

AMERICAN BANKER®

Cambridge Savings rolls out digital-only bank

By John Reosti July 19, 2021

Cambridge Savings Bank is borrowing from the playbook of larger rivals as it looks to add customers from outside its Boston-area footprint.

Like the \$187 billion-asset Citizens Financial or the \$135 billion-asset MUFG Union Bank, the \$5.2 billion-asset Cambridge Savings has launched a digital-only bank with a goal of attracting depositors from across the U.S.

Dubbed Ivy Bank, the new digital-only unit offers savings accounts and certificates of deposit, but its menu could expand as it adds customers, said Katie Catlender, the bank's chief customer officer.

"What we intend to do is just watch and learn and really look at what people need next," Catlender said in an interview.

Cambridge, a 187-year-old thrift, wants Ivy to be more than a platform where people park money, Catlender said. The site offers a suite of money management tools that lets depositors link accounts from outside Cambridge, track and categorize spending, create budgets and estimate net worth.

With consumers increasingly migrating online, the bank knew it needed a more robust digital presence to remain competitive.

"Growth is an outcome of delivering on a great customer experience that meets customers where they are," Catlender said. "We believe Ivy is well positioned to demonstrate that in the market."



Cambridge Savings Bank's new digital-only unit offers savings accounts and certificates of deposit, but its menu could expand as it adds customers, said Chief Customer Officer Katie Catlender.

"We take great pride in helping customers strengthen their financial well-being through our traditional distribution channels," Cambridge CEO Wayne Patenaude said in a press release. "We are thrilled to be able to broadly extend that service model through the launch of our digital division."

Ivy additionally features what Cambridge describes as "concierge-style" customer support. A customer service team will be available by phone, email or live chat "depending on what the customer wants to do," Catlender said. "When you need it, you can ask us for help and we'll give you that guidance. We're available," she said.

Cambridge has focused on streamlining the account-opening process, so new customers should be able to open accounts in about five minutes, according to Catlender.

Banks of all sizes have launched digital-only operations with regularity in recent years.

The \$175 billion-asset, Cleveland-based KeyCorp launched Laurel Road, a national digital bank for doctors and medical professionals, on March 30. The \$3.3 billion-asset Primis Financial in McLean, Virginia, followed suit in May, announcing plans to open a digital-only bank in the fourth quarter.

The \$18.8 billion-asset Customers Bancorp in West Reading, Pennsylvania, created BankMobile, one of the earliest and best-known digital-only offshoots, in 2015. Customers spun off BankMobile as an independent company in January.

Cambridge plans to market Ivy on social media and through digital advertising, Catlender said. Cambridge settled on the name since the plant ivy is seen as simple, strong and a steady grower.

"We felt like that was the right way to message what we're trying to accomplish," Catlender said.