



TEMENOS
THE BANKING SOFTWARE COMPANY

10 tips for a highly effective onboarding experience at your bank

By Derek Corcoran, Chief Experience Officer, Temenos.



Introduction

When we consider the customer journey in banking – we can divide it in to 3 main stages.

Marketing

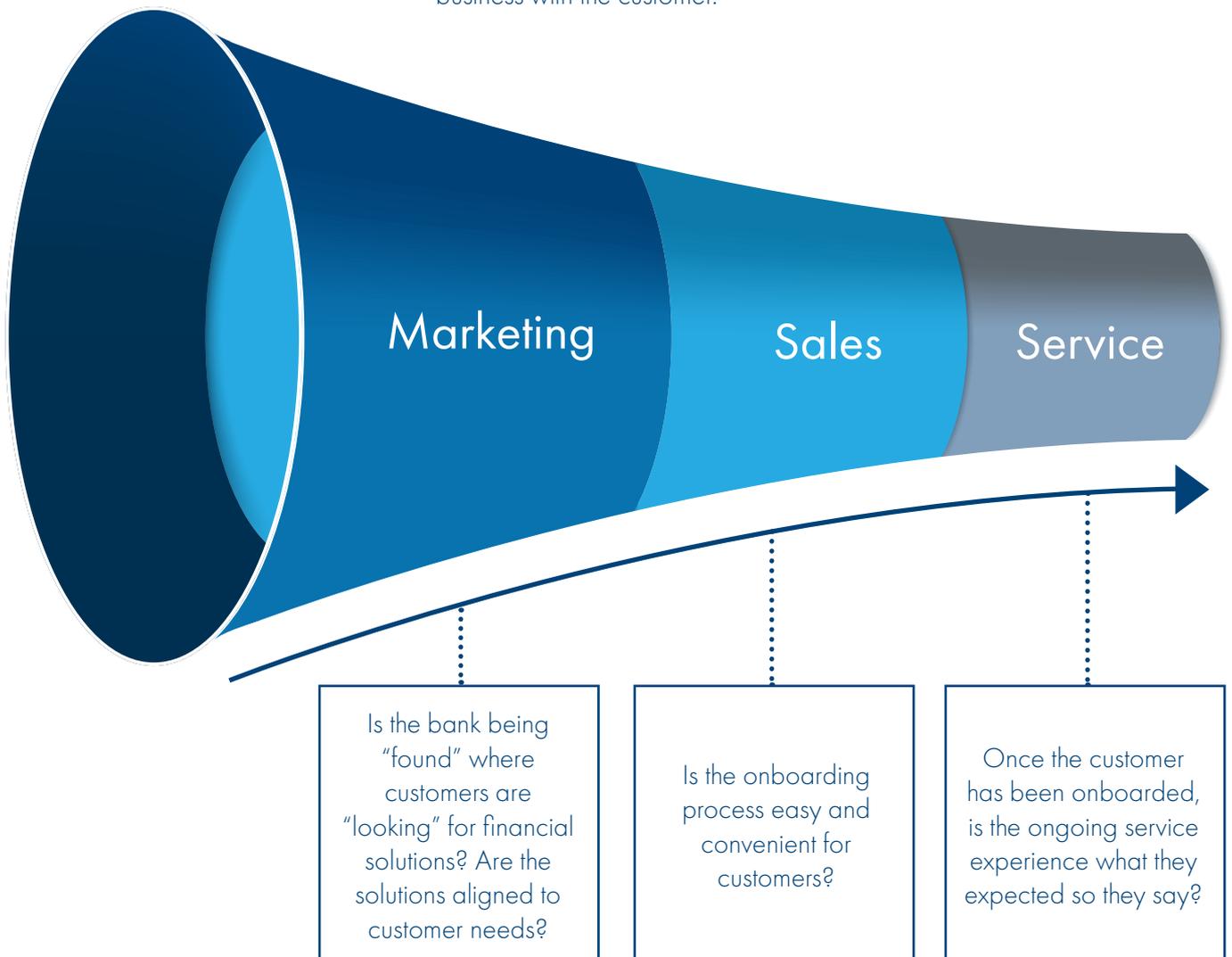
Assuming the customer is in the market for a banking product, Marketing will ensure the bank is “found” and positioned as having a relevant product or service offering for the customer.

Sales

This is the process whereby the customer will Apply for a particular product or service. This involves providing details like name, contact information, financial information etc and may require the uploading of documentation to verify those details. During this process, the bank will perform the usual identity, fraud, credit and risk checks to ensure they can do business with the customer.

Service

Once the customer has been onboarded, the bank will “look after them” through service offerings like mobile/online banking, branches, call center, relationship managers, financial advisors etc.



For the purposes of this paper, we're going to focus on the Sales (also called onboarding, origination, acquisition, etc.). Working in this space for many years, Temenos has identified a number of "Best Practices" to ensure that the Sales part of the journey is effective.

IN THIS DOCUMENT WE'VE SELECTED 10 OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PRACTICES THAT WE ENCOURAGE CLIENTS TO FOLLOW WHEN DESIGNING THEIR BANKING SALES JOURNEYS AND THEY ARE:

ADD TO CART or 1-Click Checkout BUY NOW WITH 1-CLICK

- Two paths to purchase for two different products
- Put the "Apply" button on your home page (or 1 level down)
- Re-iterate the features of the product
- Nurture leads
- Steer customers to the path of least resistance
- Categorize fields and ask tough questions last
- Details like headings, disclosures and fonts can be important
- Design for mobile first, then scale up
- Focus on design simplicity, not fancy UX widgets
- Look outside banking for inspiration

The recommendations are not in any particular order or importance. So...let's start at the start with 1.

1 | Two paths to purchase for two different products.

Design your acquisition experiences around 3 basic patterns:



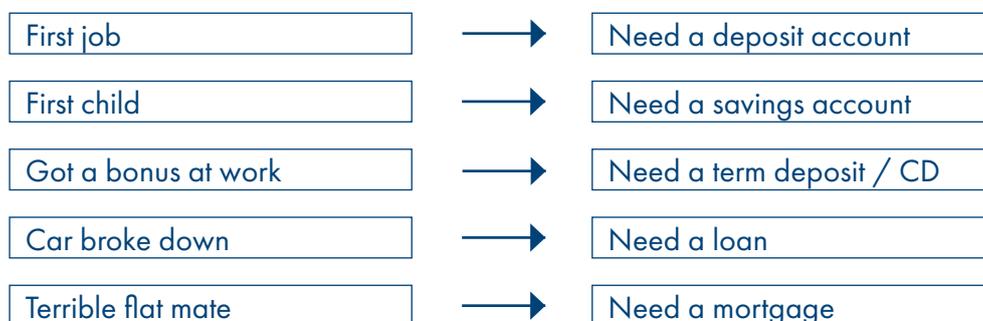
Have you ever used Amazon 1-Click to make a purchase? It's hard to deny the beauty in the simplicity of the experience. You save your preferred delivery address and purchase method...and then you can buy things with a single click. In the world of ecommerce in 1999, this was such a revolutionary design that Amazon was awarded a patent for One-Click which stood until September 2017. Meaning, Apple paid a royalty to Amazon for every iTunes purchase made by consumers using Apple's version of One-Click.

