

# Q&A: TD Bank senior VP and head of customer & product marketing talks digital strategies amid the pandemic

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Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, [extending support](#) to struggling customers and small businesses has been top of mind for banks. But it's not enough to just offer support: Banks need to effectively communicate to customers about what features are available and how to use them, especially when it comes to innovative digital offerings.

Insider Intelligence spoke with Alissa Van Volkom, senior vice president and head of customer & product marketing at TD Bank, about how marketers have changed their strategies to reach customers in the past year, how TD leveraged existing channels to provide pandemic-specific solutions, and how it is tailoring its public-facing messaging to stand out in a "sea of sameness."

*The following has been edited for brevity and clarity. [Read the full Q&A here.](#)*

**Insider Intelligence (II): How are marketers monitoring shifts in consumer behavior and expectations, and how are those learnings reflected in campaigns and customer experience?**

**Alissa Van Volkom (AVV):** Everyone has access to so much information, and the biggest challenge has been discerning the pertinent information and insights. I think we're seeing fewer new trends and more acceleration of existing trends. One area is digital acceleration: We have adapted both our marketing and how we service customers through digital.

There's also a need for differentiation, which there always has been. But at the height of the pandemic, and still a bit now, you see a lot of this sea of sameness. A lot of the "unprecedented times, we're here for you," messaging. The need to break through and understand what problems we're solving for our customers, how we're doing that, and how we communicate that to our customers [has] become really, really important.

## **II: How have the role and scope of the marketing department and its responsibility evolved during the pandemic?**

**AVV:** Marketing has always been a growth driver. It has now taken on a role to help the broader organization understand the transformation and acceleration to digital, from both a marketing standpoint and a channel standpoint. Since the pandemic, the bank has been looking to marketing more to understand what customers are really looking for, and how we can deliver it to them in a quick and agile way—which by default usually means digital. I think that it's been a fairly big shift within the organization: How do we continue to tell this digital story, how do we ensure good alignment around what capabilities we need to be able to deliver to our customers digitally, and then how do we ensure that we're reaching them from an omnichannel standpoint.

## **II: Are there any other initiatives you'd like to talk about?**

**AVV:** One of the pieces that we've looked at this entire time is how we can continue to innovate around "Unexpectedly Human" and show up differently for our customers to meet their needs. We've always had a feature where customers can get their credit or debit card instantly reissued in-branch, and we recently launched a curbside pickup **option** because we saw that even when our branches were open, some customers weren't comfortable coming

in. And as curbside got this huge pickup across the board, we took that concept and used the instant issuing [of cards] and transitioned it to a use case that resonated for our customers in the midst of the pandemic. Delivering to our customers in an unexpected way continues to be a key driver both on the marketing side and across the whole bank.



**Alissa Van Volkom, senior vice president and head of customer & product marketing, TD Bank**