Independent Banker

Portfolio

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[tag] Innovation Station

[hed] 2022: Awakening to the art of the possible

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For ICBA and our community bank members, 2022 was a year full of potential. We not only continued to grow and improve on our iconic, award-winning ThinkTECH Accelerator program; we also reached more community banks and bankers with innovative solutions and partnerships than ever before. To build on these successes, ICBA announced plans to bring its community banker-led ThinkTECH Accelerator program in-house with a new, dedicated office based in the innovation hub of Atlanta.

Here are just a few of ICBA's ThinkTECH Accelerator program successes since its inception:

* The ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator was named Finovate’s 2020 Best Fintech Accelerator
* The program has connected the world's most innovative, cutting-edge fintech companies with more than 1,000 community bankers and industry leaders
* Year over year, the program has grown by leaps and bounds—increasing the number of bank participants by more than 350% since the accelerator's launch in 2019
* This year, we increased the number of new attendees by more than 50%, generating nearly 600 hours of thoughtful discussion

That’s what I would call creating a legacy of success. Others are taking notice as well, as the program—and our cohort alumni—continue to receive coverage in influential media outlets like <i>American Banker<i>, Forbes,Reuters and Yahoo.

**[subhed] Working in step with community bankers**

None of this would have been possible, of course, without community bankers who have worked diligently to advance their own innovation strategies and continue to provide critical thought leadership. They have helped make the ThinkTECH Accelerator program a reflection of the needs of our members, and by extension, their customers.

By bringing the ThinkTECH Accelerator program in-house, we can build on the solid foundation laid since its inception to reach even more community bankers, assure bankers of consistent-quality products and services, and extend innovation programming year-round.

Our commitment to creating and promoting an environment where community banks flourish is unwavering, and this significant investment is just the next step in ICBA’s innovation journey.

We ask that you continue to share your time and experience as we work collaboratively to shape innovative solutions that make community banks stand out in a competitive market.

As we reflect on 2022 and celebrate our successes, we look to the future with great anticipation.

“The accelerator is a great exercise for bank management to start thinking about what could be, rather than what is,” says Charles Flurry, CIO at First Financial Bank in El Dorado, Ark.

I couldn’t agree more. Community banks can take heart in the knowledge that as we advance, we will apply lessons from the past while aligning our program’s goals to address the unique needs of community banks by providing targeted solutions.

ICBA extends its heartfelt thanks to the many community banks that have invested time and resources into the ThinkTECH Accelerator program, enabling us to bring innovative solutions and partnerships to banks of all sizes. We ask community bankers to stay engaged and continue to lean in, provide feedback and take advantage of available resources as we work to reimagine the future of banking through innovation.

Innovation doesn't stand still. And neither can we.

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