But with such a revolutionary design, did Amazon do-away with the Shopping Cart? No! Amazon recognized there were different paths to purchase and offers both Shopping Cart and 1-Click. For example:

- I want to buy a cover for my new smartphone, 1-Click is perfect.
- I want to buy presents for the kids for Christmas, but realize I should run this by my wife...I put the items in my shopping cart and we agree on what stays before we place the order.

Amazon has further emphasized the need for different paths to purchase with the launch of Amazon Go stores and the purchase of the Wholefoods Supermarket chain in the US. When you're hungry at lunchtime, even the speedy 2 hour Amazon Now! delivery times won't satisfy an empty stomach quick enough. In the world of ecommerce, there's still a place for traditional stores and even the world's largest online retailer recognizes that.

But what's that got to do with banking? Every bank would like to think that customers don't just want "a product", they want a financial partner. And in some cases, this is true – and these are extremely valuable customers. But for many (if not most) customers, their primary need is typically a product. And that product need is driven by a life event.



And in some cases, the customer has already done their research on a product comparison website, and they know what they want. In other cases (especially for loans / mortgages) the customer may still be shopping – trying to determine if they can afford the car loan or mortgage.

However, there are still scenarios where the customer does want a bank as a whole, not a single product. Perhaps they've moved house. Or they want to break-up with their current bank due to poor service or bad PR recently. So when looking at customer acquisition, we encourage you to design around three different use cases to create compelling purchase experiences that align to how consumers want to buy.

Scenario	I want a product, and I know what I want	I want a product, but I'm still shopping	I want a whole-of-bank relationship
Product	Bank account Credit Card	Car Loan Mortgage	Everything
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual has done their homework (comparison website, your website, social media peers etc.); They've selected the product they want (best interest rate, lowest fees, best rewards etc.); They click Apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual knows they want a loan, but they're not sure if they can afford it yet; They want to get a sense of what the monthly repayments will be before committing; They click Apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual has selected your bank on the basis of research (branch locations, comparison sites, social media etc.); They don't just want a product, they want a conversation that they know will lead to products.
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately ask for Name, Email and Phone as this person is genuinely interested. Use this data to create a lead before asking for more Contact, ID or Financial information If they don't complete the application NURTURE them. They want this product, make it easy and demonstrate that you want their business! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for the minimum information to provide an indicative cost (e.g. Monthly Car Loan Repayments); Allow them to play with the numbers to adjust the calculation; Once they move to the next step, get Name, Email and Phone – you've got them excited about what this product could help them achieve. Now capitalize on that interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if they want to self-serve digitally OR talk to someone (in-person, by phone or video chat); Get to know the customers demographics (Age, Family Situation, Work Situation, Goals, etc.); Make product recommendations that make sense for them; Then take them through the product applications – but only ever ask for a piece of information once. Even if there are multiple applications to complete.

I know this can appear that you're building varied acquisition experiences – but this is not where you want to save money by building something that's easy for you to maintain. You've invested a lot in marketing to get the customer to this point...make the next step perfect. Whether that's 1-Click, a shopping cart or a store...make it perfect.

2 | Put the Apply button on your home page (or one level down)

The majority of people visiting a bank website are doing so for one of two reasons:

To log in to online banking

To get a new product

Don't make it hard to find the Apply Now button for your most popular products.

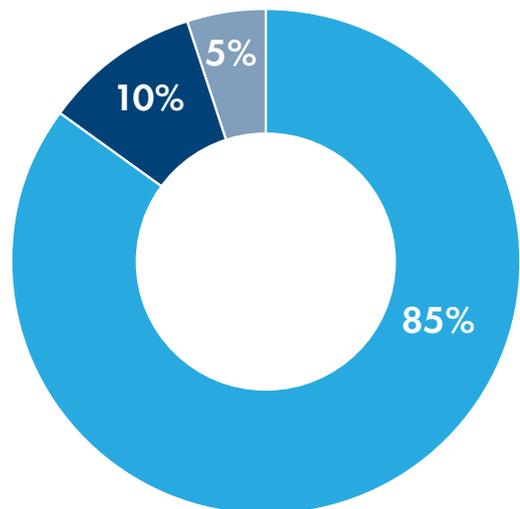
As this chart below shows, 25% of visitors to a new bank website are "Prospective Customers" (source: Extractable, The Financial Brand). And in the world of comparison websites like bankrate.com and comparethemarket.com – a lot of those prospective customers are coming to the bank's website ready to apply for a specific product.

WEBSITE VISITORS SEGMENTS



■ Other ■ Prospective Customers ■ Current Customers

REASON FOR CUSTOMER VISITS



■ Other ■ Public Marketing ■ Online Banking

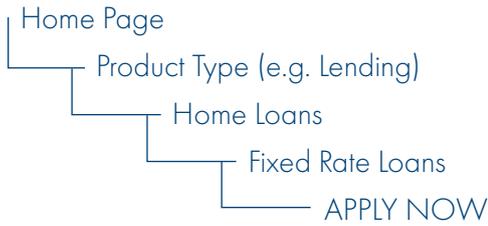
Source: Extractable © March 2016 The Financial Brand



And in many cases, the bank is running a particular campaign at a time (Low Rate Mortgage, Rewards Credit Card, High Interest Savings Account etc.). So many of the prospective customers will be enquiring about or wanting to apply for that currently promoted product.

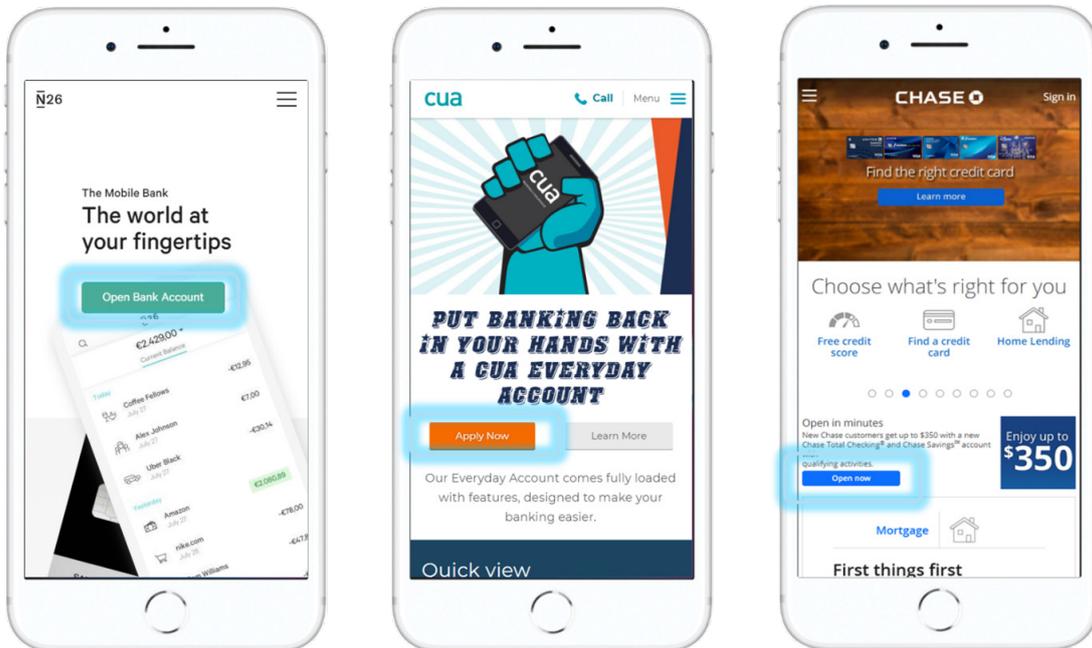
And sophisticated banks with digital marketing capabilities will recognize repeat visitors or visitors that have seen a digital ad (through cookies) and change the banner ad to reference what they feel confident the customer will be interested in.

