

.BANK Success Story: Summit Bank

www.summit.bank



“Summit’s approach to cybersecurity is layered and .BANK is one part of it.”

**FRANK HALL,
EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
OPERATING OFFICER,
SUMMIT BANK**

Founded in 2008, Summit Bank serves Northwest Florida and operates branches in Panama City, Panama City Beach, Fort Walton Beach and Pensacola. With assets of \$350M, this community bank and its 51 employees are committed to “The Summit Bank Difference”, which is focused on providing exceptional personal service, offering convenient high-tech banking and implementing the highest levels of security to protect its customers’ personal information and shielding them from financial fraud.

WHY .BANK?

Frank Hall, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Summit Bank, learned about .BANK through his and a colleague’s participation in the American Bankers Association’s Cyber and Information Security Working Group. Hall stated he and his team, including Landy Dutton, Vice President and Internal Auditor, discuss risks and cybersecurity every day and that deploying the latest and greatest technology to protect the bank and its customers has always been a top priority.

Notwithstanding the security and safeguards inherent to .BANK, securing the domain name SUMMIT.BANK was a plus because of its simplicity in brand recognition. Dutton remarked that the security monitoring in .BANK sets it apart from other domains and is well worth the extra costs of registering and implementing a .BANK domain. Hall added, “The new domain name shows our clients we’re industry leaders in protecting them.” Hall commented that Summit Bank wants to be seen as a leader in the .BANK initiative and that implementing its new .BANK domain name is part of its layered approach to cybersecurity.

MIGRATION

Summit Bank formed an implementation team of 13 associates across a broad range of functional areas and also involved its registrar EnCirca, core processor FIS Global, network support vendor AaSys Group and Proof Point, which provides spam filtering and disaster recovery services. Hall said the coordination with the bank’s vendors was needed to ensure a smooth transition with limited impact to customers and bank services.

Summit Bank coordinated the launch of SUMMIT.BANK with the release of a newly designed website. The website work started in early 2016 and the new SUMMIT.BANK domain went live on September 15, 2016. Although the website



@fTLD_Registry

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work itself required a longer timeframe, select Summit Bank personnel, including Hall, began using .BANK for email in September 2015, and he reported the overall transition to .BANK has been “relatively easy.”

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the decisions Hall had to make was whether the bank would continue to operate its .COM domain name alongside its move to SUMMIT.BANK. Initially the bank is providing identical content on SUMMITBANKNA.COM and SUMMIT.BANK. However, this is only a short-term situation until the bank’s customers and other stakeholders are notified about the change in domain name. After a reasonable period, the bank will redirect its web traffic from .COM to .BANK and finally will totally phase out use of the .COM domain name.

Hall confirmed that Summit Bank has taken advantage of the domain name system technology services offered by EnCirca and has now consolidated its .COM domain name to the same platform.

Summit Bank hosts its Exchange server in-house for maximum flexibility and control of email and uses a cloud-based service for storage.

Dutton offered that the Summit Bank experienced immediate value with its .BANK domain name after one of its service providers moved infrastructure to a new server that had an IP address outside of what had been included in the Sender Policy Framework (SPF) used for email authentication. Summit Bank realized they had a problem when an unusual number of bank statement emails “bounced” because of the server change. With the .BANK email authentication in place which requires use of SPF, Summit Bank was quickly able to identify and resolve the problem before any customers were likely to notice they had not received their statement on schedule.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

As Summit Bank prides itself on its innovative and personalized approach to banking, it realized the importance of communicating the move to .BANK in a way its internal and external users would understand. For its employees, weekly management meetings as well as a series of email blasts kept everyone aware of the transition to and value of .BANK. For its customers, Summit Bank used social media and email blasts to announce the availability of SUMMIT.BANK as well as the benefits it provides.

Hall commented that a FAQ and video answering “why .BANK” matters to Summit Bank is available on its [website](#) as well as its [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Summit Bank does not plan to use print media or statement stuffers to further announce the change, but rather will focus on social media and targeted outreach. The bank will focus on alerting its small business customers about the cybersecurity benefits of SUMMIT.BANK because of the impact that issues in that area have on them. Hall said it’s important for customers to know the bank is committed to protecting their assets and personal information.

LESSONS LEARNED

Hall said the move to .BANK was not a difficult project compared to others the bank has undertaken and that proper planning and having the right team in place are what contributed to Summit Bank’s successful launch of SUMMIT.BANK. He admitted there were some minor bumps along the way, particularly as it relates to understanding the security requirements for a .BANK domain name and email, but that they were quickly identified and remedied.

The implementation of a .BANK domain name involves many internal and external stakeholders and it’s important they be on the same page with the migration plan. Because this was a key part of the team’s project plan, the small issues encountered did not hold up the planned launch and allowed Summit Bank to provide another benefit to its customers with a relatively small investment.

