

J.J. Slygh:

As long as you're remaining present in their daily lives, remaining present with educating them, advising them the next time they have that major milestone, they're going to come back to you.

James Robert Lay:

Greetings and hello. I am James Robert Lay and welcome to episode 208 of the Banking on Digital Growth podcast. Today's episode is part of the game changer series, and I'm excited to welcome J.J. Slygh to the show. With over 20 years of financial marketing experience, J.J. is a customer experience consultant at Total Expert, where he is responsible for helping clients develop a clear path to an enhanced customer experience that is both practical and achievable.

James Robert Lay:

Prior to Total Expert, J.J. Served as vice president of marketing and creative at Kline Bank, where he was responsible for driving account acquisition and deepening customer relationships, which is exactly what we're going to be talking about today because when you deepen customer relationships, you truly do change the game for good. Welcome to the show, J.J.. It is good to share time with you today.

J.J. Slygh:

Thanks. Thanks for having me, James Robert.

James Robert Lay:

Before we get into talking really what you see as future growth opportunities, game changing opportunities for financial brands, for banks and credit unions, what's good in your world right now to get started. What's positive, personal or professional, your pick.

J.J. Slygh:

Well, personal, I think for me just was included in a BAI article here recently it's in their executive report. I think it's downloadable from their website, talked there about the importance of human connections with digital transformation but still maintain those human connections specifically for consumers and for small businesses as being a big part of the banking community and how you help them and how important human connections really remain for that group specifically.

J.J. Slygh:

And then on professional side, we just came off of an accelerate conference. This is a Total Experts user conference that we do annually. So we just came from Nashville and I saw you there. It was great to see you there, but having the opportunity there to talk to our banking clients, credit union clients, and just getting to understand more about how they're using our platform. I think it's important to really understand that we have an idea how they're going to use it, but to see it in action, to see it in use and how they visualize using it really can change up some of the things that we're doing or understand things better or say, "We need to put more emphasis on this part of the part of the platform that we didn't even realize." So really good stuff coming out from, from that thing as well.

James Robert Lay:

Well, it was good seeing you and the rest of the team there catching up always. I mean, there's nothing better than getting together and solving real problems, identifying new opportunities. And you all do such a great job of that, of really putting people at the center of your thinking, which then in return helps banks, helps credit union, put people at the center of their thinking and of their doing. And it's just, everyone grows. Everyone gets better because of that. And I want to take a step back. I want to start

by looking at the landscape here together and what are you all seeing when it comes to, we'll just say, is digital growth maturation as we continue to move forward in a post COVID world. What are some of the trends that you all have noted and identified?

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah, so I think some of the biggest ones, we did a survey last year with a bunch of banks and credit unions and really understand what they were trying to do. And fortunately, we saw a lot of good numbers from it. There was 85% of them were doing something to advance their, their customer experience using technology. 70 some percent were implementing some type of new technology. They were partnering with some technology partner, really trying to understand how to advance that.

J.J. Slygh:

I've been doing a few webinars over the past six months. What I've been finding the need is still out there for data consolidation, marketing automation are two of the big things that people need a lot more help with that they haven't gotten in some way. And I think it's just important to understand that they sometimes don't know where to start when it comes to that and data consolidation is a big one because they're like, "How do we do this? How do we get this all together? And what do we need in order to make this actionable?"

J.J. Slygh:

So I think the trends that way is these banks really did a lot of things in the last year or two because of the pandemic. They moved ahead with some initiatives that they had been thinking about or slowly working on over the last five to seven years. So they got some of those pieces in place that they needed, stood up some things that they needed, but now they're looking and saying, "Okay, what else do we need to help our customers even better and even more so?" And it still comes back to that consolidation of data, marketing automation stuff that they were standing up platform, so people could apply online.

J.J. Slygh:

So they were doing the kind of operational things to get that operating. Now they got to start making it hum and start taking advantage of it because even though people have started coming back in to the branches, it's not in the droves that they were before. And as we've seen that decline go in terms of people coming into lobby as it's been going down and they predict how much less it is over the years, we'll sped up quickly again, because of COVID and that pendulum is still kind working its way back. And we're not sure where it's going to finally land.

