

CASE STUDY

Bell Bank, formerly The Business Bank Reduces Risk with Daily Monitoring

THE COMPANY

Bell Bank began 50 years ago as State Bank of Fargo. Today, Bell is the largest independently owned bank in the upper Midwest, and one of the largest in the nation, with assets of more than \$5 billion and business in 50 states.

THE CHALLENGE

Daily Risk Management, Affordably and Efficiently

Like most community banks, Bell Bank, formerly The Business Bank was faced with the challenge of reacting to new regulations, increased compliance requirements, and difficult economic times. The Bank knew that daily monitoring of risk was the key to managing risk, but this created a burden that required extensive personnel time and was costly.

In order to continue their client-focused philosophy, Bell Bank wanted to streamline and automate the risk management process to save time and money, including the ability to:

- Gather independent data from multiple sources easily
- Eliminate manual data entry and report creation
- Automate the monitoring of accounts
- Monitor more accounts more frequently
- Receive advance warning when clients are struggling
- Reduce expenses for data acquisition and reporting
- Free up staff to take on advisory roles with clients

THE SOLUTION

AR Surveillance™

After an extensive search, Bell Bank determined the best option was AR Surveillance™, a B2B, subscription-based, risk-mitigation solution that is easy for banks to set up and use. Being a Software-as-a-Service solution (SaaS), it required no hardware or software to be installed. Bell Bank assigned the use of the AR Surveillance tool to the Credit Analysis department to monitor up to 75 business accounts.

MANAGING RISK IN REAL-TIME

Mark Lauffenburger, SVP/Commercial Lender, points to AR Surveillance as a significant leap ahead for Bell Bank in terms of risk management. "With AR Surveillance, we can manage risk on a real-time basis," he said. "Instead of relying on data that arrives 20, 30, 40 days after an event, we're getting up-to-the-minute alerts." What does that mean? On a real-time basis, the solution monitors the pulse of the clients they've chosen to monitor. It provides them with insight into customers the company does not know as well. Not only does it allow them to track changes (positive or negative) for their own clients, but for the customers of those clients as well. Bell Bank can get a better feel for the big-picture finances of its clientele. "We use AR Surveillance to track as many customers as our subscription allows," said Lauffenburger. He's found the AR Surveillance solution allows Bell Bank to move forward analytically much faster than waiting for traditional reporting systems.



After several months of use, we have found this product to be invaluable in providing us the financial health insights needed to monitor and manage our key credit risk relationships.



~ Mark Lauffenburger, SVP/Commercial Lender - Bell Bank

IMMEDIACY OF ALERTS ALLOWS US TO REACT IMMEDIATELY

What Bell Bank gained by enrolling with AR Surveillance was realtime access to up-to-the-minute risk assessments. Anytime a significant event such as bankruptcy, judgment, acquisition, or divestiture occurs, e-mail alerts are immediately sent to the subscriber. The risk factors are graded on a simple-to-understand basis: red means significant concern, yellow means caution, and green means the company being reported on is in a healthy state.

Because the alerts are easy to understand, Bell Bank did not have to use up considerable (and valuable) staff time learning how to read them. The immediacy of the alerts provides Bell Bank with the ability to react immediately to a change and decide quickly how to proceed.

Contact us for more information at
info@argosrisk.com or sales@argosrisk.com



Bell is the largest independently owned bank in the upper Midwest, and one of the largest in the nation, with assets of more than \$5 billion and business in 50 states. They are well known for sound management practices and efficient operations and thank their many loyal customers, whose confidence has led to growth and opportunity.

When Bell Bank opened its doors in 1966 with a single location in a North Fargo shopping center, their founders couldn't have dreamed of the growth the company would have. For decades, having happy employees and happy customers has been at the heart of the organization. Their values – **being a family, treating customers well and making our community a better place** – are at the core of all we do.

With this as their mission, core values of family, unequalled service and giving back are the heart of what they do. Bell is an award-winning company offering full-service commercial, consumer and private banking as well as mortgage, wealth management and equipment finance services while achieving a well-earned reputation as a financial resource by providing opportunities for their clients that extend beyond traditional banking products and services.

Bell Bank is committed to community and has given back over \$12 million since 2008 through its "Pay It Forward" program.

Bell Bank
Fargo, ND 58103
800-450-8949
Assets: \$5B
www.bellbanks.com