

meridianlink®



As Americans Brace for **Financial Hurdles in 2024,** the Demand For Personalized **Digital Banking Solutions Grows**

MeridianLink's latest survey sheds light on consumer sentiments for payments, customer service, digital innovation, and **more!**

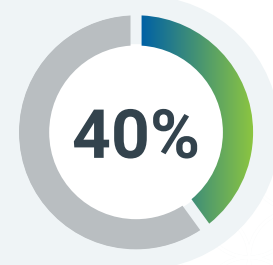
Here's what to know 

Executive Summary

In an era defined by dynamic digital advancements in every aspect of our daily lives, financial institutions (FIs) find themselves striving to adapt to the evolving needs of a diverse consumer base as they navigate technological innovation and balance customer service excellence with their growth objectives.

MeridianLink® conducted a nationwide survey of more than 1,000 Americans to uncover consumer expectations, concerns, and evolving preferences in financial services. The findings illuminate emerging trends, notably highlighting the intertwined dynamics of **payment challenges**, credit card **debt concerns**, customer service preferences, and the heightened **expectations around digital experiences**.

A striking 40% of Americans anticipate financial challenges in 2024.



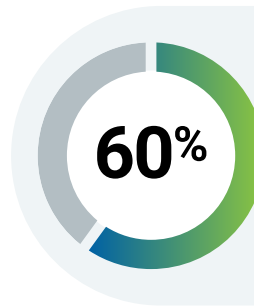
This report summarizes the results of the survey, emphasizing the imperative for financial institutions to equip themselves with the right tools to support their consumers through their unique financial journeys.

Report Findings Overview

The insights distilled from the survey responses offer a valuable guide intended to assist financial institutions not only in anticipating but also in effectively addressing the evolving needs of their consumer base—fostering resilience and innovation in the face of dynamic opportunities and challenges.

Generational Perspectives on Payment Challenges:

Zooming in on age dynamics, a notable contrast materializes. An impressive 60% of adults aged 18-24 brace themselves for financial hurdles, unveiling a stark generational contrast when juxtaposed with the 20% reported by respondents aged 55 and above. This difference not only brings to light the diverse financial situations navigated by customers but also emphasizes the **urgent need for targeted financial solutions** that resonate with distinct generational mindsets.



60% of adults aged 18-24 are bracing themselves for financial hurdles in 2024.



Credit Card Debt as Central Concern:

Credit card debt emerges as a predominant worry, resonating with 19% of respondents as their primary anticipated challenge. This aligns seamlessly with MeridianLink's recent [customer survey](#), where financial institutions acknowledged the need to confront credit card debt (34%) and housing costs (25%) as paramount consumer concerns. A convergence of priorities that underscores the industry's awareness and commitment to addressing these pivotal financial challenges head-on.



Evolving Awareness:

Consumers are clearly aware of fraud, as a substantial 48% express a strong desire for their financial institution to prioritize and intensify efforts in safeguarding their information from fraud in the current year. This **demand for heightened emphasis on fraud protection** resonates deeply with the changing expectations of consumers in an era where digital transactions and information sharing are fundamental aspects of financial interactions. In response, financial institutions face a compelling mandate not only to acknowledge but robustly address these concerns, fostering a secure and trustworthy environment for their consumers.



Customer Service as a Pivot Point:

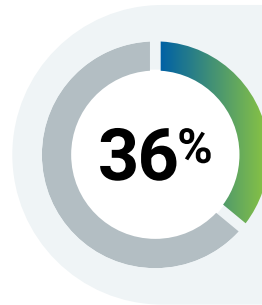
The dynamics of consumer loyalty in financial services reveal a fascinating correlation with service quality. A notable **30% of respondents indicate a willingness to switch financial institutions if confronted with subpar service at their local in-person branch**. Additionally, 26% and 27%, respectively, express a readiness to change in the presence of slow or fragmented service. This highlights the critical role that customer service plays as a decisive factor in shaping and maintaining consumer loyalty for FIs.



Digital Evolution & Subtle Shifts:

Digital presence and omnichannel experiences are key loyalty drivers, as 36% of respondents express a desire for their financial institution to prioritize this innovation. Notably, this trend is accentuated within digital banking services, especially among younger demographics: **33% of respondents ages 18-34 plan to rely on digital banking more in 2024**, compared to nearly a quarter (24%) of all respondents. While only 16% explicitly cite this as a reason for considering a switch in primary financial institutions, a delicate undercurrent of silent attrition is present. In a discreet yet impactful manner, consumers are subtly redirecting their business towards institutions that better cater to their evolving needs.

