

.BANK Success Story: United Bank of Union

www.ubu.bank



“Our research about .BANK led us to believe it had zero risk for the bank and high reward so it made perfect sense.”

**BRADY WEINHOLD,
ELECTRONIC SERVICES
MANAGER**

Originally chartered in 1934, United Bank of Union is a community bank that serves the Franklin County area from the bank headquarters in Union, Missouri. The bank’s three locations provide traditional banking services and products for both personal and business customers including real estate, commercial and business loans. The bank currently manages over \$300M in assets and is an active member of the American Bankers Association (ABA) and the Missouri Bankers Association (MBA).

WHY .BANK?

Brady Weinhold, Electronic Services Manager, said bank management likes to stay in front of technology advances, which is one of the reasons .BANK appealed to them. Mike Marcink, Chief Operating Officer, had seen the articles published by the MBA and ABA in early 2015 and immediately moved to secure their desired domain names. The bank had long wanted to use a “UBU” domain for online services to provide a shorter and more memorable name, but it was being used by a non-bank related business which sometimes led their customers to the wrong website. United Bank of Union chose Lexsynergy as their registrar after learning about the Sunrise registration period in an ABA webinar. Lexsynergy helped them secure a trademark registration so they could participate in the Sunrise period in May 2015, at which time they secured UNITEDBANKOFUNION.BANK and UBU.BANK.

The bank was also pleased with the security measures that are an integral part of the .BANK domain as this supports its goal of being leaders in technology and security services among their peers. They were the first bank in their area to move forward with a full .BANK website and email implementation.

MIGRATION

The primary implementation team at the bank consisted of three people including Weinhold, Dan Rettke, Director of Marketing, and Aaron Evers, Systems Engineer from Diamond Cardinal Processing (DCP LLC), the bank’s technology services holding company. The team started work on a comprehensive marketing plan as soon as the UBU.BANK domain was secured and in August 2015 they began working with their vendors on the technical implementation. Captiva, their web hosting provider based in St. Louis Missouri, prepared to simultaneously run both their UBU.BANK and .COM websites and Lexsynergy set up the necessary DNS hosting information for them.



@fTLD_Registry

| www.register.bank



From January through March, 2016, United Bank of Union ran an extensive marketing campaign to alert customers and the community about the coming name change. Finally, as part of stepped up marketing focus during Community Banking Month, the UBU.BANK site was launched on April 16, 2016.

The bank migrated their email just before the launch so that they could update materials such as business cards and have everything else in place once the UBU.BANK website was launched.

Although United Bank of Union did an initial review of the “fTLD Guide to Leveraging .BANK” for technical guidance on areas such as DNSSEC and DMARC implementation, they relied heavily on Lexsynergy to guide them in the detailed implementation steps to ensure that they were in compliance with .BANK security requirements.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since United Bank of Union hosts an in-house Exchange server for maximum flexibility and control, the bank decided to make a total commitment to securing their email and worked with Lexsynergy to add the needed SPF, DKIM, AND DMARC information. Brady noted “When we saw the benefits of DMARC for our customers, it made a lot of sense.” Using DMARC reporting, they monitored compliance until the rate of rejects reached acceptable levels and then implemented a rejection policy for all emails failing DMARC alignment. There were some initial problems with the emails because of out-of-date spam gateway filters used by a local ISP and some local organizations, but these problems were resolved quickly.

Fiserv, their core processor, had no issues with the migration since the new site continued to use the existing link to access online banking services. Lexsynergy was “absolutely fantastic” and very knowledgeable about the technical requirements for a .BANK implementation. Lexsynergy now provides external DNS hosting not only for .BANK, but for all of the other domains maintained by DCP LLC because they were impressed with its service during the migration.

The only external issue when the UBU.BANK website launched was when 10 or so online banking customers had access problems because they were using old and insecure browsers. To address this issue, the bank developed a set of instructions to step users of any skill level through the process of upgrading their browsers to be more secure so they could connect to the bank’s website.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

The marketing plan was extensive and needed to ensure the bank’s employees and customers had a smooth transition to UBU.BANK. The education of employees about the change to .BANK was handled through a “Lunch and Learn” in February 2016, where the value of the new domain was highlighted.

Weinhold noted that the bank started its promotion to customers and the community by posting a “Why .BANK?” article on its website in January 2016. The launch was timed to coincide with the bank’s yearly Customer Appreciation Week in April. In 2016, UBU.BANK was a focus of the bank’s 90-day promotional Product Spotlight event.

Dan Rettke shared that Customer Appreciation Week was themed to promote the move to UBU.BANK and included a “Dip and Dot[Bank]” ice cream social and candy “dots” handed out with every drive-thru and inside transaction. In addition, as part of the bank’s normal quarterly promotion, everyone who asked about .BANK was entered into a drawing for prize baskets that included online-themed gifts such as Amazon gift cards.

The United Bank of Union used billboards, local newspaper ads and included a tag line about UBU.BANK on their radio spots leading up to the launch as supplements to lobby banners and other promotional materials. The bank wanted to be sure that the community as well as its customers knew about their new name.

There was increased traffic to the bank’s UBU.BANK website after the campaign and Rettke confirmed this was likely a combination of the new, more memorable name and the heavy promotion during the launch period. Weinhold commented that the collective efforts of the bank were successful in making customers aware of its new online identity and reinforcing its commitment to protecting the security of their accounts and data.



LESSONS LEARNED

Weinhold offered that there were several keys to the success of the migration to UBU.BANK. First, DCP LLC reviewed a broad range of scenarios that might cause problems for customers and developed solutions to mitigate them. Next, they ran UBU.BANK and the old .COM site simultaneously for over four months until the traffic on UBU.BANK became more than 70% of traffic to the bank. This meant most people were already using UBU.BANK before the bank began redirecting the old website traffic to the new .BANK address. Finally, an extensive marketing effort made the bank's customers aware of the new name and the security benefits; it made them feel special knowing they are protected by an additional layer of security.

Finding the right registrar also proved critical since Lexsynergy was able to answer any questions for the technical staff at DCP LLC and the bank. Weinhold did note that it was initially difficult to secure cost information from some registrars, which extended the registrar selection process. From a technical perspective, understanding DMARC for authenticated email required the most research for the project.

Weinhold provided the following suggestions to those who have not yet secured their domains or who have not activated their .BANK domains:

- Ask questions - United Bank of Union and other .BANK users are happy to share their experiences
- There is zero risk and high reward for moving to .BANK!

