



Selecting a Bank for Your Business

Twelve important questions to ask

Selecting a bank is an important decision for the future of any business. Often the decision defaults to simply finding the most convenient location with the lowest cost for accounts and loans. Although these are important considerations, there are other factors that are just as important to the success of a business. These Should Ask Questions (SAQs) will help to define the value that will be delivered during the relationship:

1. Who will be my primary point of contact responsible for my banking relationship or does the bank take a “whoever is available” approach to serving me?
2. If I have an account manager, what is their level of experience and expertise to serve my needs? How long have they been with the bank, how long do they expect to be at this location and what are their primary responsibilities? Are they primarily a commercial lender with a narrow focus on making loans or are they a well rounded commercial banker, able to address whatever needs I have, whether that be loan or deposit services including being able to provide sound business advice if I want it?
3. What process do they have to get to know and understand me and my business and be able to proactively offer services, financing and advice to help my business succeed?
4. What process do they have to engage with me regularly to stay abreast of my changing business and business needs, and in turn, advise me of new services the bank may develop to keep my banking as efficient as possible? How proactive are they in understanding my banking needs?
5. What process do they have to consider a loan request: the normal length of time it takes to make a decision, who will be involved, where are they located and how do they become knowledgeable about me and my request?
6. Whether they approve the request or not, do they share their analysis of the request and my business so I know how it is viewed, whether it is accurately represented, and what I can do to improve on it to be eligible for additional credit or better terms?
7. What happens if I experience adversity after getting a loan and have difficulty making my payments? If adversity happens, with whom will I be working?
8. Because commercial bankers work with a variety of businesses, what kind of advice and counsel is available to help my business?
9. What assistance will the bank provide in helping promote my business as a customer of the bank?
10. What is the ownership and financial condition of the bank? Where do they have banking locations? What are their ratings for safety and soundness?
11. What is unique about this bank that they can serve my business needs better than any other bank?
12. Do they have a service delivery promise for business customers?