

Wells Fargo's mobile app revamp, new virtual assistant give it a shot at catching up to biggest competitors

Article

The news: Wells Fargo announced that it will revamp its mobile app and add an AI-powered virtual assistant next year. The revamped app will be deployed in phases beginning in Q1 2022, while the assistant, called **Fargo**, will be available later.

More on this: The updated app is designed to have a more streamlined user experience:

- Fargo will deliver “a concierge-like experience” for the app, and customers will be able to ask the AI assistant questions and request that it complete tasks—examples include pay billing and sending money, per CNBC. Fargo will also eventually offer personalized insights and recommendations.
- A new **Pay & Transfer hub** will be “a one-stop-shop” for customers for receiving and sending funds.

The new features arose from customer concerns with the current app’s experience: **Michelle Moore**, the bank’s **consumer digital head**, told CNBC that users voiced concerns about the app being difficult to use and unintuitive, which led to dead ends and users getting stuck.

That might change, if Moore’s experience is any indication. She previously worked at **Bank of America** and played a role in the rollout of its **Erica** assistant, CNBC noted. Erica now counts 22.9 million users.

The big takeaway: Wells Fargo is behind direct competitors when it comes to mobile and needs to catch up—and the new app can help, but it won’t be easy.

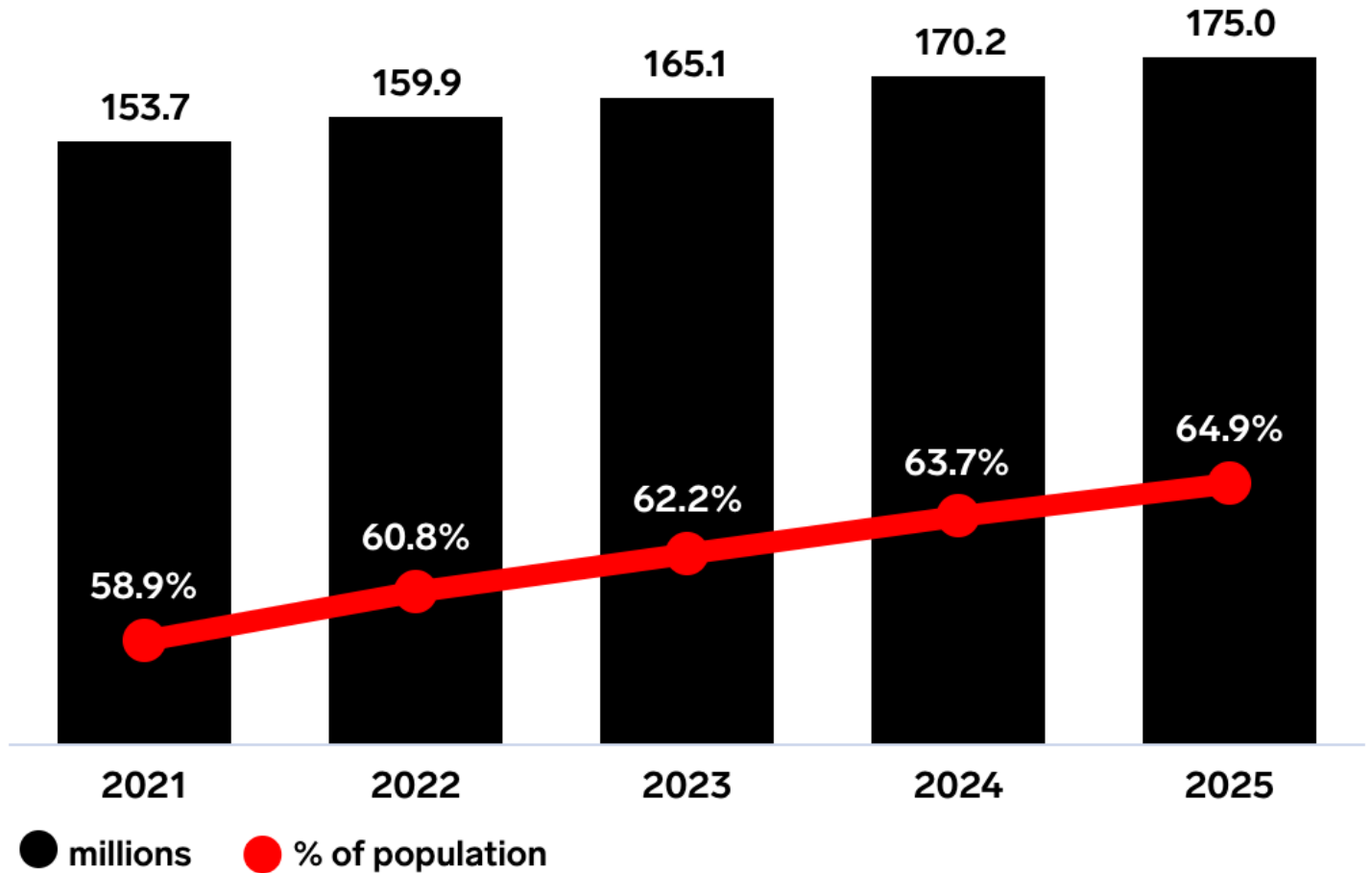
- Wells Fargo’s year-over-year (YoY) growth of active mobile users in Q3 2021 trailed **JPMorgan Chase** and BofA, per a CNBC analysis, up just **4.2%** compared to respective figures of **10.2%** and **6.2%**. The bank also lags JPMorgan and BofA on total active mobile users, according to the analysis: respective Q3 2021 figures came in at **27 million**, **44.3 million** and **32.5 million**.
- Additionally, in Insider Intelligence’s 2020 US Mobile Banking Competitive Edge Report, Wells Fargo finished seventh overall out of 25 sampled banks. While it’s not a laggard among all players reviewed, it came in behind all of its biggest competitors—**Citigroup** was **third**, BofA was **fourth**, and JPMorgan was **sixth**.

But Fargo will be playing catch-up with Erica specifically: BofA’s assistant already has the ability to gather and use insights from customer queries. This could provide BofA with an

advantage to stay a step ahead of would-be competitors—and raises the stakes for Wells Fargo to hit the ground running with its own assistant if it wants to achieve its goals.

Mobile Phone Banking Users

US, 2021-2025



Source: eMarketer, March 2021

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