



# Case Study

## BankSouth®

### BankSouth: Customer-centricity is Key

One gets the distinct feeling that BankSouth, based in Greensboro, Ga., truly abides by its tagline: If you ran a bank, you'd run it like this.

The \$660 million bank, with six branches and 120 employees across Georgia, is deeply rooted in the communities it serves, not only providing service-oriented banking solutions, but also supporting many local businesses and charities. In fact, its BankSouth Foundation provides college opportunities for area youth.

The bank even holds the prestigious honor of being recognized annually by ICBA as one of the nation's top performing community banks.

#### CHALLENGE

BankSouth's aging core platform was no longer meeting the needs of their growing customer base. Identifying a new core platform that could deliver an open architecture for solution integration became crucial to meet their growth objectives.

#### SOLUTION

Arriba Advisors collaborated with BankSouth's executive team to identify key features, functionality and processes. Through a comprehensive evaluation process, a vendor was selected that could provide a long-term partnership positioning BankSouth for optimal growth.

So when BankSouth's leaders gradually realized that their core platform—in place since the late 1980s—no longer served its customers' growing needs, they knew they needed to replace it. The legacy core technology delivered only marginal integration, along with inefficient and manual processes, which handicapped the bank's ability to capitalize on new market opportunities.

"It was a core that really had its roots in the deposit area, not the lending area. And it was very difficult to bolt [other vendors'] products onto it," says David Cowles, BankSouth's executive vice president and chief operations officer. "So it really limited what we could offer to our customers."

That notion didn't sit well at all with the bank's leadership, who live and breathe by exceptional service.

"Our focus is increasing the customer experience ... we call it customer-centricity," Cowles says. "When we look at a new

product or service, or even internal procedures, the first thing we look at is how it's going to help our customers. How it's going to make their banking easier, and a better experience. Secondly, we look at gaining bank efficiencies."

Further, the existing core couldn't handle a large loan servicing portfolio, an area the bank, which also runs a mortgage company, is looking to expand.

"Part of our enterprise strategy is gaining customers through our mortgage company. If somebody comes in and has a great experience with the mortgage company, you would like to bank them as well," Cowles says. "But with these really slick online deposit origination or loan origination platforms ... to get that integrated into our former core was impossible."

Most importantly, BankSouth's customers wanted a user-friendly online account-opening solution, and a digital banking experience that could hold up to their growing "Amazon" expectations.



813-999-0881



info@arribaadvisors.com  
www.arribaadvisors.com



# Case Study

## BankSouth®

### A SIGNIFICANT LEVEL OF TRUST

Indeed, the challenge ahead seemed daunting. Luckily, Cowles had maintained a long-standing working relationship with one of the principals of Arriba Advisors. When she learned of BankSouth's project needs, she arranged a meeting with Cowles that included the Arriba team.

vendors to deliver a focused RFP response and onsite presentation targeting the bank's strategic goals that resulted in several vendors "knocking it out of the park". One of those vendors ultimately won our business. "

"There was a significant level of trust we had with one of the Arriba team members, and it did not take long for their full team to earn our complete trust," Cowles says, adding he knew right away that Arriba was up to the hefty task. "We needed to evaluate and retool the entire infrastructure of the bank, and we were fortunate to find Arriba, a company with enterprise-level specialization across every business line of the bank. Other consulting firms we evaluated could not bring that same level of sophistication and specialization."

After analyzing BankSouth's list of criteria, which included an open architecture platform that would allow the bank to integrate best-in-class ancillary solutions, Arriba sent out RFPs and arranged demonstrations with three core processors. "The combined Arriba and BankSouth teams invested significant time preparing the

*"It was a core that really had it's roots in the deposit area, not the lending area. And it was very difficult to bolt [other vendors'] products to it. ... We needed to evaluate and retool the entire infrastructure of the bank ..."*

David Cowles  
Executive Vice President & COO,  
BankSouth

Want to know how we can help you?  
[www.arribaadvisors.com/contact-us](http://www.arribaadvisors.com/contact-us)







# Case Study

# BankSouth®

## EXPERTISE AT WORK

In addition to negotiating the bank's core deal, Arriba navigated through BankSouth's technical, operational and strategic requirements to negotiate contracts for several additional solutions over a two-year process, including debit/credit card processing, ATMs, digital channels, document imaging, and platforms for new account origination and consumer and commercial loan origination.

In fact, one of Arriba's specialty areas is card processing and the interchange networks, and they were able to analyze and negotiate significant savings for BankSouth in processing, while optimizing interchange income.

Today, Cowles says he would not hesitate to again team up with Arriba Advisors, and would highly recommend them to other financial institutions. He points out, in particular, their negotiating skills.

"They knew what we didn't know. When you look at a 67-page contract, and you don't know core contracts inside and out ... you don't know what they'll budge on and what they won't," Cowles says. "But they knew. And I honestly believe that they have been the best outside consultant I've ever worked with."

Cowles expects to gain vastly improved efficiencies with the new system and, most vitally, a significant increase in customer-centricity: "We will be able to offer our customers that Amazon-like experience they have come to expect."

*"They knew what we didn't know. ... And I honestly believe that they have been the best outside consultant I've ever worked with."*

David Cowles  
Executive Vice President & COO,  
BankSouth

Want to know how we can help you?  
[www.arribaadvisors.com/contact-us](http://www.arribaadvisors.com/contact-us)

