

Howard Bank Gets Hands On With Optimist 7

Optimist 7 Case Study

Customer Profile



Howard Bank

Maryland

www.howardbank.com

Industry:

Financial Services

Need:

- Build stronger relationships with their clients
- Expand market share through differentiation
- Create consistency amongst all commercial credit team members; relationship manager & analysts
- To compete on Service not Price

Inmatrix Solutions:

- Optimist 7
- Training
- Implementation

Key Benefits:

- Build better quality loans
- Growth in the portfolio
- Increased revenue and profitability
- Raise customer satisfaction & loyalty



inmatrix
making business simple

Howard Bank, Howard County, Maryland's first banking start-up in 15 years, sums its approach to the market it serves in two words: Hands On. Hands On is how Howard Bank does business. It is how the bank thinks about its clients' businesses and the goals those business owners want to achieve. At Howard Bank, Hands On is about being involved every single day, every step of the way, and no tool helps the bank deliver on its promises better than Optimist 7.

Optimist Impacts the Bottom Line

Optimist, a commercial banking software solution developed by Inmatrix, was implemented at Howard Bank only one year ago, but the bank is already benefiting from incredible results. Commercial loans are growing. Revenue is growing. But perhaps most importantly for this bank that values its business clients and strives to provide superior financial solutions, relationships are growing too.

"Optimist fits our model of being an advisor to our clients," said Paul Brown, Chief Lending Officer of Howard Bank. "We want to provide service beyond what most typical banks offer. We want to have longer, more meaningful conversations with clients to figure out exactly what their needs are and provide them with advice that quickly gets them to their business goals."

Howard Bank uses Optimist as both its internal credit management/spreading solution and its front-end relationship management tool. The real differentiator is the ability for relationship managers to use Optimist face-to-face with clients. During client meetings, a laptop is used to input financial data and then manipulate that data to generate a number of 'what-if' scenarios. This, in turn, helps the business owner to determine the optimal path to increase business results and achieve the objectives he or she is seeking. With a few clicks of the mouse, a visual display of charts and graphs is created and the client immediately sees the impact various decisions would have on the business. Brown sees this as being a tremendous value add to clients and prospects.

"Our relationship managers can actually sit down with a client or prospect, tie the business's income statement and balance sheet together, and get critical answers right away," he explained. "Business owners, especially small business owners, don't have a lot of time. They really do rely on someone who can suggest alternate ways of doing things—especially when those suggestions lead to greater business success for them."

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Optimist Fuels Powerful Client Conversations

According to Rosa Scharf, a Howard Bank senior vice president and relationship manager, clients see the differences in Optimist and are amazed by how much they can learn about their business in mere minutes. *"I've never had a negative client experience when using Optimist,"* she said. *"Our recent upgrade from Optimist 6 to Optimist 7 has proven to be far easier to navigate and truly enhances every client presentation I make. The ability to sit down with a prospect or existing client, plug the financials in, and instantaneously show how the business is performing in a clear, user-friendly format is phenomenal."*

Scharf uses Optimist 7 to demonstrate how well clients' businesses are doing and also to help those in financial trouble. *"Optimist 7 enabled me to show a particular client that he was growing too fast and if he kept growing at that pace, he was literally going to put his company out of business,"* she explained. *"This was a scenario he could not visualize until I demonstrated the consequences using Optimist 7. The information I was able to provide to him changed the way he did business from that day forward."*

Optimist Enhances Business Success — For Howard Bank and its Clients

Howard Bank may only be a year old, but it has made quite an impression on the highly competitive Baltimore/Washington corridor banking market. Optimist 7 is helping Howard Bank to build better quality loans and grow its portfolio, increase revenue and profitability, exceed clients' expectations and raise customer satisfaction, plus differentiate itself in the eyes of its clients and prospects.

Clients are telling Howard Bank how Optimist 7 is helping them to succeed.

"I recently had the opportunity to review my company's financial history with Rosa Scharf of Howard Bank," said Victor Kishter, president of Corridor Printing. *"She was able to show me how some of the business decisions that I had been exploring would impact me and my company financially."*

"The software program that Howard Bank is using was instrumental in helping me understand quickly and succinctly what these decisions would mean—and she was able to do it during our meeting. It was great to receive the answers to my questions immediately without having to wait to schedule a follow-up meeting," Victor said.

That's Hands On banking, Howard Bank style.



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