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# Banking on Families: How to grow your credit union with the next generation of members

**GreenLIGHT**  
for Credit Unions



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# Executive Summary

With the rise of open banking and embedded finance, non-financial brands and fintechs are blurring the lines of customer ownership. As a result, it's never been more important for financial institutions to retain their existing clients while engaging the next banking customers and credit union members.

## **Easier said than done.**

The banking industry continues to face challenges brought about by digital transformation and the rapid pace of innovation. This is profoundly impacting the effectiveness of traditional strategies to attract and retain customers. Deposit bases are shrinking. And young adults are choosing non-traditional banking options.

To address these challenges, credit unions need to adopt a new approach that focuses on developing relationships with adult members and their kids, the latter which represents a burgeoning segment of potential members. Adults with young children consistently rank family financial education and wellness as high priorities, with a majority expressing interest in access to tools and resources to better educate their kids about personal finance.

By partnering with established fintech companies and leveraging mature solutions that deliver seamless tech experiences, credit unions can create compelling digital offerings that empower parents to raise financially literate kids while creating and nurturing the next generation of loyal members.



Traditional FIs today  
are at a crossroads.

## The digital transformation has changed the industry's traditional business model.

Success is no longer measured by physical street corners, but by virtual capabilities. Credit unions must reduce costs while improving efficiencies—conflicting priorities, yet operational mandates.

With an aging member base, the need to attract younger members is paramount, yet leaning too hard on innovation risks eroding those established members.



Meanwhile, Millennials and Gen Z prospects are increasingly opting for other banking—or non-banking—options.

Consider the following:

**64%** of Gen Z and **57%** of Millennials

have financial accounts at a non-traditional institution, such as a fintech.<sup>1</sup>

**79.3%**

of Millennials expressed interest in digital banking, vs. 33.8% of Baby Boomers.<sup>2</sup>

**<50%**

of Gen Z and Millennials use the same financial institution as their parents.<sup>3</sup>

It's little surprise that the Bank Administration Institute (BAI) recently concluded that the biggest challenge for traditional financial institutions is improving the digital experience for their customers while expanding their customer base.<sup>4</sup>



Past growth strategies  
fall short in the long term.

## Younger members are easy to find but difficult to keep.

Targeting Gen Z and Millennials is one approach. But many have already landed on digital-only banking options, which have surged in popularity. Developing a competitive offering in-house is another option, but internal software developers are likely overburdened already. There's simply not the time nor resources to redirect them from critical day-to-day responsibilities. But even for those credit unions capable of developing their own solution, consumer expectations often outpace the ability to continually offer a fresh offering. In those instances, the solution is likely to become dated even before it reaches the marketplace.

Some may try to compensate by creating clever ad campaigns. In 2021, the banking industry spent more than \$11 billion on digital ads, nearly a 31% increase from the prior year.<sup>6</sup> With the right approach, these may deliver the viral boost that sparks interest among younger credit union members. But without a mature offering to land on, the attention will be fleeting—and the fallout, fast.



## Traditional strategies no longer work.

Some financial institutions may do what's simply familiar, promoting piecemeal account enhancements that do little more than clutter customers' inboxes.

Or perhaps they'll focus on exclusive in-person capabilities, like enhancing customer service offerings.

That seems logical, but it overlooks the inherent customer-centricity that today's innovative offerings deliver, 24/7 personalization that's more convenient, more dynamic, and more effective than ever.<sup>6</sup>



It's time for a new approach.

## A youth-focused strategy pays dividends.

Rather than focusing outsized attention on those Gen Z and older prospects—ones who are increasingly difficult (and expensive) to engage—you can position your credit union for long-term growth and success by developing relationships with those under the age of 18 by way of their parents.





Adults consistently rank family financial education and wellness as high priorities.

81%

say they want access to tools and resources to better educate their kids about personal finance.

