BANK was done at the senior management level, and was driven primarily by the technology and marketing departments. The team charged with implementing the new domain consisted of five people, and it took them less than four months from the time of registering the domain name (June 26, 2015) until the time the new website went live (October 15, 2015). Asked to describe any concerns related to the transition, Abramson described it as “largely a non-event.”



@fTLD\_Registry

| [www.register.bank](http://www.register.bank)



## TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the primary reasons that the migration to MONTECITO.BANK went so seamlessly was Abramson's close coordination with these technology vendors:

CloudFlare helped enable MB&T to meet the industry regulations for the domain change as well as bulletproof the site from sophisticated cybersecurity threats. CloudFlare provides Domain Name System resolution services and was key in implementing Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC).

Proofpoint, a leading cybersecurity company, provides email security services and was also instrumental in the migration. Although MB&T had implemented Sender Policy Framework (SPF) in its existing security feature set, it chose to also activate DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM) for its .BANK domain name.

Abramson noted that the website migration was quick and seamless, but that MB&T chose to take a phased testing approach to implementing email for .BANK, to ensure a seamless switch. Specifically, he began with activating .BANK email addresses for select employees, including himself, to identify any potential issues before full-scale company deployment. The final transition to @MONTECITO.BANK email addresses occurred December 18, 2015.

MB&T also received support from MarkMonitor that provided .BANK domain name registration services as well as supporting its existing portfolio of domain names in legacy TLDs.

## MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

MB&T's marketing department applied fTLD's "A Guide to Leveraging .BANK" to develop a strategy and communication plan focused on educating customers about the migration. Applying a phased approach that began with email, they informed customers in advance of the upcoming change in order to manage expectations and permit time for customers to understand what this enhancement meant for them. As the transition approached and was activated, MB&T deployed homepage spotlights and [created a dedicated page](#) to further explain the impacts and benefits.

While MB&T did not immediately replace existing letterhead following the migration, they plan to replace it on an as-needed basis to minimize costs.

Following the migration, it took about a week for the major search engines to re-index the MONTECITO.BANK website, and the MB&T marketing team experienced no mid or long-term search engine optimization disruption. Today a search for Montecito Bank returns the .BANK domain name as the top organic search result.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Abramson quickly learned that fTLD's security requirements provide considerable value to the industry. During the early phase of migration Abramson reported he was pleasantly surprised when he received a compliance notification from fTLD regarding one of the security requirements. This notice came during the initial set up and prior to MB&T completing the migration. However, it reaffirmed to Abramson that fTLD is committed to operating .BANK as a trusted, verified and more secure location online for banks and their customers.

Montecito Bank and Trust is committed to making the communities they serve, better places to live and work. Because the .BANK transition strengthens the bank's website security, its President and CEO, Janet Garufis, is pleased that MB&T customers can continue to bank online more confidently and securely. Ms. Garufis believes that in addition to preserving and improving the banking experience for their customers, this transition also positions the bank to better compete within the marketplace. She is looking forward to supporting Abramson as he works with fTLD to help build a broader recognition and trust in the .BANK domain among the banking community and its customers.