Bank Director's 2026 Technology Survey: Banks Feel Heat From Growing Field of Competitors

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Bank Director's 2026 Technology Survey examines how bank leaders are thinking about the competition, emerging technologies and strategy.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Sept. 15, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Bank Director, the leading information resource for directors and officers of financial institutions nationwide, released the results of its **2026 Technology Survey**, sponsored by financial technology provider Jack Henry & Associates. The findings reveal how today's bank leaders think about competitive dynamics, artificial intelligence, digital assets and technology adoption.

Community bank leaders now view fintech firms as a greater competitive threat than national and superregional banks. In the **survey**, 58% cite fintech firms such as Block and PayPal as a top competitive threat – second only to local banks/credit unions (61%) and outpacing big banks (48%). Forty percent share concerns about neobanks such as Chime. This is the first time survey respondents have cited fintechs as a greater competitive threat than big national banks.

That shift may reflect a regulatory landscape favoring greater competition. More fintechs have sought bank charters – PayPal and Affirm Holdings applied for ILCs in 2025, and more than a dozen firms applied for national trust bank charters with the OCC, including Coinbase and Circle.

"Bank leaders are feeling the pressures of a growing field of competitors, particularly payments-focused fintechs and neobanks," says Emily McCormick, vice president of editorial & research at Bank Director. "Further, almost a third perceive that their payments offering is insufficient to meet customer needs, which points to a widening competitive gap."

In the **survey**, 16% point to crypto/stablecoin platforms as a top threat. The GENIUS Act (July 2025) laid out a framework for payment stablecoins, but final rules haven't been released. Just 10% say their institutions have a stablecoin strategy; 7% have one for tokenized deposits.

"No matter when final stablecoin rules are issued, GENIUS requires those rules go into effect in January 2027," says Lee Wetherington, senior director of corporate strategy with Jack Henry. "In the interim, institutions must ensure their core infrastructure bridges fiat and on-chain monetary networks and can support the tokenized money use cases that gain traction and scale in the years ahead."

Of potentially greater concern: 70% say their bank has no strategy to reach younger accountholders, especially Gen Z, the cohort shaping the future of financial services.

"Banks are finally recognizing the fintech threat, yet they don't have formal strategies for Gen Z," says Jennifer Geis, senior strategic advisor for research and payments with Jack Henry. "They're ignoring the very demographic fintechs have targeted to disrupt generational continuity, drive unprecedented deposit attrition and capture a significant share of small-business banking."

Full survey results are now available online at BankDirector.com.

Additional Key Findings

Efficiency Over Growth
Seventy-six percent see technology as primarily an engine for improving efficiency; 24% view it as a means of generating growth.

Getting Educated On AI
Eighty-eight percent drafted an AI acceptable use policy; 74% educate employees about AI-enabled fraud (up from 66% and 54%).

Gauging AI Usage
Seventy-two percent implemented generative AI (operations, marketing, compliance). Thirty percent use agentic AI. Almost a quarter use neither.

Integration Challenges
Sixty-nine percent cite integrating new tech with existing systems as a top concern when it comes to their bank's own technology use. Among banks with a failed tech project, more than half pointed to integration challenges as the culprit.

Prioritizing Payments
Eighty-two percent offer P2P payments (+9 pts). Fifty-eight percent offer mobile payment acceptance; 49% offer real-time payments to SMB clients (+10 pts).

Most Not Sold on Crypto
Majorities believe cryptocurrency (79%) and stablecoin (63%) have been overhyped; 43% say the same of tokenized deposits. Just 15% believe generative AI is overhyped.

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the evolving needs of their accountholders. We empower more than 7,200 clients with people-inspired innovation, personal service, and insight-driven solutions that help reduce the barriers to financial health. Additional information is available at **www.jackhenry.com**.

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