But, so often the Apply button will be buried several levels down on the website.



Smarter banks realize that they should put the Apply Now button on the Home Page or at most 1 level down – making it easy for people to find the product they want to apply for and begin the process.

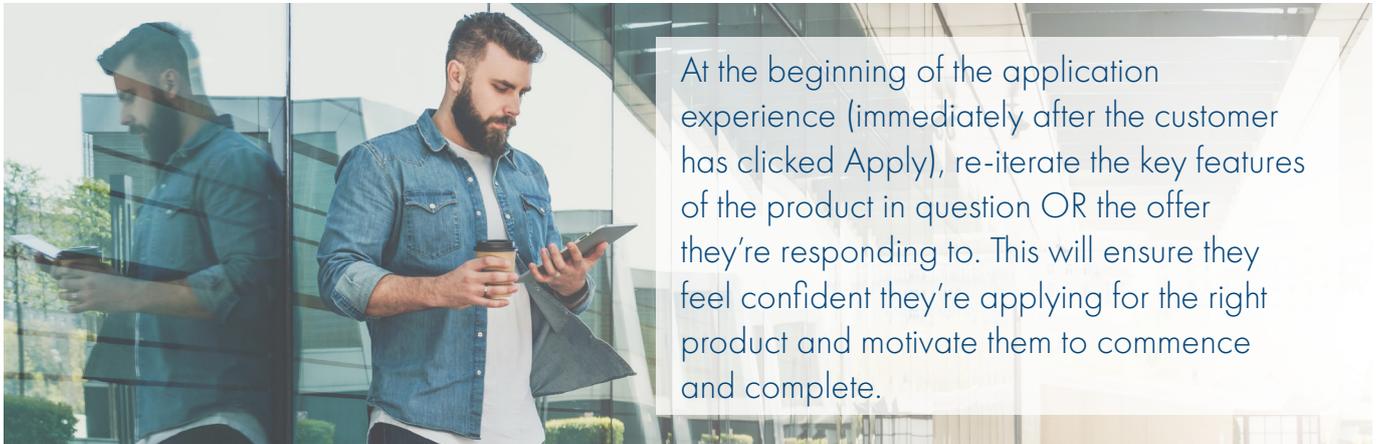
Here are some examples from a range of institutions:



And this aligns with the strategy of the best “sales” company in the world – Amazon.

When you’re looking at an item on amazon.com, the “Add to cart” and “Buy Now” buttons are clearly visible. And when you go to your Shopping Cart, there’s a “Place your order” button at the top and bottom of the screen and as you scroll through a long shopping cart, the button follows you down the screen. YOU NEVER HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT! Amazon have made shopping easy. Do the same for your bank.

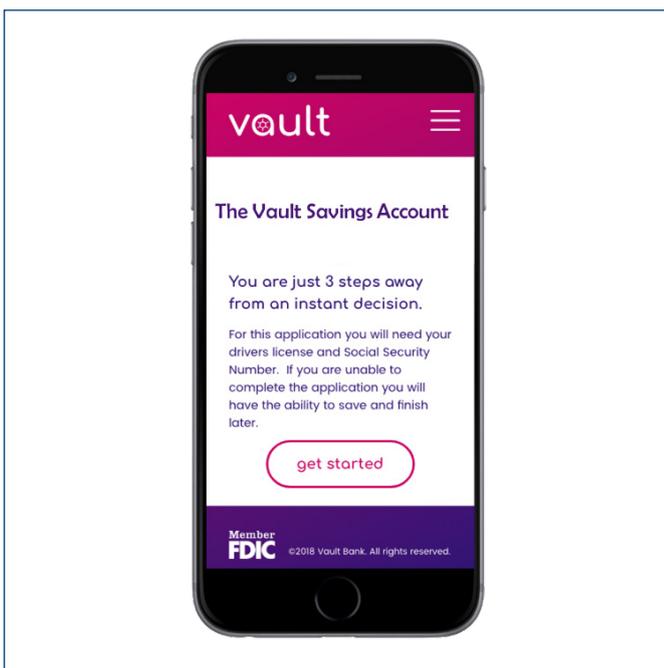
3 | Re-iterate the features of the product



There's a reason Amazon and other ecommerce companies show images of products when you go to check-out ... with physical goods, being able to see them reinforces the impulse to buy (plus, they want to make sure you've put the right thing in the shopping cart).

Well the same is true of banking products. We don't have a shopping cart, but we do have an Apply process. And very often, the Apply process is identical for similar products – product groups like Checking/Current Accounts, Savings Accounts, Credit Cards may all have identical application processes within that product group. But I may be applying for a particular account or card and it's important that I know I'm completing the right application.

And the value of reminding the customer that they're applying for the right product holds true just like it does in ecommerce.



Imagine a scenario whereby you've spent 10 minutes comparing Savings Accounts on a bank website and you've selected the one with the following key features:

- No minimum balance
- No monthly account keeping charges
- 1.5% interest rate

You click Apply Now and you see this screen...

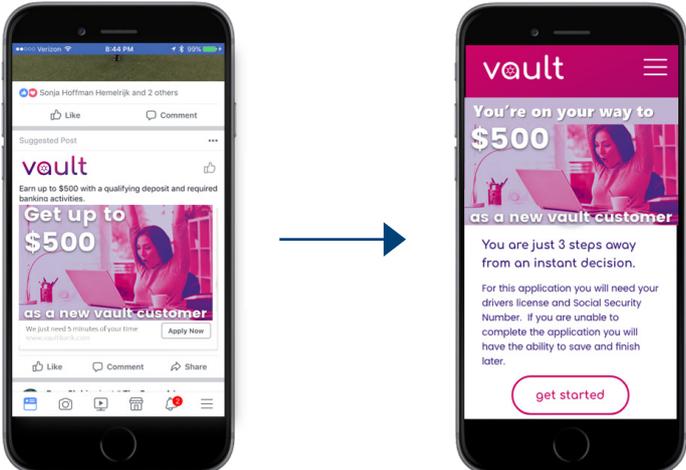
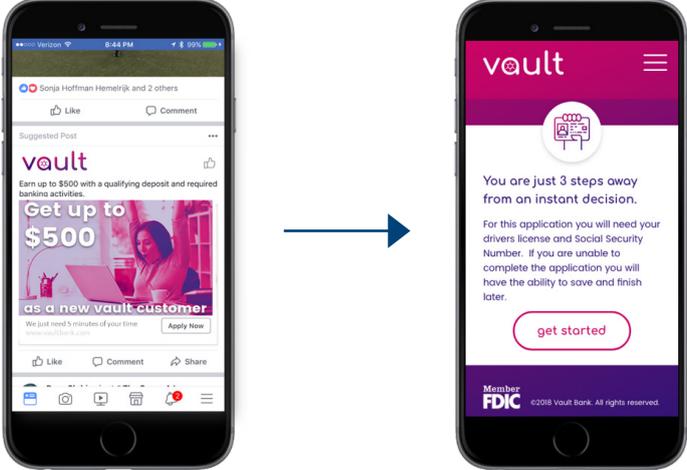
Is that the right Savings Account? Sure it's "a" savings account...but is it the one I researched with those features I'm interested in?