James Robert Lay:

That's a great point about really, I would say simplifying the complexities of data one and then two optimizing marketing automation, maybe taking that a step further, maximizing marketing automation and the value that it can create to really change the game internally as well as externally. And I think if you take both of those perspectives, simplifying data, maximizing marketing automation that can help a financial brand, a banker credit and really deepen relationships with those that they have worked so hard to attract, to acquire new accounts, retain those accounts.

James Robert Lay:

And when you think about it, they're, they're spending anywhere between 400 to \$700 to acquire an account but then what happens? I think that is the next area of growth of really game changing opportunity to deepen relationships, to deepen share of wallet. What are some of the challenges you

see when it comes to missed opportunities to deepen those relationships that lead to a deepening of the share of wallet?

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah. So definitely another one of those things that we talk to banks and credit unions about is that onboarding process. And right now it's not necessarily as great people, maybe open up an account online and then they kind of disappear. They don't have quite the experience they had before when somebody would spend time with them. So that's one of the things that they're approaching us to talk about is how do we improve our onboarding? We want to make sure these people are using our stuff because it's easy to sign up for account, but you still got to fund it. You still got to start using debit card, you still have to sign up for online banking. So there's all these pieces that can either create an engaged customer or somebody who's just kind of using the account and not necessarily really strongly tied to your brand.

J.J. Slygh:

So those opportunities exist quite a bit right now for banks to really strengthen their onboarding process. And like you were saying about how to keep and hang onto them. Now, you know this, I know that other people have talked about this Ron Shelvin at Cornerstone, Jason Hendrix at LA Labs, the financial relationships that we have are now more than ever spread out all over the place. And to talk more about that, I have got some data that shows like 50% of consumers use two or more banks. Not just one. So we know that. Well, that's just a question about a bank or a financial institution and what Ron Shevin always likes to point out is what about that Starbucks card? Starbucks has like 2 billion dollars sitting out there.

James Robert Lay:

Assets on their app, just waiting to be... It's incredible when you think about that. Like 2 billion just sitting there. Yeah. Just sitting there waiting for someone to use and purchase a coffee with.

J.J. Slygh:

And I'm sure Starbucks, isn't just sitting on that money, they're using it for something.

James Robert Lay:

Absolutely.

J.J. Slygh:

But that is a financial relationship. But even if you don't immediately assume that it is so I think that is that's out there and so people drift of these other things, they start using their money in different ways. Cryptocurrency, obviously, who knows that's in chaos right now, but still there's still a huge number of people that had invested in cryptocurrency and banks, credit unions saying, "Well, how do we get involved in that space?"

J.J. Slygh:

So you have this, this whole stretch of on onboarding somebody to get them engaged, looking at what are the things you have that they are interested or need. And again, that goes back to the data and using the data and really understanding what are the next steps that people take after they open an account? What are the next things they need based on their lifestyle, based on their spending habits.

J.J. Slygh:

And then how do you reengage with them? And so we kind of have these three buckets that we talk about and we talk about onboarding, we talk about cross sell and we talk about retention. And within retention we have re boarding. So those are the opportunities to reengage with somebody who suddenly stops using their debit card or their credit card, or stop logging into online banking. Those things that you want to do to like remind them, "Hey, this is good for you to do. It's good for you to log into online banking, minimize fraud on your account. We're doing our best to protect you, but it's good for you to protect yourself."

J.J. Slygh:

So I think those opportunities exist out there to really wrap your arms around them. Obviously they're going to use these other things. They're going to use their Starbucks Card. You're not going to stop that and that's fine. But as long as you're remaining present in their daily lives remaining present with educating them, advising them the next time they have that major milestone, they're going to come back to you and they're not going to see an ad pop up in their Google for something and say, "Oh, perfect. That's exactly what I need right now." You're going to be the one that's popping up to them saying, "That's what I need right now from them."

James Robert Lay:

I like that remaining present but then utilizing data, utilizing automation to not just remain present, but to then take that presence and be proactive as well. I think that's where real value creation comes from. And speaking about being present, speaking about being proactive, I want to get real practical here around this opportunity of onboarding and I like those three buckets of onboarding retention and then reengagement. And when you look at that, there was a financial brand in California that I know that you and the team at Total Expert helped to change the game for and really helped them start winning big.