89%

of parents feel that it's extremely important that their kids develop good financial habits.<sup>7</sup>

And the best part? You can begin targeting families with a compelling, digital offering—one that aligns with digital transformation trends—**without** investing additional personnel or resources.





## How to unlock efficient growth with a family focus.

Start by partnering with an established fintech company, leveraging a mature solution that delivers the seamless tech experience that customers of all ages expect.

Next, look to adults with young children—both existing members as well as new prospects—selling them on the value benefit of helping their children acquire critical financial literacy skills that they can carry with them through adulthood.

Finally, merge the two approaches with a customized, digital offering—one of those powerful apps that you've been aspiring to create—that empowers parents to raise financially-smart kids by introducing them at an early age to online banking with your credit union.

And let your fintech partner do the heavy lifting.

Educate and engage for the long-term by addressing the member needs of today.

This strategy speaks to a sharp movement away from traditional cash handling, which is aligned with members preferences. After all, cash allowances? Those are a relic of the 20th century. And piggybanks? They followed the path of cash allowances.



Indeed, parents are looking for more practical ways to hold a child's money.

**In a recent nationwide survey of 1,034 parents:**

93%

of consumers responded that fintech offerings save them time, while 78% said that they save them money.<sup>8</sup>

94%

of parents say that it is important to them that their financial institution provide banking capabilities for their children (debit card, savings, checking).

94%

of parents also say it is important for their institution to provide financial literacy and education for them and their children.

80%

of parents say they would be at least somewhat likely to switch to a similar FI that offers such banking capabilities and financial literacy for their children.

Meanwhile, those same parents have been unable to find desirable solutions:

**85%**

of parents say their current FI does not provide any financial literacy education designed for their kids.

**49%**

of parents say their FIs do not offer banking capabilities for their children (savings, checking, etc.)

**58%**

of parents say their FI does not offer debit cards for their children with parental controls.

By offering a family-focused financial wellness solution, one that integrates an app and debit card that teaches kids and teens to spend, save, give and earn in a fun and creative way, you'll appeal to those parents while creating and nurturing the next generation of credit union members.





Greenlight for Credit Unions:  
The fintech partner to power  
your growth

# Greenlight for Credit Unions offers a turnkey, co-branded youth money management program for credit unions.

Featuring Greenlight's popular money app, the program includes immersive, financial literacy games that engage kids as they see their savings grow, along with straightforward messaging that explains the opportunity costs associated with spending decisions.

## How it Works:

Working from a checking or savings account at your credit union, parents seamlessly manage and see where, when, and how much their kids spend, supporting them as they learn to manage their money and adopt financial literacy skills.

They retain complete control over their kids' spending and saving, a holistic money management solution that includes cross-promotion opportunities that expand your relationship with those adult members.



## With Greenlight for Credit Unions, parents and kids realize a myriad of banking capabilities:

### Parents:

- Send money to kid's card instantly
- Set parental controls on spending
- Keep tabs on spending/saving habits
- Assign chores and automate allowance to teach the value of hard work

### Kids:

- Build their money knowledge with Greenlight's fun financial literacy game
- Learn smart spending with their own debit card
- Set and achieve Savings Goals
- Earn with chores and allowance

**No technical lift is expected or needed from Greenlight's credit union partners—Greenlight helps you deliver the digital solutions that your members expect without the backend headaches.**

# Acquire the next generation with Greenlight for Credit Unions.

All of this is created with an eye on graduating your Greenlight for Credit Unions kids into member adults, educated consumers with entrenched loyalties to your brand. (And in the meantime, that piggy bank money is deposited and held by your institution.)

**When you partner with Greenlight for Credit Unions, you can:**

- Acquire your next generation of members, bringing them into your banking ecosystem at an early age
- Grow by attracting new families with a finance solution built just for them
- Nourish strong future members with with robust financial literacy tools
- Create upsell opportunities, with a co-branded app that strategically promotes new offerings





Ready to learn more?

Visit us at [www.greenlight.com/credit-unions](http://www.greenlight.com/credit-unions).

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