By simply re-iterating those key features, we can reassure the applicant they're **in the right place**.

Even worse, imagine you've targeted a new customer with a great offer through digital marketing. As is common in the US at the time of writing this piece, banks are offering cash bonuses from \$200 to \$500 just for customers to open a checking account and meet some minimum deposit requirements. So customers are seeing adds like this:

A nice targeted ad in facebook with a compelling offer...but when they click Apply Now, they see an application for a bank account alright, but no reference to the \$500 that motivated them to click!

Are you in the right place?
Is this the right product?
Are you going to get \$500???



Don't assume customers knows it's the right application form...remind them why they clicked Apply Now. Pass in context from your marketing and let them know they're on their way to that product they just selected.

How much more compelling would that experience be if it looked more like this...

A subtle but powerful change.

4 | Nurture leads



When someone abandons an application for a banking product, it doesn't always mean they're not interested. Life can get in the way. So generate and nurture leads from incomplete applications.

About 5 years ago we were working with a large bank to improve completion rates on Personal Loan applications. The bank put in place a nurturing process for the first time – meaning, abandoned applications (incomplete applications) would be followed-up. This bank chose to call customers that abandoned their Personal Loan application.

They converted **40%**
of the people they called to customers.
Yes, 40%.

We talked with the bank about the process and the head of digital explained that in addition to offering the customer help to complete their application (explaining that the bank hadn't thrown away their data) they also asked "why" the customer had abandoned. They heard stories like "my laptop crashed" or "my phone lost connection" and even "my child threw-up...so I had to go deal with that...and when I got back to my laptop, the session had timed out".

Hearing this we concluded **“life gets in the way”**

Applying for a banking product takes time...usually too long, but we'll talk about that another time. So while people are completing an application, life can get in the way. The phone rings, they lose power or connectivity, they get distracted. But that doesn't mean they're not interested in the product they started applying for. It just means they got distracted because "life gets in the way".

People who provide you with Name, Email and Phone Number are genuinely interested in a product – they should be nurtured to see if you can help them complete the application.

Plus – contacting someone to let them know "you want their business" will demonstrate that you value their business and want to establish a financial relationship with them.

So, we recommend that you obtain Name, Email and Phone Number as early in the application process as possible and create a lead from this information if their application is not completed. And then nurture this lead. Don't wait 7 days to connect. Contact the customer on Day 1, Day 3, Day 6 and Day 10 or some other similar combination. And don't always contact them at the same time of day...mix it up. See if you can find a time to reach out (by email, SMS or phone) to get them to complete the application. You might be surprised at the results...but if you've ever worked in ecommerce, you wouldn't be surprised at all.©

5 | Steer customers to the path of least resistance.

You may have features in the customer experience that can make customer acquisition easier for the customer (Photo ID Capture, Online Account Aggregation etc). Steer customers to using these options by promoting the benefit and making them clearly visible – it's a win-win.



To open a bank account or originate a loan, there's information you need – some of it for Risk reasons, some of it for Compliance reasons. Regardless of the reason, you need that information.

Providing that information takes time – typing it in is reasonably slow and whilst each individual field isn't an issue, in aggregate it can take from 5 to 30 minutes to complete an application, depending on the product. And your customers have other things they'd much rather be doing with that time.

So we've seen banks invest in building experiences that can streamline the application process for consumers with capabilities like:

- Photo ID capture and prefill
- Prefilling information from a mobile/cell carrier
- Prefilling information from an existing banking partner through account aggregation or open banking APIs
- Etc.

However, when these experiences aren't positioned appropriately with customers, they're often ignored or simply missed. The benefits (to the consumer!) of using these services should be promoted to encourage customers to leverage these services. It will save them time **AND** it will help you get more completed applications for accounts, cards, loans.

For example, with photo ID capture...

Benefit to the consumer	Benefit to the bank
Prefill's about 11 fields (Name, Address, DOB, License Details)	■ Faster completion = Higher completion rate
Improves chances of approval due to higher quality information capture (reduced typing errors and better matching to government databases)	■ Reduced fraud due to the presence of a photo ID document used to prefill.

But very often the expedited process is presented along with the option of just typing information in. And in fact, it's often missed! Therefore the customer just starts typing information in, which takes time, and then they abandon due to fatigue, or they get distracted because it's taking too long, and so on.

Let's look at an example.

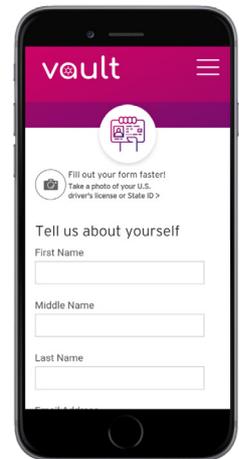
Take a look at the application experience to the right?

Did you even see the option to Prefill the form with a photo of a driving license?

Is it obvious that the circle icon with a camera is a button to use the camera on the phone?

In practice, an experience like this results in people simply typing their information in. When a consumer clicks "Apply Now" they expect to complete a form. Their on **auto-pilot** to an extent and they start looking for fields to enter First Name, Last Name, etc.

And you can see those fields on this application form under the subtle option to take a photo of a license. So when a customer sees this screen, they click in to "First Name" and start typing. And that's what happened with a similar experience in production. They missed the option to prefill or simply didn't see enough value in "Fill out your form faster".



Compare that to this experience from US banking giant Wells Fargo.



On a mobile device, the entire screen is taken up with a big red button to engage the camera. You can't miss it. You simply have to click "Or you can fill it in yourself" as an option to get to the fields.

Still, even in this design we'd recommend highlighting the benefit to the consumer beyond "Checking in a Snap". In this design we'd advocate some specific benefit metrics like.

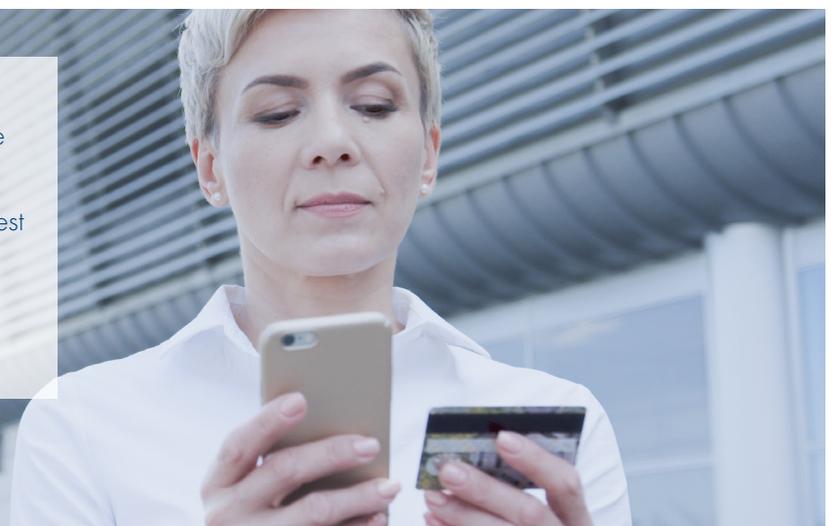
This will **save you** about 2 minutes

AND

Improve the likelihood of **instant approval.**

So, when you're designing an experience that incorporates options that will streamline the application process for the consumer:

- Make it easy for them to choose the easiest path (like the Wells Fargo design above)
- Clearly articulate the benefit to the consumer of taking the easiest path.



