

Delivering a “happier banking experience” for Kentuckians

Customer story



Forcht Bank relies on colocation to provide the availability, security and connectivity to meet customers’ banking needs.



Flexential solution portfolio



Colocation



Interconnection



Data Protection

Flexential partnership highlights

- Robust access controls and network monitoring help meet strict regulatory requirements
- Resilient environment ensures availability of customer accounts and funds
- Partnership focus helps build an effective IT strategy

Quick facts about Forcht Bank

- Named the Best Bank in Kentucky by Forbes Magazine
- Holds a 5-star rating by Bauer Financial
- 300+ employees and approximately \$1 billion in total assets

The history

Operating 26 banking centers across Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio, [Forcht Bank](#) is one of the largest Kentucky-based banking groups. Since its founding in 1985, the community bank relies on its founding principles of respect for the customer, competitive rates, and service to the community to guide its business direction and deliver on its motto of a “happier banking experience” for its customers.



“As a community bank, we are committed to providing our customers with the products and services they need to enhance their lives. Flexential colocation services allow us to dedicate more time, attention and resources to strengthening our banking services, rather than managing a data center.”

Chip Clements
Executive Vice President, IT & Technology
Forcht Bank

The challenge

Getting out of the data center business to focus on enriching the banking experience

Forcht Bank is dedicated to serving its rural communities and exceeding its customers’ expectations with best-in-class services that combine technology, personal service, products and promotions. Operating two on-premise data centers, the community bank’s IT team was pulled between managing and maintaining its facilities and working on customer-focused IT initiatives that improve the customer experience. To focus more time and attention on banking, the organization wanted to partner with a third-party data center that could satisfy its expectations around availability, connectivity and security and meet the intense compliance demands of the banking industry.

The solution

Colocation ensures uptime and security to meet stringent compliance requirements

As part of the multi-vendor vetting process, Forcht toured the Flexential Louisville - East data center. During the visit, Forcht met with the Flexential sales account representative as well as Flexential technical engineers and the data center management team to discuss its needs.

“The tour allowed us to see Flexential’s capabilities firsthand and hear their operating philosophy to see if it’s congruent with our needs and where we want to go long term,” said Chip Clements, Executive Vice President, IT and Technology for Forcht Bank. “The process was not pushy. Flexential focused on our needs and how it can meet them. They also offered some alternative architectures, which went a long way in helping us build a better solution.”

Forcht Bank chose to partner with Flexential for the first of its two data center moves. The Flexential national footprint was an important factor for Forcht, as was Flexential’s ability to address the bank’s need for space, power and connectivity as it grows. “Some of the data centers we looked at were very small with only one or two facilities and offered colocation as an additional product offering,” said Clements. “Colocation services are Flexential’s core competency and something it does very well.”

Flexential Louisville - East facility offers a resilient IT environment that features 2N UPS redundancy and N+1 cooling redundancy to ensure Forcht and its customers have unyielding access to its systems and banking applications. Flexential also offers more robust disaster recovery (DR) capabilities than Forcht had within its own facilities. The redundancies and contingencies inherent in Flexential's colocation services allow Forcht to maintain operations during any kind of failure.

The professionally managed facility further promotes performance and reliability through routine maintenance and refresh cycles. To back up its uptime commitment, Flexential offers a 100% SLA on power, cooling, network and bandwidth.

Flexential also meets the stringent demands of the banking world with its security protocols and compliance standards. Its 24x7x365 security and technical staff constantly monitors, investigates and responds to potential threats and breaches to provide Forcht with peace of mind around the safety of its environment. Additionally, Flexential employs a series of access controls—including dual-factor authentication access, biometric scanners, 4-zone security access, and monitored security cameras and intercom system—to ensure only the right people can access Forcht's space.



"These third-party assessments are paramount for any bank looking at outsourced solutions. Flexential SOC reviews, PCI compliance audits and other certifications go a long way in assessing the security aspect for us."

Chip Clements

Executive Vice President, IT & Technology
Forcht Bank

Flexential also adheres to a series of regulations and industry standards. Its facilities are PCI DSS compliant and undergo annual, independent audits for SOC 1 Type II, SOC 2 Type II, SOC 3; HIPAA; ISO 27001; and SSAE 18. By leveraging Flexential's audit-ready facilities, Forcht can better address its IT compliance requirements.

Forcht also relies on Flexential Interconnection and the private 100 gigabit per second (Gbps) network backbone to quickly and securely connect with its customers and partners. Flexential's core network features carrier-neutral, blended, and proactively managed and monitored IP bandwidth as well as redundant, automatically rerouted connections ranging

from 10 Mbps to 10 Gbps. With multiple, diverse connections from leading national providers, Flexential Interconnection also drives maximum performance and reliability. Additionally, Flexential offers proactive Layer 3 and Layer 4 DDoS protections.

Utilizing Flexential Cloud Fabric, Forcht gains a secure, more direct path to its existing Azure footprint. Forcht can easily add, change and scale connectivity options using Flexential's user-friendly, self-service interface.

The results

Dependable, secure colocation enables an unmatched customer experience

Today, the financial industry is under massive scrutiny to maintain the highest levels of availability and security. Flexential's robust colocation services ensure that Forcht can continue to deliver the top-notch banking experience its customers expect. The highly reliable environment provides customers with uninterrupted access to their accounts and funds, ensuring a faster, simpler, more pleasant banking experience.

The flexibility offered by Flexential also allows Forcht to adapt its environment to meet customers' evolving needs and ensure it can remain committed to exceeding its customers' expectations.

"There is no doubt that Flexential has greater security, greater disaster recovery capabilities and greater redundancy than we could ever hope to achieve in our own data centers," said Clements. "The improved resiliency that Flexential offers will help us serve our clients better and keep our systems and technology up and running even in dire situations."

Flexential's security protocols and protections also boost Forcht's confidence in the safety of its equipment and data—as well as in its ability to leverage these protections for audit purposes.

"Our partnership with Flexential allows us to show our customers and competitors that not only are we maintaining a reliable, secure environment, but we are doing it with one of the best," said Clements. "This helps build our IT maturity image in the market."

The security within Flexential also effectively touts the line between enabling round-the-clock, easy access for authorized personnel and tightly securing the data center and Forcht's rack space from unauthorized visitors.

Supported by Flexential, Forcht's lean internal staff can also dedicate more time to implementing IT solutions that strengthen their services and meet the evolving needs of its customers. "Flexential allows us to devote valuable resources to being bankers, rather than network engineers," said Clements.

The success of the partnership goes beyond uptime and security. In alignment with its own commitment to continually strengthening the customer experience, Flexential's partnership approach is a key success factor.

"We rely on our third-party partners to be experts in their industries. It is important that we be able to work together to adapt our IT environment strategy to address changing demands," said Clements. "From our initial sales meetings, I was impressed not only with Flexential's knowledge and expertise, but also the fact that there was less selling me on products and more listening and asking how they can help us."



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The combination of Flexential's data center capabilities and on-staff expertise allow Forcht to expand and grow more quickly than the company could on its own.

Forcht expects to involve Flexential in its second data center migration. Flexential's diverse data center footprint will allow the bank to choose a second data center location that is geographically remote from its existing deployment for enhanced DR opportunities and the same high level of availability, security and connectivity.