James Robert Lay:

They had 75,000 account holders and they were doing fantastic things. But there was a really big problem. There was a major blind spot that was costing them big time. And it came from the fact that there was no communication. There was no communication for two weeks after opening a new account. Zero, zilch, nada, it was almost like a communication blackout. I'm curious, what was going on here? What was the problem and why is this a problem because we see a lot of this in some of the diagnostic and discovery work that we do with secret shopping studies. Someone opens an account and then nothing.

J.J. Slygh:

There's so much to do. You have to put your focus on very specific things if you're in a marketing department, if you're a customer experience department not with a lot of resources. So you have to look at it and say, "What's my priority." So in this case, new checking accounts are probably more of a priority than a single service loan only customer. And so, as a result, where does the attention fall? Where does the effort fall on the checking account or something more specific that's a major driver of relationships.

James Robert Lay:

And you've got a lot of empathy for this too, because you've been on the other side. You know what it feels like to sit in that seat, right?

J.J. Slygh:

Yes. For sure. I was at internal marketing department for 10 years at a \$2 billion bank here in the Minneapolis area. So we dealt with this on a daily basis. And we set up some automated onboarding, but again, we started with our checking account stuff. We started with online banking users not logging in. So there was focuses that we had because we had to, because we had a team that was trying to maximize our efforts. I think I mentioned before, at one point to you, civil share automation. I know you've heard this, taking a file, downloading it from here, uploading it over here.

J.J. Slygh:

And so you end up adding a lot of menial tasks to your day, still doing good work, but it takes away from those opportunities to expand into other parts, other products and take advantage of those. And just like you said, no communication within two weeks, we've seen this researcher shows, people don't expand their relationships because they simply weren't asked. Now, I think people say they didn't... Jason Hendricks loves to say this, nobody goes into the bank saying, I want to be cross sold too.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

J.J. Slygh:

But they're also surprised when you don't try to offer them relevant things, relevant, not just throwing stuff at them, here is this and this, and what about this? It's that relevant type of products. So yeah, so onboarding... So what happened with this is that, obviously, they took the opportunity to use our platform, to send out and start a journey for this group of people that were just a single loan only customer. Now, what has typically in the past been a standard for converting those type of customers, 2 to 3%, we were converting at more than three times that so around 10 to 10% conversion rate. And this is simply reaching out to them, adding a little human connection in there and suddenly they're converting it more than three times what they normally have been in the past.

James Robert Lay:

Wow.

J.J. Slygh:

So perfect example of how adding technology to something that maybe people don't have the time to do suddenly just creates a great opportunity for the organization.

James Robert Lay:

I want to connect something that I think is very important for the dear listener to queue into, not only did you increase communication cadence, that was one thing, but you increased human connection and human outreach as well, which connects the dot back to the whole BAI insights that you were sharing to start this conversation. So it was using technology to connect humanity back together, once again, using data and automation to create some exponential scale to three X, what they were already doing, but take it and make it even that much better. It's funny, you mentioned Jason and the idea of cross selling.

James Robert Lay:

I want to poke on this just a little bit because, how much that term cross selling might get in the way of a commitment there within an organization, maybe even more so it's say on the credit union side, because there's that word selling? Sometimes is met with a bit of an internal mind block or a roadblock. What if

instead of cross selling... Because words have power, but what if it wasn't cross selling? What if it was cross helping? Because it's like no one wants to be sold to, but no one is going to reject help.

J.J. Slygh:

Correct. Yeah.

James Robert Lay:

Maybe that might help transform some of that internal pushback. We're not wanting to cross sell, we're wanting to cross help, because when we cross help, then we create more value and we all win together from that. What's your take on cross helping here?

J.J. Slygh:

I love the idea because it's true. We were talking earlier about consolidating data and marketing automation. And even that word marketing automation maybe not the right word in the front either, maybe it's relationship automation. It's cross helping. So I think those are the things that do help change the mindset of what you're doing.

James Robert Lay:

It's interesting that you're saying that because I was just facilitating a workshop and it was around "marketing automation" and it was with a fairly large group, maybe 15, 20 key stakeholders within an organization. And I said, we need to be very careful with this word marketing automation, because it's going to pigeonhole this particular... We weren't even talking technology, it was pretty just the whole concept, the idea. And I said, instead of it being marketing automation, because then I was like, well, then you have sales automation, and then you have service automation, what if it was experience automation?

