

'Diversity is innovation': U.S. Bank talks fintech partnerships with Goalsetter

Article

Money20/20 session: Leveraging Partnerships for Insightful Product Design

Speakers: Gregory Cunningham, chief diversity officer, **U.S. Bank**; and Tanya Van Court, founder & CEO, **Goalsetter**; moderated by Tiffani Montez, Principal Analyst, **Insider Intelligence**

Findings: The dynamic between banks and fintechs is shifting, sometimes in unexpected ways. Fintechs were once seen as competitors that threatened to usurp financial incumbents. But now, many firms are finding that symbiotic relationships with tech-forward startups can advance some of the industry's long-espoused goals and attract the next generation of banking consumers.

- “Banks five years ago were thinking in many ways about fintech being the enemy, and how do we stave off fintech,” Van Court said. “And now, that perspective has shifted. ... **When you pair those two ecosystems, you get the best of both worlds for the consumer.**”
- Cunningham stressed the value of partnerships that fill capability and capacity gaps as banks grapple with “the marriage between the physical space and the digital space,” noting that the quality of fintech partnerships has “certainly improved.”

And for U.S. Bank, those partnerships are an opportunity to make good on commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- “As a bank, we do our due diligence around making strategic investments,” Cunningham said. **“What banks are learning is how to make people-based investments.”**
- “The temptation is always to think about his relationship as something that’s part of a diversity initiative,” he continued. “We have to make a pivot around these terms like inclusion and diversity. **The business case for diversity is innovation.** That’s what it is definitionally. How do we have more creativity and provide opportunities for entrepreneurs who deserve an opportunity?”

Tiffani Montez, principal analyst, Insider Intelligence, moderator for Gregory Cunningham, chief diversity officer, U.S. Bank, and Tanya Van Court, founder & CEO, Goalsetter.



It's also an integral path toward attracting the next generation of banking customers. [Our report on teen and kid banking](#) found the conventional thesis for attracting young customers is losing ground, Montez noted. In its place is a digital-first approach that meets kids where they are with gamification and financial education.

- “Kids led the digital disruption of the cable industry,” Van Court—who worked for Nickelodeon and ESPN—said. “The same thing is happening in banking. Kids will be the tip of the spear. Kids will get youth banking products, teen banking products, and when they turn 18, 19, 20 ... those banks that were never part of their ecosystem still won't be a part of their considerations when they're making their own decisions.”

- “At U.S. Bank, we’re trying to figure out, what are the solutions at every stage of those young people’s lives,” Cunningham said. “What kids want is in every aspect of their lives they’re looking for independence. ... How do we help kids appreciate and understand this notion of independence?”