

# Getting to Yes Faster: Instant Is the New Expectation

Presented by

AMERICAN BANKER

Partner insights from

 MERIDIANLINK



Many financial institutions have made significant investments in digital onboarding and mobile apps, providing customers and members with 24/7 access to lending and account-opening systems. In today's competitive market, this is merely table stakes.

It's no longer just about offering these services; it's about how quickly these services bring true value and impact to the customer journey. When customers hear that they'll receive a response from their financial institution in 48 to 72 hours, their immediate thought is, "Why does it take so long?" After all, it takes less time to have paper towels delivered from Amazon.

Speed is crucial for any customer entry point, but the absence of instant decision-making is particularly detrimental for existing customers and members. Because their information is already known, they expect swift responses and for their wait time to be less time than it takes to order household essentials.

Slow and inconsistent decision-making erodes trust and reduces conversion rates. If a bank or credit union can't provide quick decisions and funding, even if originally the primary provider, customers will seek out those who can. And these other providers are not just the bank in the next town anymore—they're major banks and fintechs with vast technology budgets that enable them to deliver rapid approvals and funding.



Slow and inconsistent  
decision-making erodes trust  
and reduces conversion rates.

While community financial institutions may not have the same financial resources, they can level the playing field by strategically embracing innovative technology solutions that help them reach "yes" faster, boost conversion rates, retain primary financial relationships, and drive stronger operational performance.

## Speed Powered by Real-time Data

Automation is essential for enhancing speed, but it is not sufficient on its own. To truly accelerate processes, financial institutions must fuel that speed with high-quality data and real-time insights. This requires unifying systems into a comprehensive platform that encompasses the entire customer or member journey—from account origination to funding—across the retail banking landscape. Investments in siloed systems often fall short in achieving this integration.

“You’re on the right track, but your execution is likely fragmented,” explains Wes Zauner, Vice President of Product Management at MeridianLink®. “When you try to piece everything together, you create technical complexities, often leading institutions to add more technology, which only deepens the fragmentation and makes the system harder to manage.”

An integrated platform featuring a robust data intelligence layer not only supports the customer journey but also drives growth and empowers bankers with actionable insights. By adopting this holistic approach, financial institutions can ensure a seamless customer experience and optimized operational efficiency that retains and acquires customers at a competitive rate.

## How an End-to-End Platform Changes the Conversation

The challenge is transforming data, such as credit scores or employment history, into actionable insights that allow for faster decision-making and that can be integrated into technology platforms to help identify friction points.

While financial institutions may have automated signals, acting on those signals still requires manual



An integrated platform allows customer journeys to adapt dynamically based on behavior.



When you try to piece everything together, you create technical complexities, often leading institutions to add more technology, which only deepens the fragmentation and makes the system harder to manage.

**Wes Zauner**, Vice President of Product Management at MeridianLink

effort, cumbersome workflows and extensive follow-up. For instance, when a customer abandons a loan application, it goes unnoticed for hours, so no one contacts the customer immediately when it matters most. If a member’s payment behavior shifts, it can take collections weeks to catch on and proactively reach out.

With an integrated platform, outreach happens instantly in the customer or member’s preferred channel. Journeys can adapt dynamically based on behavior rather than relying on static workflows.

Additionally, a platform with a full suite of retail products, including mortgages, auto loans, personal loans and deposit accounts, allows you to see the full picture and leverage real time analytics to deepen relationships. For example, when a person is opening an account, a branch employee can see they also have an auto loan and refinancing could save them \$30 a month. That offer is extended to the new customer and ultimately strengthens the confidence they have that their financial institution is acting in their best interest.

---

## Transforming Speed into Action: The Power of the Last Mile

Fast decisions without high-quality data introduce risk, inconsistency and poor customer outcomes. The institutions that win are those that combine speed with real-time, trusted insight. Driving operational efficiency and enhancing customer and member outcomes requires more than dashboards, reports or a collection of APIs. It requires more than automating onboarding or underwriting. What it really needs is a deeper understanding of the business that enables true internal transformation.

Despite significant technology investments, many institutions still struggle to translate those efforts into tangible results like faster, more confident decisioning.

“You need an integrated platform that ingests data and

turns it into insights and actions so you can make faster, confident and compliant decisions,” explains Zauner.

“That’s the crucial last mile that can significantly impact metrics like approve-to-fund rates and overall customer and member satisfaction.”

Ultimately, getting to yes faster isn’t about moving quicker for its own sake—it’s about building the right foundation to consistently turn insight into action. Institutions that do this well are better positioned to convert applications, retain primary financial relationships and improve operational performance.

“You can tell yourself you have the APIs and the data infrastructure, but if it’s not driving real operational change, it doesn’t matter. What matters is having a foundation that turns data into action so you can actually improve outcomes,” advises Zauner.

## About MeridianLink

MeridianLink’s leading digital lending platform and suite of solutions help retail banks, credit unions, IMBs, and consumer reporting agencies grow, scale, and serve. Powered by smarter automation, built-in compliance, trusted AI and data, and the industry’s most robust partner network, we connect consumers to a modern technology ecosystem. Our solutions across account opening, loan origination and optimization, digital mortgages, collections, and reporting accelerate processes, deliver personalized experiences, and foster lasting relationships. Together, we’re making lending human.

Learn more at [meridianlink.com](https://meridianlink.com)