

Is it Time to Break up with Your Bank?

Are you with your current bank because of love or convenience?

While Millennials are comfortable switching banks to reduce fees, according to a recent [FICO survey](#), many people stay despite excessive fees, customer service gaps and low interest rates, simply because switching banks can be a hassle.

If you are less than thrilled with your current banking relationship, the following five signs might be a cue that it is time to break up with your current bank:

- 1) **Fees, fees and more fees.** Banks continue their drive to increase fee revenue, often passing on the pain to customers. With median overdraft penalties at \$35, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts, banking fees are adding up to much more than nickels and dimes. Other onerous fees can include ATM and online banking fees, new charges for checking and savings accounts, and monthly service fees. If you are fed up, seek out new options, with an explicit focus on low fees.
- 2) **Lack of service with a smile.** You should receive good service all the time, whether you are opening a new account or are a long-time customer, whether you are in person, on the phone or online. This is your money, your savings, your investments and you deserve warm, attentive service. If your questions aren't being answered to your satisfaction or if the staff appears tired or bored, it might be time for a new relationship. Focus on finding a bank with 24/7 online help, easy-to-reach customer service representatives, live chat and social media support.
- 3) **Unacceptable errors.** Banks don't appreciate it when you make mistakes – charging notable overdraft fees, for example – and you should feel the same in return. If your bank or credit union has made a number of small or large mistakes in terms of forms, deposits, fees or anything else, then you should quickly consider looking elsewhere. This is your financial future you're talking about.
- 4) **Lack of amenities.** Today, consumers expect free online banking, easy transfers and bill pay, an abundance of ATMs and branches, financial tools and reports, mobile apps, a breadth of products and services, the ability to quickly trace payments and much more from their financial institution. If your current bank does not offer the services and amenities you have come to expect, it might be time to make a clean break.
- 5) **You've changed. Your bank has changed.** Perhaps you've moved or your work hours have shifted. Maybe you've gotten married or decided to open a joint account with a partner. Or perhaps you are traveling more and need a bank with a larger national footprint. For all of these reasons and others, it might simply be time for a change based on your lifestyle, your relationships, your work and your needs. If you're considering a joint account, discuss the merits of your current

banks, accounts, charges and benefits to determine if one bank exceeds the other.

Interestingly, people report greater satisfaction with their banks (and choose to pay for additional services) when they pay their bills online, according to a Forbes survey. If you haven't already switched to paperless, you can save time, money and the environment while potentially increasing your loyalty to your current financial institution.

Making the switch

If you have decided to break up with your bank, don't rush into it. You will want to keep your current account open for a few months to prevent bounced checks and lost payments.

Evaluate all of your options. Do you want a smaller local bank or a large national option? Are you interested in a credit union or online-only bank? Do your research to find the best option for your current and long-term financial needs. Make sure your choice fits your needs and your lifestyle. Before you switch, download account history and statements that you may need in the future to buy a house, for instance.

It can take several hours to switch your automatic payment settings, not to mention paperwork for your new financial institution, but if it adds up to years of greater satisfaction with your bank, it will be well worth it. While breaking up is never easy, your financial institution should offer you convenience, access and satisfaction.