



CUSTOMER STORY

First Financial Bank turns legacy challenges into scalable growth with colocation



A modern colocation strategy delivers high availability, geographic flexibility and the foundation for next-stage growth.

Flexential solution portfolio



Colocation



Data Protection

Flexential partnership highlights

- Delivered enterprise-grade infrastructure resilience and compliance at a lower monthly cost
- Nationwide footprint supports growth with flexible colocation options across 18 major markets
- Industry-leading uptime SLAs ensure 24/7 availability for critical banking services

Company Headquarters: Terre Haute, Indiana

Established: 1834

The history

As the fifth oldest national bank in the United States, [First Financial Bank](#) has served as a reliable financial partner to individuals, businesses, and communities for nearly two centuries.

With approximately \$5.7 billion in assets, First Financial Bank builds on decades of trusted service by integrating personalized banking relationships with digital solutions that offer 24/7 access, mobile convenience, and secure online transactions.

Over time, the bank has grown to become a regional leader in personal and business financial services, operating 79 banking centers across Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

The bank's growth strategy centers on expanding its mission to empower communities with secure and innovative financial solutions that make it simple to spend, save, borrow, and invest.



Our expansion required a new approach to disaster recovery and Flexential has been an excellent partner as we have scaled our infrastructure to grow into new markets.”

Brad Waldhoff,
Chief Information and Operations Officer, First Financial Bank

The challenge

Expansion exposes critical gaps in reliability and disaster readiness

As First Financial Bank expanded across five states, it became clear that legacy IT systems could not support its ambitious growth trajectory. The bank needed a technology foundation that could scale with its expansion while preserving its hallmark personal service.

A primary focus of the bank's infrastructure modernization was upgrading disaster recovery capabilities, moving the backup site from a branch “closet” to an enterprise-grade data center.

Only 20 miles from the primary data center, the disaster recovery backup site was vulnerable to regional disasters, such as inclement weather and power and network outages that could impact both sites. The facility's physical limitations also made routine maintenance and upgrades inefficient.

Colocation emerged as the clear choice for delivering immediate access to enterprise-grade security, redundant power and cooling systems, and robust multicarrier connectivity without the cost or delay of building it on-premises.

This model would also enable accelerated growth, scaling capacity on demand while boosting resilience and driving down total cost of ownership.

Key criteria for the colocation site focused on geographic separation, redundant carrier paths, and hardened environmental controls to optimize application performance and reliability, safeguarding critical infrastructure.

“Our top priority was finding a partner who could deliver the highest level of security, built-in scalability for growth, and reliable connectivity,” said Brad Waldhoff, chief information and operations officer for First Financial Bank.

Waldhoff and his team compared several data center providers for security, reliability, and scalability. A trusted partner recommended Flexential, and an on-site tour confirmed it was the clear choice.

“Walking into the Flexential data center in Franklin, Tennessee was like stepping into a whole new world,” said Waldhoff. “Suddenly, everything we needed for security, growth, and resilience was right in front of us.”

The solution

A seamless upgrade to secure, scalable infrastructure

The [Flexential Franklin Data Center](#) is designed for performance, resilience, and high-density deployments at scale. With power capabilities of 80kW+ per cabinet and efficient liquid cooling, it is a launchpad for future growth.

The inter-facility connectivity backbone made location-to-location redundancy fast and reliable, while minimizing network hops for nearby regions and improving performance. Access to a rich ecosystem of carriers, cloud on-ramps, and service providers, delivers the redundant connectivity and low-latency paths organizations require.

Key features: As an audit-ready facility, Flexential ensures the highest level of data security and 24/7 availability backed by industry-leading SLAs. Physical security controls include around-the-clock security, dual factor and biometric access, a five-zone access model, continuous video monitoring with intercoms, and tightly controlled contiguous space for sensitive workloads.

With a nationwide footprint encompassing 40+ data centers, the bank can expand its geographic presence by planning capacity and maintaining flexibility as it scales.

“Relocating to the new facility not only exceeded compliance requirements but also gave our team and stakeholders greater peace of mind,” said Andy Garrett, senior systems engineer for First Financial Bank.



The transition to Flexential was remarkably seamless. The platform is secure and gives us plenty of room to grow, both in our current environment and in new markets.”

Brad Waldhoff,
Chief Information and Operations
Officer, First Financial Bank

Together, these features created a modern infrastructure foundation for the bank to scale while lowering ongoing costs.

“We don’t design our infrastructure just to meet today’s needs,” explained Waldhoff. “Instead, we are building our architecture with future growth in mind, putting a structure in place that positions us for the next big milestone. With Flexential’s agile framework and partnership, we can deliver on our mission to accelerate speed to market.”

Implementation: During the transition, the Flexential team provided proactive support, including coordinating circuit installations, assisting with the placement of customer racks, and ensuring that all infrastructure was ready before the move date.

“Flexential helped design a cage layout that not only fit our current equipment, but also anticipated future growth, so we are not just planning for today, we are building for what’s next.”

The team has relied on Flexential Remote Hands service when needed, explained Mike Flack, senior systems manager for First Financial Bank: “We’ve worked with the Flexential team onsite a few times and the experience has been outstanding. This support is especially valuable since our team is located several hours away from the data center.”

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Flexential offers the kind of scalability we need to match our ambitions, and the implementation phase was incredibly smooth. With Flexential it truly feels like you’re hitting the easy button on disaster recovery.”

Brad Waldhoff,
Chief Information and Operations
Officer, First Financial Bank

Thanks to this collaboration, what could have been a complex process became remarkably straightforward. “Moving into the Flexential data center, from design to implementation was seamless,” said Waldhoff.



The results

Resilient infrastructure drives uninterrupted growth

Performance: Geographic diversity, redundancy, and 24/7 availability support business continuity mandates and exceed regulatory expectations without the cost of long-term maintenance.

Efficiency: Infrastructure architected for the bank's next scale, with expandable space and power, multi site flexibility, and network design that adds capacity without re-architecture.

Customer service: Reinforced 24/7 resilience so customers can bank anytime without interruption, backed by 100% network and power availability SLAs.

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custom-tailored colocation

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