James Robert Lay:

And that right there, I think really lit people's eyes up because they could see that it was more than just a marketing activity, it was more than just a sales activity or it was more than just a service. It was really about automating experiences, and what are our experiences? Well defined systems and processes that have been strategically thought out, then applied, and then the secret is to continuously optimize them over time with what? With data, to make them even better, that result in either a positive or a negative emotion. So I'm liking where this is going and we're almost kind of creating together, in real time, experience automation.

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah. I love it. I think it's great. I think it kind of goes in line with how we change, our platform used to be called MOS, Marketing Operating System. And just like we've talked about [inaudible 00:19:37] that is such a term, pigeonholes it in a certain way that you don't want. Now we refer more to it as an experience platform and... So it goes way in line with what you were saying, there, experience automation. I love the idea of cross helping or something like that to really deepen that relationship. Increase wallet share even is, kind of could be a negative, more negative if you're saying wallet share, cause you're talking about something like not necessarily helping, it's like taking more of their wallet.

James Robert Lay:

Right.

J.J. Slygh:

Even those terms are vernacular that we've got in the ecosystem and people understand it. That's a challenge, but I think simple changes like that do make a difference and they can change people's minds of what it means and what you're trying to do with it too.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. And there's so much history tied up into that. I think if we're wanting to blaze new trails that put people at the center of our thinking and doing it's these small little changes of how we communicate that can have big impacts over our next best steps. Let's say I'm a dear listener, I'm hearing this, I'm shaking my head. I'm thinking, yes, this is me. This is where we're struggling right now, particularly around the onboarding. What's the next best step? What can I do J.J., help me out here?

J.J. Slygh:

Well, I think it's really about mapping out what you're trying to do with an onboarding experience and really understanding it. We developed one at our bank. We've got some pre-made ones here at Total Expert that can be applied easily and quickly to organizations that come on. But I think the first thing to do is just look at what you want that to do, what you want that relationship to be like and how you want to set it up. The one that we developed at my bank that I felt was really strong, did that, in terms of technology and human connection. Banks for years had this two, two, two, six, one type thing, two days, two weeks, two months-

James Robert Lay:

Two months.

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah. Six months, year. And then that was it, they forgot about. But really it was, we didn't want to take away from that, because there was still some good human outreach there. What we saw is, we're going to inject some technology here. So when they have those conversations at the two week and the two month, they're not talking about, did you get your debit card? Did you get it activated? We were going to let technology take over that part of it. So when they had that conversation at the two months time, how's your account working for you?

J.J. Slygh:

Is it doing what you needed to do? Is there something else we can help you with now that we have this conversation that it's doing what you're doing? Ad have deeper conversations, not, oh, you were having trouble with online banking, oh, let me help you with that. Because that just wasted their entire time talking to them. Obviously you want them to not have problems with online banking, but having technology educate them along the way when it's time to set up their online banking, to get their debit card activated, that stuff can be handled and people are fine with technology helping along with that.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

J.J. Slygh:

I think that's the trick, is like, what do you want that outreach to be for an onboarding? What kind of experience do you want them to lead with? And then, what pieces can you turn over to technology? Things that you can turn over and say, this is fine if technology reaches out to them and gets them going

on this, and this is what I want to do when we have our human outreach. I think that's one of the biggest things you can do to really make that shine.

James Robert Lay:

And then I think the other thing... Because you've mentioned this human outreach a couple of times and I just want to keep coming back to that. I want to keep coming back to the human outreach here because through our primary research, along with the secondary research, it is the human interaction, it is the human connection that has the greatest influence still in a person's overall financial journey. But it's using technology, I think to help hold that human outreach accountable, but then document that too, because through our own studies in secret shopping that we do for financial brands, there might be an expectation that, maybe there's human outreach, but in reality, that human outreach is not happening. So I think it's the technology that can also ensure the documentation that yeah, we are outreaching. Where might there be roadblocks that the dear listener could be aware of here?

