

PRESS RELEASE

CORNERSTONE ADVISORS GEARS UP FOR “*THE CORNERSTONE REPORT: BENCHMARKS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR MID-SIZE BANKS*”

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. /Feb. 14, 2003/ -- Cornerstone Advisors announced today it has put the wheels in motion to gather data for *The Cornerstone Report: Benchmarks and Best Practices for Mid-Size Banks*, an authoritative industry study that will provide spending, staffing and process benchmarks, and industry best practices for banks in the \$1 billion to \$30 billion asset range.

“*The Cornerstone Report: Benchmarks and Best Practices for Mid-Size Banks* will give bank executives the information they need to increase productivity, enhance fee income, and hold managers accountable for meeting and beating peer performance numbers,” said Scott A. Sommer, president and CEO of Cornerstone Advisors. “Additionally, Cornerstone will provide each bank that participates in the study with a customized and detailed itemization of its revenue and expense-reduction potential.”

Cornerstone also reported that six major industry vendors are encouraging their larger bank clients to participate in the study. “This cross-industry level of interest indicates to us that the data this report will produce is valuable not only to mid-size banks, but also to the leading providers that service this financial market,” Sommer stated.

According to Sommer, *The Cornerstone Report* will help banks answer these and other important questions:

- How many employees should we have in a particular function and what type of benchmarks should we use to measure line of business performance?
- How does my fee income compare to peers in specific categories?
- Am I getting a return on investment from my Internet, ATM, and Call Center channels?
- How do my Commercial and Wealth Management businesses compare to best practices?
- What are peer banks outsourcing and how much are they spending?

(more)

Cornerstone Advisors, the leading consulting firm for mid-size banks, is inviting banks in the targeted asset range to participate in the study by completing a series of questionnaires that will examine 1) volumes and delivery, 2) headcount and operations, 3) technology systems deployment, and 4) technology spending. The surveys are available in hard copy form or in electronic versions that can be downloaded from Cornerstone’s Web site (<http://www.crnstone.com>).

Cornerstone said the study will provide participating banks with a wealth of valuable peer data:

1. Detailed staffing and productivity benchmarks in 12 key bank functions;
2. Key revenue and fee income benchmarks;
3. An analysis of overall technology spending levels versus peer banks; and
4. An examination of technology utilized and deployed as compared to peers.

Participating banks will receive, prior to publication, a complimentary copy of *The Cornerstone Report* (\$400) as well as a confidential, customized *Cornerstone Scorecard*. The *Cornerstone Scorecard* provides each participating bank with comparison data and a breakdown of revenue enhancement and expense-reduction opportunities in 12 major bank areas. The *Scorecard* also gauges an individual bank’s performance in key fee income and non-interest expense categories.

Cornerstone will publish the results of the study in Spring 2003.

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