

Get a Consumer's-Eye View of Your Bank *BancSource's Enhanced Relationship with Harland Clarke Helps Banks Take the Mystery out of Mystery Shopping*

Imagine being able to view your bank through the objective eyes of your customers. Imagine having at your fingertips their candid and unbiased assessment of your branch, your telephone customer service line, and your website. And then imagine that you are privy to any change in their opinions over the coming weeks, months or even years — all without asking them a single survey question.

No, you do not need to hire a psychic with a crystal ball. Harland Clarke offers a comprehensive Mystery Shopping service, and the way it works is anything but mysterious.

In a nutshell, it utilizes professionally trained staff — mystery shoppers — who evaluate a bank's customer service, whether in person, by phone or online. The key is that they are unknown to bank staff, who treat them as they would any other potential or current customer.



"Mystery shopping is a rapidly growing service that's easy to implement and offers banks a wealth of information they couldn't get any other way," says **Linda Schrock**, Harland Clarke's Mystery Shopping manager. "Yet it's amazingly underutilized."

One reason for this is that banks are not necessarily aware that, when done right, Mystery Shopping is highly structured and highly measurable, and offers a great return-on-investment. Bankers may assume that they have a handle on customer satisfaction because, for example, they know the teller wait time is two minutes, or because they listen in on random customer service phone calls. But while such knowledge is an important first step, it is neither objective nor measurable over the long haul, nor is it likely to result in any significant long-term changes.

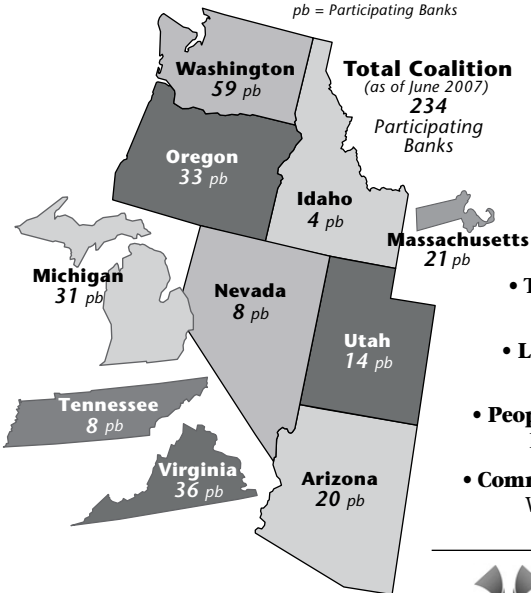
Continued on page 25

BancSource Coalition Highlights

Welcome New Participants!

BANCOURCE COALITION

pb = Participating Banks



We are proud to announce that the following banks have recently joined the BancSource Coalition:

- **Town & Country Bank** •
St. George, Utah
- **Lake Sammamish Bank** •
Issaquah, Washington
- **Peoples Federal Savings Bank** •
Brighton, Massachusetts
- **Commonwealth National Bank** •
Worcester, Massachusetts



Think Forward: BancSource Strategic Planning Initiative

The board of directors and management of BancSource recently completed a full day planning session to help establish the strategic priorities for the organization looking ahead.

The board retained **Terry Saber**, principal with Saber and Associates, to lead the session and distill the results into a draft plan available for board review. Saber was previously retained by the Oregon Bankers Association for the Association's strategic planning initiative completed earlier this year. This experience provided her with a good frame of reference and insight for the subsequent BancSource planning effort now underway.

The new plan will illuminate the business path for BancSource moving forward - capitalizing on previous successes, current strengths and future opportunities. It is anticipated that the proposed strategic priorities will be finalized and presented for approval at the BancSource and OBA board meetings scheduled for December. ■

Mystery Shopping. . . continued from page 24.

According to Harland Clarke, mystery shopping is implemented in seven consecutive steps:

- 1. Customize** - We work with the bank to decide what to measure, based on strategic initiatives. Using this information, we create appropriate shopping scenarios.
- 2. Train** - We assign knowledgeable professional shoppers to each institution who are fully trained on the scenario to be used.
- 3. Shop** - The bank determines the extent and frequency of the shops, which might include in-person evaluations of the facility and its employees; telephone evaluations of the call center or branch; or website evaluations of online banking.
- 4. Benchmark** - We conduct an initial shop to establish a baseline, to which all future shops are compared, and from which historical analyses can be generated.
- 5. Report** - We gather data from our shopper evaluations, analyze it and report to the bank within 30 days of the last shop. To see a sample report, go to www.harlandclarke.com/mysteryshop and click "View Sample Mystery Shop".
- 6. Feedback** - We help banks use the shopping results to identify areas in which your employees can improve, and to implement staff training, as needed. This ensures that Mystery Shopping is not an end in itself, but that it results in the desired long-term changes.
- 7. Repeat** - In order to demonstrate a return-on-investment, results must be measured over time. This will provide consistent ongoing measurement and historical perspective.

Schrock says it is important to note that, while there are other companies that offer mystery shopping services, they are generally retail-based. "Because they don't focus exclusively on the financial services market, they can't offer the same level of customization, reporting and feedback," she says.

Also, there is a difference in how a large bank with hundreds of branches would utilize Mystery Shopping, versus a local community bank. "It's easier to implement a solution across ten branches versus a thousand," says Schrock. Therefore, large banks considering Mystery Shopping should focus on regional implementation.

Mystery Shopping: One Size Does Not Fit All

There are myriad reasons to consider Mystery Shopping, and each will require different shopping scenarios. Put a check next to those objectives that match the goals of your financial institution and then contact **Laurel Olson** at laurel.olson@harlandclarke.com or (503) 675-0585 to see how Mystery Shopping will work for your bank. ■

MY BANK GOALS ARE:

- Establish a sales/service culture
- Enhance service levels and customer satisfaction
- Gauge effectiveness of promotional campaigns or marketing efforts
- Compete more effectively
- Analyze cultural strategies
- Evaluate employee training
- Streamline operating procedures
- Acquire new customers
- Assess the competition

Boost Fee Income Through the Enhanced BancSource Partnership with Harland Clarke

This Fall, most Oregon banks participating in the BancSource - Harland Clarke partnership have taken advantage of the opportunity to access additional features of the newly enhanced program by signing on to the new extended program. These banks will enjoy the benefits beginning in January.

Oregon banks that have not yet completed their Participant Agreement have a shrinking window of time to act. It's important to take action now to assure a spot in the queue for the stream of additional benefits that will be activated in January.

For more information, contact **Stephen Clark**, general manager of BancSource, at sclark@bancsource.com or (503) 581-3522, or **Laurel Olson**, senior account executive at Harland Clarke, at laurel.olson@harlandclarke.com. ■

Have we met?



Get to know the insurance company specializing in products & risk management services for banks.

"Meet the difference."


BANCINSURE[®]
By Bankers - For Bankers

Contact
Todd Doty
877.216.7376
www.bancinsure.com

Exclusively
Endorsed by

