

[Back to Blog Home](#)Share:  0  1  0  0  0 

## Community Lender Beats Big Banks with Community Focus

March 5th, 2014 [Adam Shiflett](#) • [Lender Blog](#)

### *Town and Country Bank achieves 80% close rate by visiting businesses*

Community lenders are looking over their shoulders as big banks extend their reach into their regions. American Banking's Paul Davis [reported](#) "Larger banks have unseated regulators as the bogeyman standing in the way of small banks' survival." Something banks are more concerned about than regulations? Now that is saying something.

Surviving as a community lender means you need to articulate what makes you different—something your customers can't live without. You may not be able to compete on services, marketing budget or number of locations, but there are areas where you can compete (and kick some big bank booty, too). You can reach further into your community and make a more personal contact because you are there. Don't ever underestimate the value of this advantage.

### **Town and Country Surprises Business with In-Person Visits**

[Town and Country in Southern Utah](#) takes the needs of their community seriously. Everything from its location (looks like a quaint country inn) to the business development process is done in a way that focuses on how the bank cares about their customers and the connections they create.

"We have a marketing meeting where we sit down with our business development people and the entire management team and ask 'Who do we want as a customer,'" said Bruce T. Jensen, President of Town and Country Bank. "Then we use our advisory board, leadership team and others to schedule an in-person meeting at the business's location."

"Our entire management team goes to the customer's location," continues Jensen. "The visit usually involves a tour of the location where we get to see firsthand what drives them and what their concerns are."

### **Making an Impact**

Having the entire management team visit a business at their location leaves an impression. Most businesses are conditioned to go to the bank. The management team never visits them at their location. They even leave their cell numbers—making themselves available anytime their customers need them. Needless to say, doing this, they leave a lasting impression.

"We get a lot of great responses, but the most common is 'I don't even know my current bank president, let alone the entire management team. I'd rather deal with you.'" said Jensen.

"These business owners open up during our conversations and often bring up needs their current financial institution is not meeting," he continues. "By the time we leave they often mention the next project they want our help with."

### More than Community Outreach, They're Driving Results

The business meetings drive results for Town and Country Bank. Most of the business owners give them business because of the connection they feel with the management team.

"Many of the business owners tell us meeting the management team gives them access that they don't have with their current financial institution," said Jensen. "We see an 80% close ratio on businesses we visit."

### Doing what the Big Banks Can't

Very few businesses that work with a big bank would ever get a visit from the president and the entire management team. The privilege would be reserved for only the top accounts and even then it would be infrequent. Jensen's team has found a way to overcome the perception customers need to go to a bank to get attention.

By doing what others won't or can't do Town and Country has found their competitive advantage and driven a stake into the ground. Breaking away from the desk to spend time with small business owners in their community, the Town and Country team is creating new customers, winning away business from the competition. This is the kind of thing other community lenders need to consider to compete against the big banks.

It takes commitment, organization and **flexible solutions** that allow members of the business loan department to do their job even when they are not at their desk. But the benefits can be seen in the business they gain.

---

[Back to Blog Home](#)

Share:  0  1  0  0  0 

---

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[MORE](#)

## Adam Shiflett

Adam has a passion for telling stories with data. He has helped organizations identify opportunities to improve their business operations through collecting and analyzing data. He contributes concrete approaches that help improve businesses' performance and grow their bottom line.