



Editorial Perspective:
*Competitive Checking Accounts Can
Earn New Members and Boost Loyalty*



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by Kari Anne Arnosk

This article originally appeared as a PSCU Press Release on October 12, 2011 and is reprinted in its entirety here.

A checking account usually defines which institution consumers view as their primary provider of financial services. "Now is the perfect time for credit unions to market their free checking accounts and win consumers who are not willing to pay new fees being assessed by their banks," according to Kari Anne Arnosk, [Advisors **Plus** Director of Debit and Checking.]

[Advisors **Plus**] offers these best practices suggestions designed to help credit unions expand market share and boost member loyalty:

- **Launch direct mail campaigns that target non-members and members who do not have a credit union checking account.** The added issue of free vs. fee will draw attention to your credit union. Plan to conduct several marketing campaigns a year that not only differentiate your credit union from the big banks, but also position your offerings as the most consumer-friendly.

Adapt your messaging to attract target groups such as 18 to 24 year olds. While historically January, spring and back-to-school have been prime promotion timeframes, national media coverage of rising bank fees has publicized credit unions as a safe haven for consumers. Therefore it's important to act quickly to capitalize on this opportunity to gain checking account market share.

- **Develop a multi-channel marketing approach.** Free checking needs to be actively promoted on the website, in newsletters, through branch collateral and at the teller window. Develop a product comparison chart that outlines the benefits of your checking account when compared to other local or national accounts. Incent your staff to promote checking accounts at every opportunity. If you decide to offer a special promotion, make it a competitive cash offer that requires direct deposit, eStatements, loan or credit card balances, first mortgage, or deposit balances.
- **Offer several different types of checking accounts, but keep your checking products simple and easy to understand.** An optimal checking portfolio includes free non-interest-bearing checking as well as interest-bearing checking accounts for those who fulfill other

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requirements such as higher minimum balances, direct deposit or use of other credit union products.

- **Offer multiple ways for members and non-members to open accounts.** Allow members to open accounts at your branches, at a call center and through a fully-automated online solution. It's also important to provide members with convenient tools such as mobile banking that equip them to manage their accounts.

For More Information

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About Advisors Plus Consulting Services Debit and Checking Consulting

Advisors **Plus** takes a comprehensive approach to reviewing debit and checking portfolios and making strategic recommendations. Our Consulting Services Debit and Checking Consulting is one-of-a-kind in the credit union industry, with no other competitor offering the type of insight and intellectual capital that Advisors **Plus** delivers.

The Advisors **Plus** team begins each engagement by partnering with a credit union for an uncommonly thorough review process. Because Advisors **Plus** offers a complete analysis of debit P&L and the role that debit and checking play within the entire business model, the majority of Advisors **Plus** clients re-engage our Debit and Checking Consulting team annually to revisit the review and provide updated results and recommendations.

In 2012, our average Net Promoter Score in 2012 was 84 as measured by client surveys.

About Advisors Plus

Advisors **Plus** was established in 2005 to provide consulting and marketing services to credit unions. Our range of services covers the key areas of strategy, credit cards, debit and checking, marketing, contact center, operations, and branch sales.

The experienced consultants at Advisors **Plus** work with a credit union's staff through the entire process from project analysis to implementation and management. Our goal is to ensure that each credit union client achieves sustainable business growth, exceptional member experiences and operational efficiencies.

As of December 31, 2012, Advisors **Plus** has superior NPS Scores of: 79 – Credit; 84 – Debit and Checking; 91 – Contact Center. For more information, please visit AdvisorsPlus.com.