

Trademarked banking system leads to customer satisfaction and new consulting revenue.

Mavericks by definition don't take the road less traveled – they cut their own trail. That's exactly what James Geeslin of Extraco Banks of Central Texas has done. His creative spin on banking services has transformed his branches, changed hiring practices, and resulted in an innovative trademarked banking system.



"It's more efficient. Time is money," Geeslin says of his Swarm Banking™ system. The concept is indeed modeled on its namesake – swarms of bees. Rather than have customers wait in line for help, staff "swarm" to them and greet them within 10 seconds of their arrival.

Starting with revamped floor plans, Geeslin, vice chairman and chief sales officer, changed the nature of the way they provide service. The biggest change is hiring and training employees. "We needed people who could do more than one thing, who were mobile, and could communicate well," he explains. "We found that the bulk of turnover in the bank is in the retail positions where there are lots of part-time workers." Training was diluted and inconsistent because one teller trained another. Now, training is more formal, following an airline flight attendant training model, allowing staff to serve more job functions.

Extraco's staff now have combined job functions and are more sales-oriented, full-service staffers. In fact with their ear pieces for communication, they look more like secret service agents than tellers, Geeslin says.

A wide range of improved services and procedures set the new banking concept apart:

- **Cash Recycling Kiosks** – These automated kiosks allow staff to feed checks and deposits in, and the cash and change come out. No need for time-consuming balancing of drawers at the end of the day.
- **Deposit Automation** – Customers can make a deposit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They feed the check into the machine, which deposits the money and returns a receipt with copy of check on the back side.
- **Instant ATM cards** – "We survey our customers a lot," Geeslin says. Extraco found that customers were displeased with the turnaround on debit cards – sometimes up to 10 days wait to receive a new card. Through the Innovation Committee, we developed a system to print the cards in the lobby and customers get a new card in four minutes.
- **Innovation Committee** – "I hand pick the members who come from all walks of the business," Geeslin says. The committee meets religiously for lunch every two weeks. "We throw ideas around and see what sticks...If we want to move forward with an idea we have a task force pull in fellow workers," he explains.

- **Consulting Revenue** – Extraco’s system has been so popular, many businesses were asking to come see how it works. “So we started charging for our expertise and are helping other banks reduce their staffing and turnover, and increase their customer satisfaction,” Geeslin says. “By the fourth quarter of 2011, we developed a nice pipeline of business.”

Not surprisingly, Extraco’s creativity earned Geeslin “Maverick Banker of the Year” in 2011 from the Bank Administration Institute. Extraco was also named a 2011 Celent Model Bank.

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