

Customer Success Story

Locknet® Managed IT Services



“Locknet® Managed IT Services was the IT partner we were looking for. We are able to maintain a close working relationship and continue to have personalized attention that best fits us as a bank.”

— Rodney Nelsestuen,
SVP, Chief Information Officer
Merchants Bank

CUSTOMER:

**Merchants Bank,
N.A**

Winona, Minnesota

BUSINESS PROFILE:

From its beginning in 1875, Merchants Bank has grown to a \$1.6 billion dollar asset bank focusing on personal, small business, commercial banking, with leasing and wealth management services through its nearly 450 employees and 23 locations across Southeastern Minnesota and Western Wisconsin.

The Challenge

Like many community banks, Merchants Bank faced a resource challenge in meeting the IT needs of the business and its customers. The bank’s IT team was talented but stretched in many different directions across systems, applications, network, security, and in providing day to day support. What resulted was a strategy to balance responsibilities between internal IT and outsourcing. A major concern was the weight of security management. “While we were addressing security concerns, our resources were stretched, especially when you consider today’s rapidly evolving security challenges,” said Rodney Nelsestuen, SVP and Chief Information Officer – Merchants Bank.

The criteria for Merchants Bank included finding a vendor big enough to provide 24/7 support and with resources to keep the bank current with changes in technology, yet small enough to provide personalized attention. “We wanted a vendor that would bring the skills we needed and who would partner with our staff on key decisions,” Nelsestuen said.



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The Solution

After hearing about Locknet® from banking industry peers, Merchants Bank did their due diligence, including an on-site tour, and began a relationship with Locknet® in 2015. Initially, Locknet® managed the company's firewalls and provided comprehensive patch management services. "Working with Locknet® gives us the freedom to pick and choose which parts of our IT needs that we want to manage and which parts they can address."

One of the true benefits of working with a solid IT partner is freeing up the IT team to focus on key areas of banking and partner with an expert resource on more universal issues such as security.

"Instead of having limited resources available to focus on security, we can trust in an expanded team of specialists whose main goal is creating and maintaining a safe cyber environment."

Over the course of a year and a half, the relationship continues to grow with the recent introduction of vulnerability management services. This offers a proactive approach to managing IT security. "Too often IT is on the defensive," said Nelsestuen, "but with a strong vulnerability management program, you can begin to play offense and strengthen security practices before they become a serious risk."

The Results

When Merchants Bank searched for an IT vendor, they wanted to find a service provider that was a good fit for the bank. With Locknet®, the bank has a collaborative relationship to address their IT needs. "Now, their team works with us on ideas that will improve the technology services we provide to our bank," said Nelsestuen.

"When we were looking for an IT vendor, we wanted to find a company that would be an extension of our team, a goal that Locknet has fulfilled."



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