

25 Questions Every Bank Should Be Able to Answer About Its Debit Program

You don't need every answer memorized. Management should know how to get to the answer when the question matters.

MONEY

1. What do we earn per debit transaction — and is it going up or down?
2. Why did our debit interchange income rise or fall?
3. What do we earn on PIN transactions compared with signature transactions?
4. How important is debit to our noninterest income?
5. How many of our business checking relationships have a debit card?

USAGE

6. What percentage of our checking accounts have a debit card?
7. What percentage of our issued cards are active?
8. How does our processor define "active"?
9. How often do our active cards actually get used?
10. What percentage of our cards are loaded into a digital wallet?

APPROVALS

11. What percentage of our debit transactions are approved?
12. What are the biggest reasons for our declines?
13. Are our fraud rules declining more good transactions than the fraud they stop?
14. Are our business cards running on fraud rules built for consumer spending?
15. After a decline, does the card keep getting used?

NETWORKS

16. Which networks handle most of our debit transactions?
17. What do we earn through each network?
18. Who chose our network lineup, and when was it last re-evaluated?
19. Are we correctly set up for the small-issuer exemption on every debit network we use?
20. Would a different debit-network mix earn more?

MANAGEMENT

21. Who is responsible for the debit program inside the bank?
22. When the numbers change, who can explain why?
23. Which debit metrics does management review regularly?
24. What does the board see?
25. What are the three things we should work on next?

Eleven of these are answerable from the reports your processor already sends. Three come from the bank's own books. Four need one de-identified extract — no names, no account numbers, no card numbers. Seven are questions for management, not for data.

The question behind all 25: If your debit program were quietly underperforming, would anyone know?