

# Growing Primary Relationships

## CLIENT STORY WITH MARQUETTE SAVINGS BANK

Marquette Savings Bank has been in business in and around Erie, Pennsylvania for 115 years, with \$1.2 billion assets under management.

We had a chance to sit down with Senior Vice President of Deposit Operations Lisa Lopez and AVP and Retail Project Manager Madelynn Delgado to talk about their experience implementing a new checking account product portfolio with StrategyCorps.

“My main interest was to clean up our consumer checking account portfolio,” recalls Lopez.

“We had a lot of grandfathered accounts. Some people were paying fees, some were waived forever, and it was a really good idea to reevaluate the relationships with those checking account customers and create new opportunities for them that delivered real value.

“When we saw what StrategyCorps had to offer, we jumped on board pretty quickly.”

Lopez added, “To have somebody help us analyze our checking account data and say which accounts were profitable, what was working, what wasn’t, so that we felt confident wiping out all the various waive codes and fees we had implemented over the years was exciting.

“We now have three checking account products on the consumer side, one without BaZing and two with. It really helped us do our own evaluation of what we thought was gonna make these accounts profitable to us.

“We didn’t feel pressured by StrategyCorps about how we priced the new checking products, or how we used their guidance when they came on-site.

“Their flexibility in working with us to build the checking products we felt we needed was what attracted me, in addition to all the things we were able to do with local merchants.”

### Community First

While CheckingScore helps build a stronger internal relationship with customer/member accounts, BaZing



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is a white-labeled, subscription-based checking account with a variety of discounts and incentives for customers and members.

BaZing has a Local Deals section where community FIs can reach out to local businesses to have them participate. Marquette used this aspect to build a virtuous circle with the local business community.

“We’re a mutually owned community bank and what resonated with us about BaZing was knowing that we could knock on local businesses’ doors and say, ‘Hey, we have this offer for you to be able to get the word out there and get people in your doors.’” Lopez reflected.

One example of a campaign the bank ran was last spring. “We allowed each branch to create attainable goals in signing up local merchants and did something really fun if they hit those goals,” said Delgado.

“One of the prizes was Jeans Day - any branch that enrolled three or more new merchants could wear jeans, for an entire month on Fridays and Saturdays.

**“StrategyCorps showed us a chart and said, here’s the sweet spot. Here’s where you need to focus. And yes, you might lose some customers. But look at the growth you’re going to get out of your remaining active checking accounts.”**

In all we signed up around 70-plus merchants in those three months. And the branch that enrolled the most got a free catered lunch for their branch.

“We also highlighted the winners and the new merchants in our internal newsletters.”

“Erie is a unique community and these efforts have a long tail,” noted Delgado. “Anything that we can do to benefit our local merchants and drive business to them benefits them, benefits us, benefits the whole community. It was a very successful campaign and we may well run it again this year.

These non-customer businesses that we were visiting and saying, ‘We’d love to do this for you even though you don’t bank with us, simply because you’re a member of the community.’ That got a few businesses thinking, you know, if this bank is willing to do this for us and we’re not even a customer, they’re certainly going to treat us the right way if we move our account over.

“This also really helped set Marquette apart from our competition,” reflected Delgado. “We’re in the community, helping the community. We care about the community in deeds, not just in words.”

### **Keep Benefits Front of Mind**

“We try to keep the benefits of BaZing top of mind for the branch employees. Look, this person used it for this, and they saved this amount,” observed Delgado.

“We’ve compiled certain benefits that are relevant to the time period, like last spring, we sent out all the different allergy medication coupons during allergy season. Just keep it relevant and top of mind. We also want our employees to also buy in and utilize

BaZing because it’s easier to talk about something that you use yourself, especially when you have success with it.”

“We also engage in digital marketing to keep BaZing front of mind, and we take advantage of all the social media blasts that weekend to remind people.

### **Lose to Win**

Part of StrategyCorps’ approach to creating more value in checking accounts is making sure you’re building products for your best customers to encourage primary accounts, which may result in losing some secondary or tertiary accounts.

“We anticipated that,” said Lopez. “And StrategyCorps helped me demonstrate that to the executive team, which includes accounting, and sales and affects traditional views of branch growth. But maintaining an account just for the sake of having an account – that isn’t a primary account and is losing the bank money – is something a lot of banks struggle with.”

“We want something that’s a two-way street. We want to be able to give customers the features and benefits on our accounts that they need, but we also need to get a little back from them. “Just to have a free checking account open because you happen to walk in and make a mortgage payment one day, and then it just sits there; it’s not a primary account. I think a lot of bankers realize that, but they’re afraid to break up with people.

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“Risking any account was why we kept grandfathering things because we didn’t want to run the risk of losing somebody. Conversely, we didn’t want to ruffle the feathers of the people we did want to keep,” reflected Lopez.

“StrategyCorps helped us reason through that, in a way that made sense to us and gave us the confidence to be able to consolidate accounts and add BaZing.”

## Tips for FIs Interested in SC

What tips would Marquette have for others that are looking to implement the program?

“Trust the numbers,” Lopez expressed. “The program is definitely well thought out.”

“StrategyCorps did their homework on what speaks to the people; what they’re looking for as far as a deal; how easy it is to access the deals; the subscription concept, all of that.

“All the work that went into building this program proved itself over and over again to us. And that

made it very easy for us to put our trust in the numbers.”

Underscoring that, as the transition progressed, the CheckingScore analytics that StrategyCorps presented to Marquette remained very close to what we were seeing play out. “The actual results were very close to the projections,” noted Lopez.

## Getting to Know the FI

“They took our data, and put it into their formula with our goals and presented us with the charts that showed our path,” recounted Lopez. “We also had regular on-site visits from StrategyCorps.

“The team spent a lot of time getting to know not just our portfolio, but us as bankers, our mentality, our mindset. We even drove through downtown to have lunch to show them our community.

“They took a lot of time to get to know us and I think that went into the reports as well. You could tell they understood our goals.”

For more information on this client story or to discuss how StrategyCorps can help your financial institution, contact us to learn more.