J.J. Slygh:

Definitely CRM is one of the tools that it really helps with documenting and keeping those things ready in front of people's faces. And you almost need something like that to do this at scale, if you're just trying to do this through Excel sheets or some other format, it's not going to be as effective, but something that really assigns these tasks, holds them accountable, not only to themselves, but their senior leader that can see these, definitely that's what can happen. I think overdoing it as well. I mean, you're trying to do this at scale, but you still have human beings trying to reach out and they only have so much time.

James Robert Lay:

Correct.

J.J. Slygh:

I think the trick is, what do you want that experience to be? And where and how can you inject human interaction and how much can you handle is another aspect. And again, I think that's where that example where you said is like what fell short and they had to focus on other things, other account opening things, and they couldn't focus on this single loan only customer to try to get capture that business because you can only have so many humans reach out at so many times because you only have so many employees. And right now it sounds like... Everything I read is like, talent is hard to get.

James Robert Lay:

Talent is tight right now, for sure.

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah. And it used to be a very important job to be a banker. And suddenly now you have places like gas stations paying such a high amount to get people in that now they're like, well, I could sit and deal with someone's money or I could sit and just say, thank you very much for visiting, and people are taking the easier route. So you only have so many people. So the human capital is a big thing. So you got to maximize that. That's where tools that keep these tasks up there for onboarding or for that cross helping as we call it now, you have to get the best opportunities in front of them if they're going to do any type of reach out, because you can't just be saying, here's the giant list of people to call, they don't have that kind of time.

J.J. Slygh:

And that's where the data consolidation, the insights gathered from that data can really make a difference to prioritize that outreach. So [inaudible 00:26:20] reaching out to everybody, they're reaching out to the best prospects, the best ones that can be helped the most. And so I think that's where technology really steps up. So Roblox definitely are just volume, volume of what you can do. So you need to find a way to manage it. And CRM is a good solution to that.

James Robert Lay:

Let's also dive a little bit deeper into this cross helping here because it's a perfect practical place to provide proactive recommendations informed by data and then facilitated through experience automation. When you think about what you're seeing, where might there be the greatest opportunities to help with this proactive outreach informed by data to cross help?

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah. I think-

James Robert Lay:

What would you see?

J.J. Slygh:

Yeah. I think there's a couple places. It depends on what you're using to help identify those insights. Now, there's insights you can gather if you have a data analyst at your bank or credit union that can really dig into this stuff, or there are things that we can provide that help customer intelligence type prebuilt things that can alert you based on certain data points. There's other companies out there that can identify certain spending patterns based on data to bring these things top of the bucket for people to call. I think there's tools that actually have to get bolted on or added on.

J.J. Slygh:

The customer intelligence tools that we have are primarily around the mortgage stuff and they're fantastic, because really, if you have name and address that you're monitoring, and they put their house up for sale on the MLS, your bank or credit union can get alerted. Boom, Hey, so and so just put their house for sale. And you're like, well, big deal. That is a big deal-

James Robert Lay:

Big deal.

J.J. Slygh:

... Because more than likely, they're going to buy another house, and that's your opportunity to step in and say, Hey, we can help you with that house. Now, what happens after they buy a house? Two times more likely to make larger purchase, how can you help them with that? Credit card? Maybe a HeLOC if they've got some instant equity in that home, which based on the value of home, they might have some instant equity. They could lean on. Six months after, what do people typically do after they buy a new home? They buy a new car, auto loan boom. So in the number of residual financial things you can help them with, even if you end up not getting the mortgage, there a lot out there, a lot of opportunities to continually cross help them with other products. So I think that's one of the big ones.

J.J. Slygh:

Even the mortgage inquiry alert just will alert if they got their credit checked for a mortgage. And so now you know whether they're going to buy a new home, probably not refinancing at this point based on their rates, but they're going to buy a new home. So again, you know they're buying something, you're like, well, they got their credit checked, are they going to even waste their time with me? Heck, yeah. People typically do two to three applications to make sure that they're getting the best deal. And if they know you, there's a good chance you can maybe capture that away.

