



Inquiry & Insight - Charters, ADA, Tariffs

business customers strategic planning employees

Summary: Today we provide insight to customer inquiries on bank charters, ADA accommodations and the possible effects of tariffs.

Scientists have discovered that drugs like aspirin may lessen the adverse effects of ambient particle matter from air pollution on lung function by as much as 50%. Now you know.

Other things to know that we have been asked by customers:

Q: My bank is thinking about switching to a national charter from a state one. What are some of the top considerations?

A: When banks talk about switching charters, it's often from federal to state. But, for certain banks, there may be valid reasons to consider a switch to a national charter. Banks considering such a change are typically larger and may do business in multiple states, so this can make sense. Their motivation may stem from the desire to have one national regulator rather than various state ones. This can be a compelling reason for banks that currently do business (or are planning to grow) in multiple states as well. Another issue to consider is that some banks like the idea of having easier access to state regulators, should issues arise. Some banks feel local examiners tend to be more familiar with local banks and their borrowers and more open to working with banks.

Q: We're getting more requests from employees to work from home. In many cases it's just not feasible, but how do we vet such requests from employees with disabilities?

A: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employers from discriminating against a qualified individual with a disability. If requested, banks, like certain other employers, must try to provide a reasonable accommodation so the employee can perform his or her job functions. While there's been some non-binding guidance from the EEOC on this matter, current case law doesn't provide clear-cut guidance. So, as with every request for accommodation, you will need to engage with the employee and your legal/HR experts to determine the best path. Since every situation will be unique, we suggest moving slowly and evaluating things thoroughly to avoid unintended consequences.

Q: With tariffs likely to affect more business customers, what can banks be doing now to help?

A: About 43% of small business owners said the tariff war with China is increasing their costs, according to a recent survey from BizBuySell. To deal with anticipated higher costs, it's a good bet that some businesses are going to explore other areas where cuts can be made. To prevent even the possibility that the bank will face pressure, it's a good time to set up meetings with small business customers to get a better pulse on those most likely to be negatively impacted. This way, you can prepare and get a better sense of pain points. Then, you can tee up solutions you may be able to offer to help your customers. This further builds the relationship and shows customers you care and are there to help during times of strain too. Who knows--new opportunities may surface along the way too.

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