



Ath Power Consulting Unveils Small Business Banking Benchmarking Study

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-- Most large banks scored below accepted norms for servicing new small business customers, according to a new study released today by Ath Power Consulting, a customer experience research and strategy firm. Based on the customer experience offered by front-line sales and service staff, only 76% of small business owners in this study would become a bank's customer after their initial experience.

"We would expect to see average evaluation scores above the 90th percentile for this market, but only 24% of the banks in our study scored that high. 29% scored less than 70% for overall service measures," notes Frank Aloï, President of Ath Power Consulting. "The average evaluation score for all banks was 76%."

Three-Step Formula for Success

By implementing 3 steps, bankers can increase their close rate to 96%!

1. Determining what matters to the customer ,
2. Exhibiting a clear understanding of products/services and taking responsibility for servicing inquiry or referring it ,
3. Determining business banking needs before talking about products/services

= 96% of those surveyed would become customers!

About the Study

Ath Power Small Business Banking Study conducted nearly 600 in-person visits to 20 large and mid-size banks in the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2009. The banks that scored well on customer experience were primarily mid-size regional banks. The top-scoring banks include Bank of the West in the Western region, Capital One Bank in the mid-Atlantic, RBC Bank in the South, Citizens Bank in the Northeast and Fifth Third Bank in the Midwest.

Mike Menyhart, Senior Vice President and Director of Customer Experience at Fifth Third Bank, said "Fifth Third is widely recognized for our leadership in customer service and we are particularly proud of our ranking given the robustness of the Ath Power Survey. It offers a true benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of our efforts."

Ath Power's Small Business Banking Study is designed to help banks benchmark best practices in winning new customers and servicing existing ones. "This study is important for bankers who want to know how well they provide small business banking relationships compared to competitors," says Aloï. "Our data is easy to customize so that banks can make highly targeted comparisons." A white paper based on the study results may be requested by going to <http://www.athpower.com>.

About Ath Power Consulting

Ath Power Consulting provides integrated customer experience solutions that drive customer loyalty, retention and front-line sales for banks and financial institutions. Ath Power is a leader in financial services marketing research, mystery shopping, employee development, and strategic planning. The company supports more than 40% of the nation's largest financial services institutions with customized customer experience research solutions. CEO Frank Aloï was a featured speaker at the recent BAI Retail Delivery conference and SourceMedia's Small Business Banking conference.