J.J. Slygh:

So if they're at a competitor getting their mortgage checked, why don't you know about this? Because the worst thing can happen is, you don't know, and then three months later they're pulling out all their savings from your bank because they need it for the down payment. And you're like, wow, we just lost all those deposits. We didn't get the loan, hopefully we can help them for something later on, but who knows where that relationship goes after that. So those are the type of things that really can help you be very proactive when it comes to cross helping.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah. Well, I think to bring this all full circle, and this has been such a great conversation, J.J., let's get real practical here at the end because it can feel so overwhelming. Like you said, to start this conversation, where do I begin? Where do I get started? How can I change the game at my financial brand, at my organization? And a lot of times it begins with one small, simple step. What would that next best step be for someone to just move forward, make a little bit of progress, get some wins, get some confidence so that they can continue to build their courage to commit on their own journey of growth? What would that next best thing be for the dear listener to do from your perspective?

J.J. Slygh:

I think if it was me it will be, what is the one thing that I really want to change at my organization? What do I need to do that? So that will be like, what kind of data do I really need? Because one of the things that gets people overwhelmed is this whole data consolidation thing. Like, oh my gosh, I got 18 systems, I got to consolidate. This is going to be mind bending. But sometimes you can realize that, to do a good onboarding, you only need 12 points of data. You need to know if their cards open, if their online banking has been activated, if they use their card, those type of little simple things.

J.J. Slygh:

And you're like, well, maybe I only need to get some data from a couple systems right now. And I can make my onboarding experience so much better, because I already now have enough information to contact them through email, through phone number. Now to reach out to them, I just need a couple other things to make sure that I'm hitting them up on the right things. Did they sign up for eStatements? Is another big one too. I just need those few bits of data. So how do I get at that bit of data? Okay, not overwhelm myself with saying I need every bit of data point, everything that they're spending on, bing bang boom, to make this great.

J.J. Slygh:

I think if you start there and say, okay, I need this little bit of data, let me see how I get that, how I retrieve that bit and how do I get that together. Now, may be that you have no system to do it, then that's where you have to start looking at vendors of course. Obviously self-serving and Total Expert as an experienced platform has a lot of this stuff together that in one platforms make it easy. So easy for me to say, just make a call to us and we can help you. But to start off, I think it's just better idea to think about

how you going to build this out, and build up one thing and say, this is how we can make this thing shine, how we can make it sing.

J.J. Slygh:

This is what we really need to do. And then start looking at how you can make that happen. So definitely that's a really simplistic way to look at it. But I think the biggest thing is just start with something small that you get a good win out of, that makes sense for your organization.

James Robert Lay:

I like that, start small, get a good win, and frame it around your unique situation, at your financial brand, because it's so easy to want to try to boil the ocean with gobs of opportunity, but then it's like... Then it's this negative cycle of, what do we do next? Where do we start? And then we don't do anything, and then the future becomes the predictable past. And so start small, get really, really clear and then get some quick wins. That's a great, great thought, J.J.. Thanks so much for joining me on this episode of Banking on Digital Growth. What's the next best way someone can continue the conversation that we started here today?

J.J. Slygh:

For us, it's just simple, reach out to [totalexpert.com](http://totalexpert.com), and you could reach out to me through LinkedIn and I'm happy to facilitate any further conversations. I'm happy to be part of that conversation. At LinkedIn, I can just be found at J.J. Slygh. If you just do a search, I'm the only one out there fortunately. And so it's pretty easy to find me and reach out to me and I can help connect people to Total Expert. [totalexpert.com](http://totalexpert.com) is a great place to start. A lot of good resources out there, a lot of good blog posts that talk about a lot of things that I just mentioned. Going to be on a webinar, I think next month for a... Watch for me popping up in your email boxes. I'm sure if you're listening, you're at a bank and our stuff is going out. Me and others from our organization being on financial brand bank director will pop up there all the time. So watch for more of those, reach out to me, reach out to [totalexpert.com](http://totalexpert.com). Any of those will help.

James Robert Lay:

Connect with J.J., learn from J.J., grow with J.J.. J.J., Hey, this has been fantastic, and you all do... You put out so much helpful content information resources because you're helping provide that clarity into what the next best steps are. You're guiding financial brands on their journey of growth. You're putting people at the center of your thinking of your doing with everything that you all do at Total Experts. I appreciate it. Keep up the good work and thanks for joining me for another episode of Banking on Digital Growth.

J.J. Slygh:

Thank you so much.

James Robert Lay:

As always. And until next time be well, do good, and make your bed.