Encouragingly, the MeridianLink customer survey conducted at the start of the year revealed that 42% of **financial institutions recognize the importance of prioritizing seamless omnichannel experiences** in the coming year. This collective commitment signifies a positive alignment between consumer expectations and industry goals, paving the way for a more dynamic and digitally enriched financial landscape in the near future.



36% expressed a desire for their FI to prioritize digital omnichannel experiences.



Navigating AI Skepticism in Banking:

Consumer skepticism towards the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the banking experience persists, revealing a cautious sentiment prevalent among the public. Particularly, 42% of respondents express varying degrees of skepticism with the prospect of their financial institution employing AI to enhance consumer experiences. This is mirrored in the industry's slow adoption, with only 12% of banks and credit unions signaling a commitment to deploying AI to improve customer service.

An additional layer of sentiment unfolds as nearly one-third (32%) of respondents remain indifferent to the presence of AI in banking. This ambivalence signifies a segment of the population that neither directly opposes nor actively embraces the incorporation of AI into their financial interactions. The challenge for financial institutions lies in navigating the delicate **balance between technological advancement and consumer trust** as they tread the path towards integrating AI into their systems—cultivating a more receptive and informed banking environment.

In response, financial institutions can embrace a strategic approach that seamlessly integrates human and AI elements for success. By **harmonizing the strengths of artificial intelligence with the personalized touch of human interaction**, FIs can leverage the efficiency and accuracy of AI while maintaining a genuine connection with consumers. This two-pronged strategy not only optimizes the benefits of AI but also enhances the overall consumer experience, ensuring that individuals feel truly valued and understood in their financial interactions.



Aligning Operations With Consumer Expectations: A Strategic Imperative

Incorporating insights from this report into the operational framework of your financial institution is more than just ensuring consumer satisfaction; it's a savvy strategy to achieve key institutional objectives. By seamlessly **integrating digital advancements** and **personalized experiences**, your institution positions itself for success, particularly in these three pivotal areas: deposit growth, consumer acquisition and retention, and digitally maturing your experiences.

1

Deposit Growth

Providing intuitive and user-friendly digital experiences, coupled with proactive efforts to connect consumers with pertinent information and personalized product offers based on their distinct needs, not only attracts individuals seeking deposit-related services but also cultivates ongoing engagement.

2

Consumer Acquisition & Retention

Adopting data-driven strategies and advanced technology to infuse a personal touch is pivotal in capturing new consumers and fostering loyalty among existing ones. Streamlining digital acquisition and customizing demand generation campaigns to individual consumer preferences not only enhances user experience but also positions your institution as a compelling choice in a crowded market.

3

Digital Maturity

Digital transformation is an ongoing journey, not a static destination. As your financial institution progresses toward digital maturity, this involves systematically evolving and refining digital experiences to align with industry dynamics and modern consumer behaviors.

Conclusion

The opportunities presented within this report center upon recognizing that **ordinary transactions** can transform into **extraordinary experiences**. This goes beyond meeting basic consumer needs but consistently exceeding expectations at every interaction point. Whether it's a routine transaction or a complex financial activity, institutions have the opportunity to leverage technology and personalized services to create relevant and memorable consumer interactions, ensuring a robust and sustainable position in the future of the financial industry.

To actualize these consumer-centric experiences, financial institutions should integrate robust omnichannel digital pathways that complement their in-person capabilities.

MeridianLink® One, an interconnected digital lending, account opening, and data verification platform, stands out as an optimal solution for delivering a cohesive and frictionless experience across all devices and channels. Moreover, financial institutions can leverage **MeridianLink® Marketplace** to access partnerships with leading fraud and risk mitigation organizations and benefit from advanced technology solutions that seamlessly blend robust security measures with user-friendly experiences.

MeridianLink works with around 2,000 financial institutions which enables us to deeply understand the challenges and opportunities FIs face in driving efficient growth. Our solutions are tailored to address consumer wants and needs—from outreach to origination—while improving backend processes and workflows for financial institutions of all sizes.



Discover how our digital solutions can help modernize your operations and provide the digital lending and account opening experience consumers have come to expect.

SCHEDULE A DEMO TODAY!

