

NATIONAL LEADER

IN SMALL BUSINESS LENDING

SMALL BUSINESS LENDING IS A MAJOR SUCCESS STORY FOR BANK OF THE WEST.

Small and mid-size businesses are important drivers of US economic growth. The bank intensified its focus on this segment in 2008 by creating the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Division and building a team of experts dedicated to this critical area of the economy. The effort has paid off: From 2012 to 2017, Bank of the West has been the fastest growing small business bank in the US and the top lender under the federal Small Business Administration’s SBA 7(a) and 504 programs.

“When I was hired to run the SME group, I knew that it was critical to create a team with local market knowledge and specialized expertise to help business owners manage opportunities in an often challenging business environment,” says Michelle di Gangi, Head of Small and Medium Enterprise Banking. “In 2010, we had a total of eight business bankers. We now have a sales and relationship management force of more than 400 who manage nearly \$30 billion in loans and deposits annually.”

SME focuses on prospects and clients with annual revenues of \$1 million to \$25 million, and up to \$50 million in select rural markets, and serves their unique and often complex needs, including managing cash flow, planning for growth and preparing for retirement. In addition to the natural synergies that exist within the SME group, the team has strong working relationships with the Retail Branch Network, Wealth Management and other groups across the bank. SME also offers international banking and trade finance solutions through parent company BNP Paribas’ global network.

In 2013, SME began opening business-focused branches outside its geographic footprint to meet growing customer demand and provide better service to local businesses in the Seattle/Tacoma, Phoenix, La Jolla, Minneapolis and Chicago/Milwaukee markets. Many of these branches are home to a diverse group of SME, Retail and Wealth Management team members and were designed to facilitate a collaborative approach to helping SME customers with their business, personal and wealth management needs. “By bringing together an integrated team at a business-focused branch, we are able to help customers address their business and personal finances in a way that makes sense for them,” di Gangi says.



SME HELPS ALL TYPES OF BUSINESS OWNERS WITH THEIR UNIQUE FINANCIAL NEEDS RANGING FROM PLANNING FOR GROWTH TO PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT.

