

# #cfrresults

## No Oops In Opportunity

Insights from Tom Hershberger, CEO, Cross Financial, 2020

An optimist would tell you there is a opportunity in every situation. With today's economic challenges, managers might question that statement. So, where do we look to find opportunities in banking?

The heart of that discussion is not about being positive or negative, conservative or liberal. It's not about choosing profitability over growth or loan quality over higher yields. It's about fully leveraging your unique business proposition with customers and targeted prospects. Not the opportunities being pursued by every financial institution as result of a recent conference presentation or industry study, but the opportunities created by an organization working to connect their vision and mission with customers, prospects and a trade area.

The best, most successful opportunities are created not discovered. So, be intentional about creating opportunities for your organization this year.

### Invest in Discovery

The most overused phrases in bank advertising are "meeting all your financial needs" and "exceeding your expectations." Do we really mean that? Do you spend time each year investigating the needs of your customers and discovering ways to meet those needs? Relationship expansion and contraction will be occurring throughout the year. Dedicate some time and resources to examining your customer relationships and your trade area potential. Discovery is an essential part of creating opportunities.

### Invest in Development

Expand your knowledgebase this year. Ask your managers and staff to think like customers. Work to create customer experiences that produce lifetime value in relationships. Be creative with your customer service models and product development. Distractions are holding back some organizations. Developing what your competitors do not have or will not offer could be the critical difference to expanding client relationships.

### Invest in Education

In sales, service and relationship training programs we encourage bank employees to inform, educate and provide solutions. Education is an important step in creating customer loyalty. Product and industry knowledge can help build trust...an essential ingredient to enhancing value. There is a saying, "In the absence of value, price is always a problem." That statement is true when education is missing. Spend time educating your staff about financial solutions and relationship potential with clients. Then proactively educate your customers about the solutions that set your organization apart from the competition.

### Invest in Communication

Great things happen when people communicate. Creating opportunities and achieving success requires effective communication throughout your organization. Employees that know and understand what needs to be done are more likely to achieve the desired results. Don't rely on email communications to share information and provide feedback. Get your managers and supervisors engaged in active communication. Banking is a service-based industry. This places a premium on effective communications with staff and customers.

*Continued on back...*

*Opportunity, continued*

### **Invest in Strategic Initiatives**

Tighter budgets place a greater emphasis on the few investments you plan to make each year. Producing success in an uncertain and changing marketplace is well suited for strategic thinking and innovation. The kind of thinking that focuses your efforts on essential business initiatives. Most of your opportunities will not be coming from new breakout trends in banking. They will be nurtured from your understanding of your market and an intimate knowledge of your customers needs for products, information and financial expertise. Limiting your resource management to your most essential strategic initiatives will be imperative for a successful year.

Is the optimist correct? Do opportunities exist for financial institutions this year? Invest in the right organizational practices and find out. Your competitors won't be distracted forever. If you have an opportunity, don't wait until things get better, pursue it now.

**Examine your opportunities.**

**Expand your knowledgebase.**

**Incorporate discovery into every decision.**

**Educate your decision makers.**

**Communicate.**

**Unify your leadership team.**

**Focus on strategic implementation.**

**Use this space to brainstorm your opportunities.**

**Don't worry about the solutions right now. Start by identifying the information that would help you make better planning decisions for your organization.**

**Examples:**

- Customer Net Promoter Score
- Employee Engagement Levels
- Customer Product Possession Ratios
- Customer Profitability
- Top-of-Mind Awareness