6

Categorize fields and ask tough questions last.

Categorize fields on an application form into:

Know it

(Information customers know easily like Date of Birth, Phone Number)

Get it

(Information that must be retrieved. but the location is known like Driving License)

Find it

(Information that has to be found like details of the previous year's tax return)

And ask for the easier information first and the tougher information later.

All things were not created equal...and that applies to the questions on an application for a bank product.

A typical bank application form will have 20 to 60 fields of information to be completed. And very often, they're laid out on the application form with little consideration as to what's going to be easiest for the consumer to complete. In many cases, the digital application for a bank account is a reflection of the screens of the core banking system. And the core banking system was designed around bankers, not consumers.

So, what is the right order for fields on an application form for a banking product?

We recommend a 3 step process as follows:

1. Capture a Lead

So – as you'll remember from previous posts ("Capture and Nurture Leads" AND "Two Paths to Purchase for Different Products" – add hyperlinks) we advocate generating a lead at the earliest appropriate point in the customer journey – so get Name, Email and Phone early.

2. Use Prefill

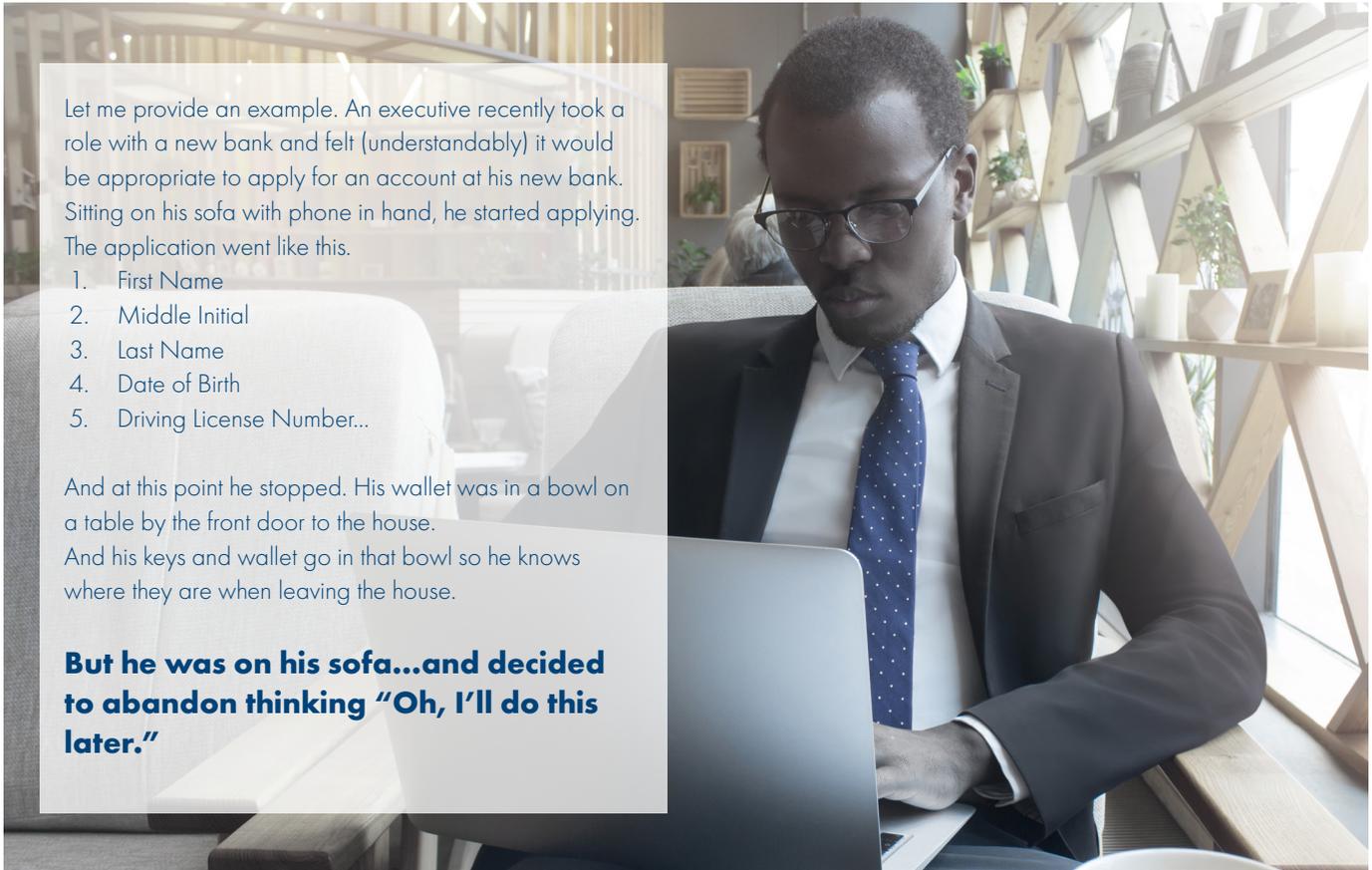
If your customer journey offers prefill services (Photo ID Capture, Account Aggregation/Open Banking, Mobile Carrier Prefill), do this early to maximize the amount that's pre-filled and show the customer there's light at the end of the tunnel! (See "Steer customers to the path of least resistance" with hyperlink)

3. Classify information in to "Know it / Get it / Find it and ask tough questions last".

Look at all the remaining fields of information on the application form (Address, Date of Birth, Employment Details, SSN, ID Document, Answers to AML Questions etc.) and classify it in to information people

- Know – Things they intrinsically know like their Date of Birth, Email Address, etc.
- Need to Get – Information that most people don't know-by-heart and must get, but they know exactly where it is like details of their Driving License.
- Need to Find – Information that customers have to think "where is that...?"

And, where possible, ask for the information in that order. Know, Get, Find.



Let me provide an example. An executive recently took a role with a new bank and felt (understandably) it would be appropriate to apply for an account at his new bank. Sitting on his sofa with phone in hand, he started applying. The application went like this.

1. First Name
2. Middle Initial
3. Last Name
4. Date of Birth
5. Driving License Number...

And at this point he stopped. His wallet was in a bowl on a table by the front door to the house. And his keys and wallet go in that bowl so he knows where they are when leaving the house.

But he was on his sofa...and decided to abandon thinking "Oh, I'll do this later."

The problem with this design was that he has only entered Name and Date of Birth before being asked to "Get" something. He wasn't invested...so he abandoned. Later realizing this was a design flaw in his new employwyyers account opening experience.

What if the account opening was...

First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name	Email	Phone Number
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Home Address	Date of Birth	Social Security Number	Citizenship	Employment Status
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Everything above here is
"KNOWN"...now he has to "GET"

Driving License Number	Driving License Expiry Date
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

By the time he has to "Get" his license, he's **invested** in completing the application and more likely to get off the sofa.

