

.BANK Success Story: The Fauquier Bank

www.tfb.bank



“TFB’s desire is that every customer has a secure online banking experience – and .BANK helps us do so by signaling identification and security when you log onto our website.”

**CHIP REGISTER,
SVP / CHIEF INFORMATION
OFFICER**

Established in 1902, The Fauquier Bank (TFB) is an independent, locally-owned community bank with eleven branches serving Fauquier and Prince William counties in Virginia. TFB offers a full range of financial services for commercial and retail customers including Internet banking, insurance, wealth management and financial planning. The bank holds \$600M in assets.

WHY .BANK?

Chip Register, TFB’s Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer first heard about the .BANK domain in 2014, in an email from the American Bankers Association (ABA). The news piqued his interest, and he chose to begin strategically following the progress of the anticipated launch in 2015; he also began sharing the information in TFB’s executive management meetings. Besides the obvious security measures, the marketing element was appealing. The bank wanted to emphasize the bank’s initials as well as the full name.

It was during an April 2015 presentation to the Virginia Bankers Association (of which he serves as Chairman of its Operations and Technology Committee) from the ABA’s Doug Johnson, that Register realized how simple and straightforward the process migrating to .BANK could be. “All of a sudden I thought, we can do this. The mist rose.” TFB has always worked to be an enterprising bank, and Johnson’s presentation was a pivotal point in shifting Register’s perspective from that of due diligence to developing a timeline for implementation. TFB purchased TFB.BANK for its main website and FAUQUIER.BANK for defensive measures.

MIGRATION

When Register returned from the Virginia Bankers Association event, he met with Alex Hoffman, the bank’s Vice President for Information Technology and Operations and they began to develop their plan. The two would ultimately choose EnCirca as the bank’s registrar, and after a discussion with the marketing department decided to time the migration with a planned website re-launch.



@fTLD_Registry

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Working on the .BANK migration was managed primarily by a two-person team that quickly lined up supplemental external resources. TFB decided to keep existing vendor Verisign operating the bank's DNS; Fiserv, its core processor, would continue hosting the website; and Advanced Network Systems, a local Charlottesville, VA IT vendor, began working on the approach to integrate .BANK email. TFB.BANK went live on September 17, 2015 – a relatively short timeframe considering the bank applied for the domain name on June 24, 2015. Register commented that the migration could have happened more quickly if it wasn't being coordinated with the re-design of the website.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Register considers TFB to be progressive about looking out for security, which was helpful when the bank encountered a few bumps in the road. Banking technical staff were unaware that the new website's Transport Layer Security (TLS) had to be a version 1.1 or higher, which made it necessary for its technology provider to modify parameters on the website. This update to TLS added additional time to the bank's project schedule.

Another issue occurred with the transitioning of the email system. Bank staff decided to wait to roll out the email system until after the website launched. The actual conversion of the email system took several months. They first started with a small internal testing that spanned a few days. In December, they told human resources that any new hires would get a TFB.BANK email and in the last week of January 2016 they converted all existing employee emails.

Hoffman acknowledged that challenges remain in addition to having to educate some vendors that .BANK is real. They are unable to use their .BANK email addresses with Cisco WebEx product and are currently exploring options to resolve this issue. The issue with Cisco is not unique. Other instances occur where vendors simply are either not aware that the number of Internet web extensions has grown by more than a 1,000 in the last 18 months or they have not appropriately modified their systems to account for them.

Register also shared that the TLS requirement in .BANK will impede the ability to access TFB.BANK for some customers and site visitors using older browsers. To address this issue, TFB is working to develop a communication mechanism, whereby visitors to the website and bank customers are informed about the importance and security benefits of updating their browsers. Performing the updates will enable ongoing access to TFB's website.

Register said that none of these issues encountered were insurmountable, or particularly onerous, but instead explained that as an early adopter, there was a lot of education that needs to take place with vendors and others in the banking and service provider industry.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

Ninety days before the launch of TFB.BANK, the bank's leadership began sharing details about the new website, primarily by email, with its 165 employees. Follow-up emails were also provided to remind staff about the deployment schedule and to answer questions in advance of the launch. Banking staff also met with the call center employees one-on-one, and equipped them with talking points to be responsive to customer questions

Publicly, bank technical staff put a rotating banner on its existing website homepage that answered the question, "[Why did TFB change from .COM to .BANK?](#)" They did not anticipate, nor receive, any pushback or concerns about the change either internally from the Board or externally from customers. Register elaborated, "If I'm a customer, I'd like to know that my bank is progressive when it comes to looking out for my security." While the bank does not mass email customers as a rule, and opted not to include statement stuffers, they shared news of the change on their [Facebook page](#) and changed all their marketing material to include TFB.BANK.



LESSONS LEARNED

TFB wouldn't have changed anything about the migration process - and admits that combining efforts with the website redesign was "fortuitous." As for lessons learned, Register says there were "only two flies in the ointment." One was having to educate some vendors that .BANK exists, and the second was overlooking the TLS encryption requirement that necessitated updating their system and creating a mechanism to educate their customers about the importance of moving to a more secure browser.

On February 18, 2016 the bank's new President, Marc Bogan, was introduced, and noted the team had positioned the bank as an industry leader with the adoption of .BANK for TFB. "My goal is for TFB to always be aggressively progressive," Register acknowledged.