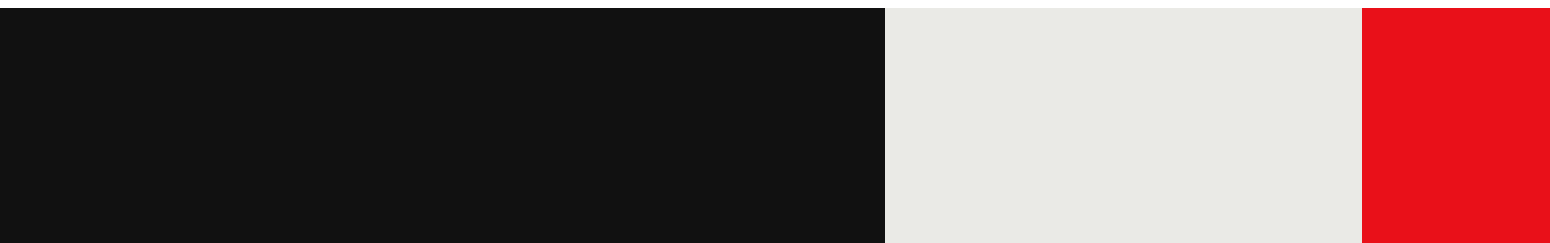



Three small banks share their marketing budget-saving strategies

Article



The trend: Amid a widespread trend of cost-cutting in marketing, The Financial Brand recently interviewed bank marketers at three small financial institutions (FIs)—Massachusetts-based **Middlesex Savings Bank**, **Seattle Bank**, and Minnesota-based **Frandsen Bank**. Here's what they said helped them save and maximize their marketing budgets:

Regular, transparent reporting is critical: [We've previously covered the challenge](#) of using data to prove a bank marketing team's value. No single data point proves marketing is responsible for growth, but **marketers should be examining and communicating the value of impressions.**

- Impressions are easily measured and tracked and can be used to inform overall outreach strategies.

The bank marketers also stressed the importance of regularly reporting on the variables that teams choose to track—including strategies that didn't work.

- Communicating failures and how the team plans to change can help build trust between marketers and other senior management.

A focus on digital marketing: According to Forbes, the cost per impression via digital marketing can be considerably less than for print or other traditional marketing. Plus, it's easier to track prospects reached by digital ads than to track direct mail that may or may not reach the end user or TV ads that customers may not see.

Digital advertising also opens up two-way communication with prospects and customers.

- People can interact with ads and posts and directly message their questions to the FIs that posted them.
- They can also click on links that take them to appropriate landing pages, rather than having to recall something from a radio or television commercial and later revisit it.

One trend to note is [some smaller FIs' preference for streaming platform marketing over social media](#).

- That's prompted by a growing sense of social media marketing fatigue, and by FIs seeking an even less labor-intensive way to reach many potential customers.

Community partnerships: [Local partnerships](#) can help FIs—especially smaller ones—to grow their brand recognition in a cost-effective way, if handled thoughtfully and proactively. As [Michigan-based Community Federal Credit Union \(CFCU\) demonstrated in our recent case study](#), these partnerships can scale and grow over time.

- For example, CFCU's relationship with local artists evolved into an appearance on HGTV.

Knowing how and when to use external partners: Seattle Bank told The Financial Brand that it uses both in-house and external marketing teams to execute on its growth strategies. It sought out marketing partners with certain skills and expertise to meet specific goals. As a result, its retail deposits grew at double-digit rates in 2023 and H2 2024.

- To help FIs explore this strategy, we recently compiled a list of [criteria to evaluate third-party marketing partners](#).

Key takeaways: Though bank marketing spend has tightened up in recent years, small FIs are proving they can use creativity to execute impactful marketing strategies on a limited budget. Such strategies may also be useful for larger FIs, especially as [some try to out-local their smaller competitors](#).

Digital Ad Spending, by Industry

US, 2024, billions

Retail

\$83.09

CPG

\$49.95

Financial Services

\$36.22

Media & entertainment

\$28.15

Technology & electronics

\$23.59

Healthcare & Pharma

\$22.09

Automotive

 \$22.02

Telecom

 \$20.27

Other

 \$9.66

Travel

 \$7.73

Note: includes advertising that appears on desktop and laptop computers as well as mobile phones, tablets and other internet-connected devices on all formats mentioned; numbers may not add up to total due to rounding

Source: EMARKETER Forecast, August 2024