So, when designing your next application for New To Bank Customers or Credit Union Members – classify the information you need in to Know It, Get It, Find It and ask tough questions later in the flow (and watch your completion rate rise!).

7 | Details like headings, disclosures and fonts can be important

Don't just assume consumers will complete whatever you put in front of them – consider the content and design of your experience and ensure you're presenting a clean and unimposing journey to become a customer. Remember, this is their first interaction with your institution – if they don't like the experience, it may be their last.



There are a great many things we can all learn from the world's largest company (at the time of writing), Apple. Not least of all is the tech giant's **attention to detail**. Apple has become synonymous with "good design" and banks and credit unions are striving for a similar Apple-like elegance in their digital experiences.

Fonts

And it can start with things as simple as web fonts (unfortunately Apple in 2018 uses a proprietary font called San Francisco – so better to look at open web fonts for good typography). The current trend in the market is towards clean and light fonts. Common, easily accessible web fonts include:

Roboto	The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.
Lato	The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.
Open Sans	The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.
Helvetica Neue	The left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.

Unfortunately – many bank/customer user experiences utilize older style fonts like Times New Roman and create experiences that look like they were designed in the 1990's. And thus, create an impression with prospective customers/members that the bank is digitally challenged and maybe not the institution for them.

Case

Once you've selected your font, please resist the urge to put text in ALL CAPITALS. Simply put, it's harder to read text in upper case. Proper Case or Sentence Case (as we're using in this article) is easier to read. Sure, I can read WORD, word, Word, woRd – but it's more natural to read text in sentence case.

So when presenting headings, labels, instructions – you'll find customers process that text in sentence case more easily than upper case. Don't believe me...take a look at the Apple website and you'll see that the vast majority (with limited exceptions like the Apple WATCH and MUSIC names) is presented in sentence case. Including menus, headings and links.

Disclosures

An important aspect of onboarding a new customer (especially after the finance industries challenges of 2007/2008) is the appropriate presentation of Disclosures – the terms and conditions associated with a product(s) such as Fees, Product Use, Legal Disclaimers, Privacy Policies, and so on.

Most would argue that customers don't read these disclosures – and in general, I would agree. Especially if they are large documents. But the financial crisis has been trying to encourage / force banks and other financial institutions to extract the key points from lengthy documents (20 – 80 pages is not uncommon) and ensure those "key points" are clearly communicated and understood by consumers.

Unfortunately, those "key points" are critical text and therefore generally prepared by staff in the Legal & Compliance teams at the institution. And often written in language that requires a legal person to understand the text. And if a customer doesn't understand something or is uncomfortable – they will abandon, rather than continuing.

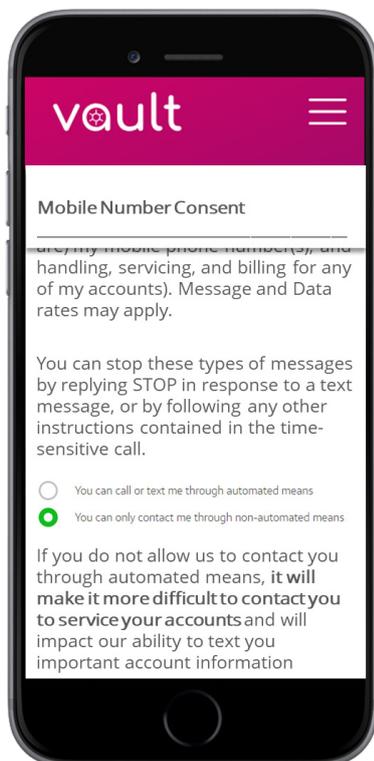
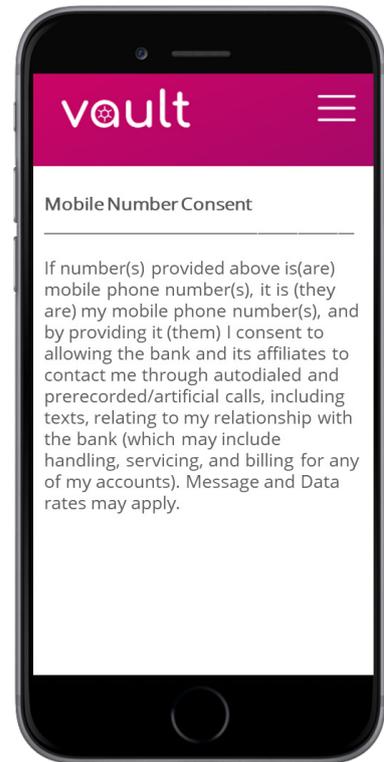
Consider the following example:

In the US, banks are required to obtain consent from consumers to send text messages to a mobile / cell phone or if they want to use pre-recorded auto-dialed messages.

Now, these messages are important – they may be a notification of potential fraud on an account. And imagine a situation where a bank's database has been compromised and 1,000,000 customers are impacted by potential fraud. But the bank only has 200 people in the call center (more than enough for normal operations). If the 200 people were to work 24 hours a day calling 1,000,000 customers – it would take 208 days to contact everyone. Whereas an automated communication method would allow this to happen in minutes.

The bank in question knew this...but didn't do a good job of articulating that to prospective customers. And presented a mobile phone disclosure similar to the one shown in the adjacent screen.

5% of all the bank's abandonment occurred on this disclosure. It was an expensive piece of text.



However, a similar disclosure (with cleaner text) could be presented along with the ability to easily opt-out as shown here.

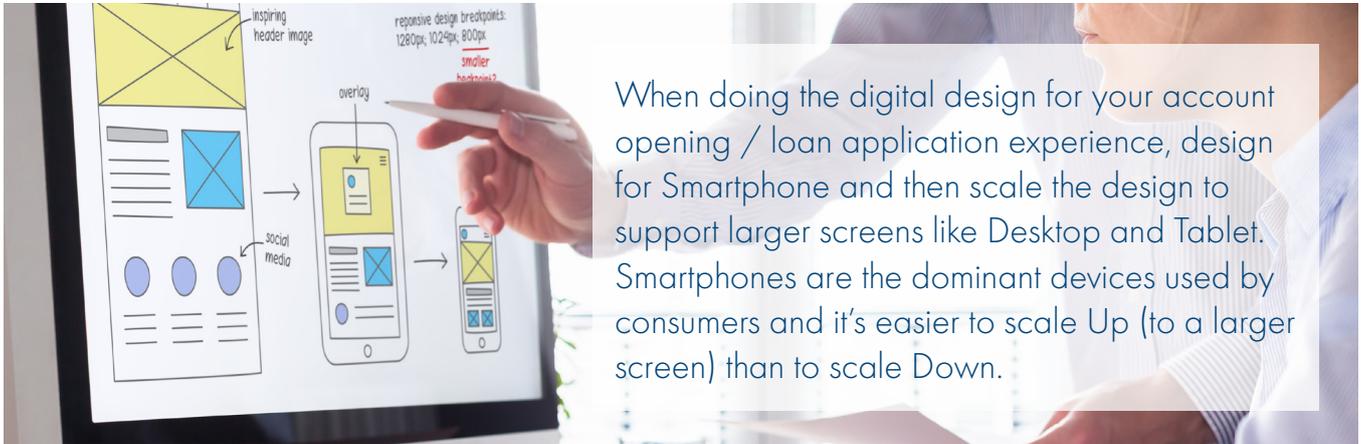
And if the customer chooses to opt out, the bank could notify them of the potential issues that may arise if the bank cannot contact the customer through automated means – basically, sell the benefit of automation to those that need to be sold on the idea.

