

- E-Mail -

\$3 billion asset Partners Trust sent this e-mail to \$3 billion asset Superior Bank
Lodestone assisted Partners Trust & Superior in adding over \$3MM to their annual revenue

From: Steve Covert
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2008 9:59 AM
To: Mark Tarnakow
Subject: Lodestone Banking

Dear Mark:

I am sorry we haven't been able to connect on your consideration of hiring Lodestone so I thought I would send you an e-mail regarding my thoughts on the work they did for us at Partners Trust (which was a \$3.7 billion bank until we sold it at the end of last year to M&T Bank). I was the Senior Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer at Partners.

Lodestone was introduced to us through another bank consulting firm in our area and I was intrigued by their promise to find \$1mm of revenue enhancements for us as well as we would only pay for those recommendations that we accepted. I also liked the fact that they were not going to focus on operating expenses (because we had the lowest expense ratio to assets of our peer group) and were not simply planning to raise our existing fees (we periodically did market shops & felt we were competitively positioned).

So, we figured if they felt they could identify at least a \$1mm, it was worth bringing them in and I'm pleased to report that they did indeed identify opportunities we agreed with that would increase Partners' fee income by over \$1mm a year (conservatively).

Beyond the financial impact we also benefited from the in depth review in other ways. Lodestone examined system set up parameters and actually traced transactions from the point of initiation to the general ledger. We were an acquisitive company and we were pleased to find that we were charging and receiving the fees we expected despite complex system conversions. This work also gave us comfort from a Sarbanes-Oxley perspective.

The feedback I received from our managers that worked directly with Shahin & the rest of the Lodestone team was that they were sensitive to employee time, were friendly and easy to work with, and were very knowledgeable in all aspects of the areas they examined.

The culmination of all of these factors resulted in my willingness to wholeheartedly recommend Lodestone. I also know that our SVP of Technology and SVP of Operations also strongly support their work, as did our EVP of Retail Banking.

I hope this helps your deliberations and would be happy to answer any additional questions you might have.

Best regards,

Steve

Steven Covert



Mark A. Tarnakow
Chief Financial Officer

October 15, 2008

Prospective Lodestone Banking Consultancy Client,

Lodestone recently completed a very successful revenue enhancement engagement for Superior Bank using their AEM^(SM) methodology.

As background, Superior Bank is a \$3 billion in assets bank headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama with 75 branch offices in AL and FL. Despite the current difficult economic environment, one of our core objectives this year is to substantially enhance the proportion of non-interest income while improving the company's overall profitability. We found Lodestone's proposal and guarantee to be highly compelling.

Lodestone claimed that they would present specific recommendations that could achieve a minimum revenue enhancement of \$1 million without increasing our existing fees or eliminating staffing. After meeting with their team, our management recognized that our organization would benefit from Lodestone's expertise and we decided to engage them.

Over the course of an eight week engagement, Lodestone was able to discern pockets of income opportunity. As they said they would, Lodestone presented over fifteen recommendations. Some had annual earnings under \$50,000 and some were significantly higher. However, all represented sound banking and all were taken seriously by management.

To begin the project, Lodestone provided us with a detailed listing of all that they would require. Lodestone's meetings with our operations staff and management team were highly focused and efficient, and they completed the project in the timeframe specified.

At the conclusion of the project, Lodestone presented many quality recommendations to enhance our profitability, most of which we decided to implement. Once fully implemented these recommendations are projected to contribute annual earning above what Lodestone had in their original guarantee to us. We have not yet fully implemented Lodestone's proposals, so we do not have data on the actual revenue enhancements at this time.

The feedback I received from my senior managers working with Lodestone's team is that Lodestone's consultants were sensitive to our employees' time, were friendly and easy to work with, and had great command of our operating system and banking knowledge.

As a result of their fulfilling our expectations with regards to their recommendations, I am comfortable discussing Lodestone and believe that our President, Mr. Marvin Scott, would express positive sentiment as well.

I hope this aids you in your consideration of Lodestone's services, and would be happy to respond to further questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Tarnakow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Tarnakow
CFO