



Blackhawk Bank Stays on the Cutting Edge of Technology with FNTS' Expertise & Personal Touch



Challenge

- Limited internal IT resources
- High-growth company with increasing capacity demands
- Mission to provide customers with the latest in technology

Solution

- FNTS Managed Services

Results

- Outsourced server management, storage and disaster recovery
- Continuously supported by FNTS' team of experts as technology advances
- Ensured banking regulations and requirements are met
20-year partnership



Founded in 1881, Blackhawk Bank is the top-rated bank in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The company focuses on not only providing exceptional customer service and superior financial products, but also allowing its customers and employees to benefit from the latest technologies. Today, the bank employs 160 people and operates seven full-service banking centers, a mortgage processing center, and a mortgage and commercial loan center. Throughout its rich history, Blackhawk Bank has gone through several expansions, mergers and acquisitions - all while maintaining a powerful partnership with First National Technology Solutions (FNTS).



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Phyllis Oldenburg
Senior Vice
President of Tech
and Operations

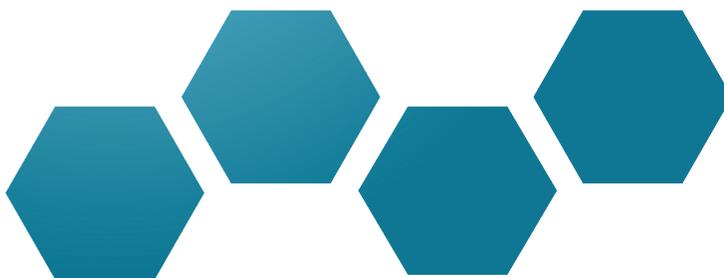
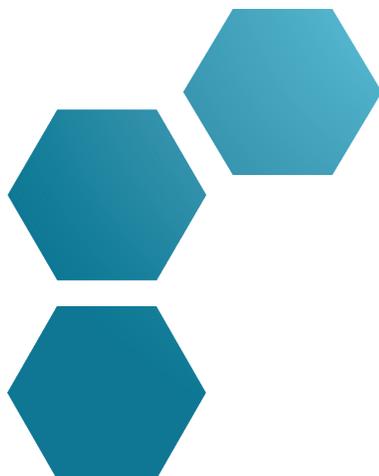
Growing Together with Technology

In 1990, Blackhawk Bank changed its state charter to become a publicly-held commercial bank. Six years later, the company reached a merger agreement with an Illinois corporation that increased its size from four to six office locations on the Illinois and Wisconsin state lines. During this period of tremendous growth, Blackhawk Bank realized it needed to partner with expert consultants to guide and support the company’s evolving IT environment.

In January 1997, Blackhawk Bank first engaged FNTS to support its core systems, and the relationship has progressed successfully ever since. With a small IT staff, Blackhawk relies on FNTS’s technical consulting, engineering expertise, monitoring and server maintenance, as well as its disaster recovery services.

Over the last two decades, Blackhawk Bank and FNTS have grown together as data center technology evolves. When the bank considers implementing new technology, for example, FNTS equips Blackhawk’s internal IT staff with expertise, flexibility and creativity.

“When we decided to enter the virtual world early on, FNTS was very willing to jump into it with us,” said Phyllis Oldenburg, senior vice president of tech and operations. “They put together a project plan, presenting what they saw in the market at the time and their recommendations. They are a terrific resource for us.”





“It’s one of the reasons we have continued to work with FNTS for so long - they have become like an extended family to Blackhawk Bank. They are truly supporting our business as much as their own - they want to see our company be a success.”



Mutual Understanding and Personal Touch

As a subsidiary of one of the Midwest’s largest privately held financial holding companies - First National Bank, FNTS’ expertise lies not only in state-of-the-art technology, but also its deep roots in the processes and requirements of the financial services industry. To support Blackhawk Bank, FNTS proactively ensures the company’s IT environment is structured appropriately and the IT staff has the proper documentation necessary to meet the stringent regulatory requirements.

“What we appreciate about FNTS the most is that they understand banking,” said Oldenburg. “There are a lot of tech companies out there that offer managed services, but don’t recognize the regulatory environment that banks have to operate in today. With its background and the resources that FNTS has available, it is a great partnership for us.”

In addition to its technology and banking expertise, FNTS’ team is passionately focused on developing and maintaining long-term relationships. With a true Midwest culture, FNTS is comprised of quality people that place high value on work ethic and personalized customer service, making 20+ year partnerships possible.

“We really value FNTS’ personal touch,” said Oldenburg. “It’s one of the reasons we have continued to work with FNTS for so long - they have become like an extended family to Blackhawk Bank. They are truly supporting our business as much as their own - they want to see our company be a success.”