The screen shot here shows the original text scrolling off the screen with some additional context for the consumer explaining that they can STOP these messages at any time and providing a radio button to opt out during the application with an explanation of the impact of opting out.

The customer experience is still far from perfect in this example, but is giving the customer control and choice are hugely important.

So, when designing your all-new Apple-esque onboarding experience – don't just assume customers will read and accept what you put in front of them. Ensure the content could be understood by a 5th grader and can't be interpreted negatively or you will lose customers.

8 | Design for mobile first, then scale up.



When doing the digital design for your account opening / loan application experience, design for Smartphone and then scale the design to support larger screens like Desktop and Tablet. Smartphones are the dominant devices used by consumers and it's easier to scale Up (to a larger screen) than to scale Down.

Due to the number of organizations using the Temenos platform and our associated analytics, we get to see a broad perspective of account opening experiences in different states and countries. And we have seen a definite trend in the growth of consumers using Smartphones to originate new personal banking products like Deposit Accounts and Credit Cards. In fact, in 2017, for our customers, smartphones became the #1 device used by consumers to apply for bank accounts and credit cards (Desktop is still dominant for business banking and products like Mortgages...but for how long?).

Furthermore, we see higher completion rates on smartphones when compared to completion rates on desktop (when the bank has invested in a mobile/touch-friendly experience).

Finally – ask any designer and they'll tell you it's easier to start a mobile design and scale up rather than start with a design focused on a larger screen and cram things on to a smaller screen. There's a great 6 part tutorial on the concepts of mobile first design (Lesson 3) and scaling up (Lesson 4) here <https://trydesignlab.com/responsive-web-design/lessons/> and as the course author Patrick Wong (<https://trydesignlab.com/Patrick/>) elegantly puts it...

“...mobile-first design allows us to start with the unique size constraints of a smaller screen, which helps us be brutal about simplifying our content and navigation... instead of simply trying to shoehorn a larger layout onto a smaller screen.”

There are some specific ideas you should consider when designing an bank product application experience for a mobile device and they include (but certainly are not limited to)

There are some specific ideas you should consider when designing an bank product application experience for a mobile device and they include (but certainly are not limited to)

Minimize keyboard use

The example here shows 3 ways of collecting the required information – number of dependents.

The Toggle Button is the easiest to interact with on a touch screen device – a single tap completes the required information.

Number of Dependents

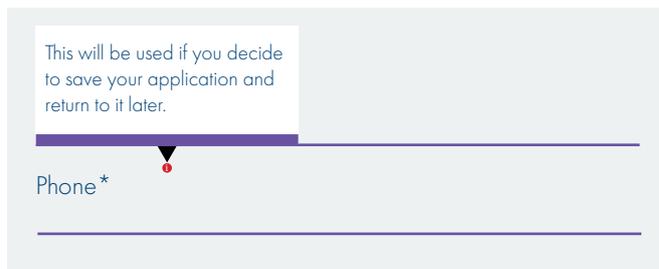
0 1 2 3 4 5+

Number of Dependents

Number of Dependents

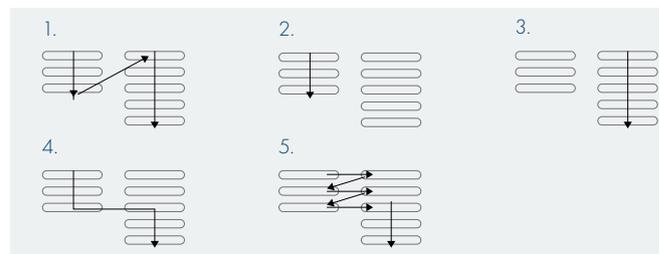
Tooltips Don't work on Touch Devices

Do not display important information on tooltips as hover is not supported on touch devices. Use information icons and if the information is critical, show it 100% of the time.



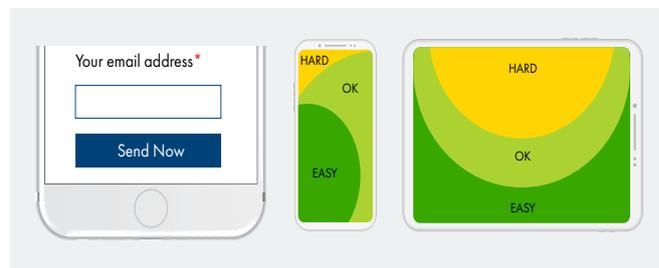
Use a Single Column Layout

Avoid the potential confusion of different paths through the fields on a form by adopting a single column layout.



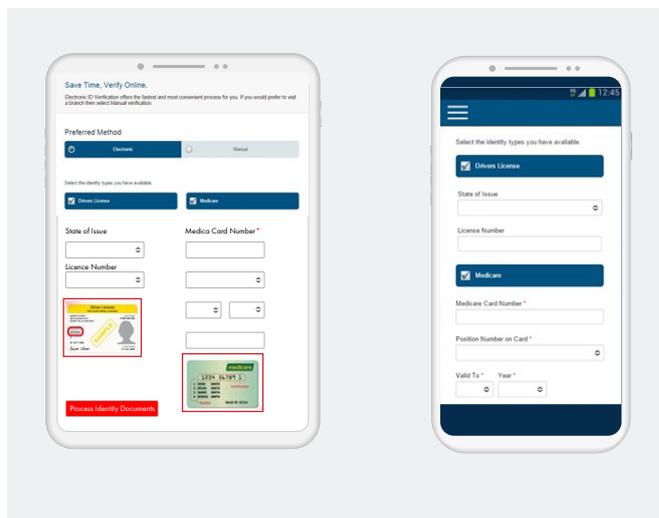
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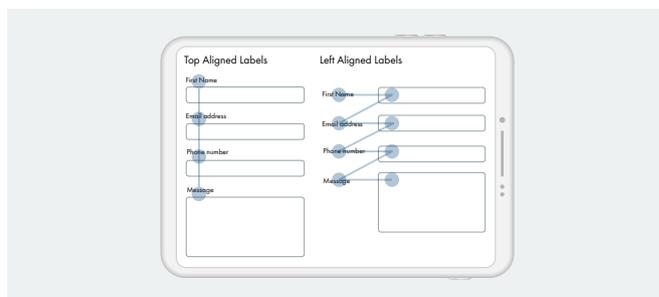
Use adaptive design to eliminate content

Smartphones have smaller screens – so adaptive design can be used to change what's displayed on a smaller screen. Sometimes instead of shrinking something to fit, it is better to remove it. For example – “helper” images like the sample ID document images shown here are better removed from the smartphone form factor through adaptive design.



Position labels above fields

The image here shows the simpler navigation of the eye when processing an application form with labels positioned above fields as opposed to on the left.



These are just some of the design principles we recommend for smartphone devices that apply equally well to larger screens. And as mentioned at the start of the article – it's easier to design for a small screen and scale up, rather than trying to cram a large screen design on to a smaller screen.

