Independent Banker

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Flourish by RRR

[pull quote] *“A plethora of new digital payments offerings now must factor into business strategies.”*

**As Winston Churchill said,** “To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” That sentiment rings true for digital payments.

Today, community bankers hold a place at the digital payments table, both as drivers of change and as witnesses to the flurry of activity. From the forthcoming FedNow real-time payments service to card innovations and P2P opportunities, a plethora of new digital payments offerings now must factor into business strategies.

Evolving customer expectations reinforce the need for change. For example, according to Engagement Labs, Gen Z will account for 40% of all shoppers by next year—and this group pays with a digital-first mindset. In fact, research from Paysafe reveals that 70% of Gen Zers use banking apps daily and 53% prefer to shop in stores that accept contactless payments. And Accenture found that 68% want instant P2P payments. Clearly, this is a generation of customers who expect digital payments solutions.

With these elements in the mix, it may feel like planning your bank’s digital payments future is like trying to hit a moving target. That’s why ICBA and its payments services subsidiary, ICBA Bancard, have created two offerings to support community banks.

First, we have created the ICBA Bancard Digital Payments Strategy Tool and Guide, an interactive resource that helps community bankers create a custom digital payments strategy. This tool has been available to ICBA Bancard clients since September, and starting this month, it will be accessible to all ICBA members. I hope you’ll experiment with the tool—you can find it at *strategy.icbabancard.com*—to explore where you fall on your digital payments journey. It will help provide guideposts as you chart the course ahead.

We also launched the Payments Executive Brief Series, topical summaries designed to support community bankers as they build and grow a digital payments strategy. These informative briefs are being shared on ICBA’s Main Street Matters blog and in NewsWatch Today. They offer insights into payments industry changes and how they apply to community banks.

These resources, along with this issue of *Independent Banker*, address the topics at hand, but as we consider the transformation in digital payments, we also must embrace the opportunity that presents itself. In the spirit of Churchill, community banks will continue to improve through this change, ensuring they offer the perfect digital solutions for their customers.

**Where I’ll Be This Month**
I’ll be visiting with TCM Bank, an ICBA Bancard subsidiary, in Tampa, Fla., where we’re certain to discuss digital payments.

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