9 | Focus on design simplicity, not fancy UX widgets.

Completing an application for a Bank Product is something people HAVE to do, not something they WANT to do. So make it quick and simple (and compliant) above all else.

There are things I WANT to do (eat out, watch a movie, listen to music, spend time with my family, play video games) and things I HAVE to do (file taxes, apply for a loan, visit the dentist). Often it seems the thinking from the first bleeds in to the second. Fun, gamification, social...when really what people crave in things they HAVE to do is speed and simplicity.

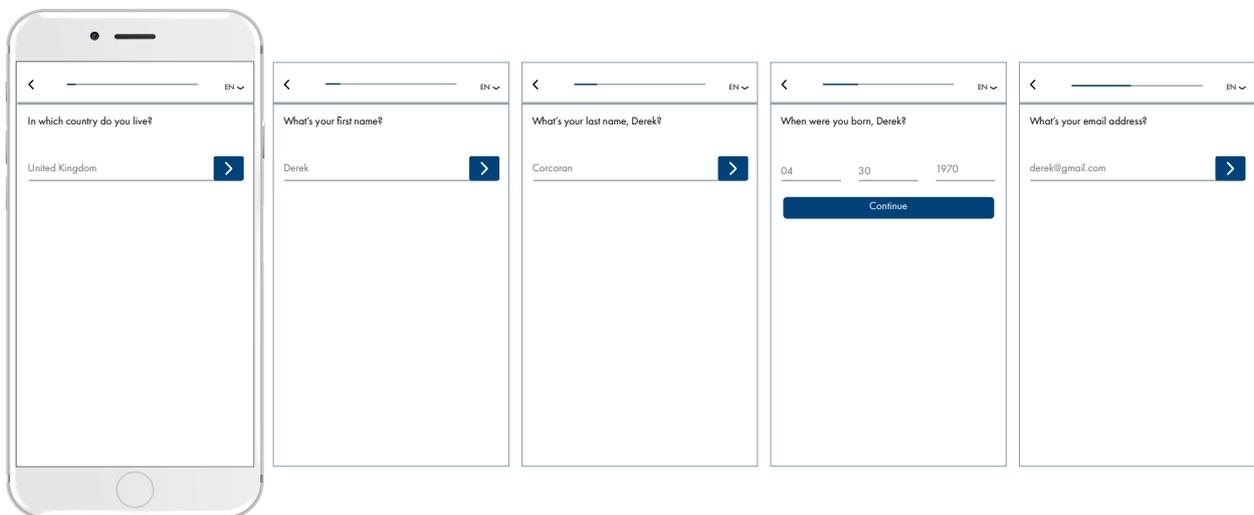
I'd happily sacrifice my dentist being able to play my favourite playlist from Spotify if the visit was 15 minutes shorter!

The same is true in banking. We often run in to design teams that are working tirelessly to design a particular graphical component for input (a slider, a carousel, a progress bar, a...whatever) and we ask them

“Do you really think this is going to make a difference to completion rates?”

What if we focused that time and energy on removing fields or prefilling information on the application. What if it didn't look as cool, but could be completed twice as fast?

Take a look at the account opening experience from N26 in Europe – a successful and rapidly growing digital only bank. It represents the ultimate in design simplicity. Single field per screen. No scrolling. Plenty of space on the screen for the keyboard when required. Simple progress bar up the top. No Logo. Clear “back” button. It's soooooo easy to move through the application experience and the design is uncluttered.



Similarly, if you've used the Amazon website or app, you'll notice a distinct lack of fancy design – no 3D rotation of objects. It's a very simple, even primitive, design. But obviously, highly effective.

So we would encourage you to focus energy on making the application experience simple and uncluttered for applicants. As software usability and design guru Jared Spool famously said

“Good design, when done well, should be invisible.”

Is your design getting in the way of people completing the important task at hand (becoming a customer)?

10 | Look outside banking for inspiration

To design a truly innovative customer experience, you should look outside of banking for inspiration. See how other industries (Ride Sharing, eCommerce, Insurance) are solving similar problems. But don't assume that innovation in every industry will be applicable to banking – it won't.



Fintech legend Brett King talks extensively about designing banking experiences with “First Principles Thinking” in his book Bank 4.0. This is a term often associated with Elon Musk and there's a great description of it here <https://medium.com/the-mission/elon-musks-3-step-first-principles-thinking-how-to-think-and-solve-difficult-problems-like-a-ba1e73a9f6c0>.

First Principles Thinking means your solving a problem or designing a product / experience with no starting point. You're not copying or redesigning something that already exists – that's a more iterative design approach.

So for example:

- In banking – **iterative design** would focus on delivering a better digital Deposit Account. Whereas **first principles** thinking would think about solving the problem of “A safe and secure place for people to store their money so they can easily access it when they need to buy things.”
- If you're looking at the problem of lending money to small businesses, an **iterative design** process would say “How do we deliver a digital experience for small business lending?” Whereas a **first principles** design approach might identify that small business owners will figure out that they need a loan WHEN their updating their online accounting software like Quickbooks or Xero – so how do we allow a small business owner to apply for a loan through their online accounting.

But to energize your first principles thinking – it's useful to look outside your usual frame of reference. Don't look to other banks or even fintechs for ideas...look to other industries and successful brands in those industries. But not all industries will provide relevant examples.

We categorize experiences in to two broad groups

- 1. Enjoyable** – things people want to do like entertainment, dining, vacation. We want enjoyable experiences to be fun, engaging, pleasurable, in fact sometimes we want them to last as long as possible because we want to do them. We enjoy them.
- 2. Necessary** – things people must do like insurance, banking, dental care. We want necessary experiences to be as quick and effortless as possible, so we can get back to doing enjoyable things.

Unfortunately, banking falls in to the “necessary” category. So when looking for inspiration, it can be useful to look at enjoyable brand experiences, but the way Apple, Marriott and Disney deliver great experiences may not be applicable to banking.

However, we can find great parallels in areas like eCommerce. For example:

- **Nike** tapped in to the desire of customers to personalize shoes with “NIKE BY YOU”. Banks have seen similar opportunities in the personalization of credit/debit cards with photos or sports team colors.
- **Amazon** learnt that displaying a customer's last searches on the home page of amazon.com when the customer returned could help complete shopping journeys. Banks have seen similar success with making the banner image on the home page about Mortgages if that was the last thing I searched for.

These are simple examples – but show how lessons from other industries can be applied to banking. However – it's important to prototype these new experiences before making significant investment. We've seen banks obtain critical early feedback from customers when showing sketched prototypes to branch customers. This low cost approach to prototyping can ensure you are “Building the right thing” before you think about “Building the thing right”.

Conclusion

If you are looking for a way to significantly impact the growth and profitability of your bank, then improving the effectiveness of your customer acquisition, sales, onboarding, origination journeys is a highly effective way to achieve tangible results.

And before you start re-designing the experience or crafting wireframes or looking at competitors – start with these recommended best practices as guiding principles for your design work to ensure you include proven tactics that will increase completion rates.

Next steps

If you are looking for a way to significantly impact the growth and profitability of your bank, then improving the effectiveness of your customer acquisition, sales, onboarding, origination journeys is a highly effective way to achieve tangible results.

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