



Banking for modern life

By leaning into innovation, Current creates better financial outcomes for people from all walks of life

by Chris Lucke

Americans lead vastly different lives, with different dreams and different challenges. Why don't their personal banking products reflect that?



That's the question that prompted Stuart Sopp to found Current, a financial management platform that reflects how people earn, spend, and save today. The company offers flexible personal checking accounts, faster direct deposits, and a teen banking product—all without the fees that, too often, keep people from achieving their financial goals.

"Everyone should have the opportunity to improve their situation in life," said Current CTO Trevor Marshall. "By offering these affordable financial services, we are helping Americans whom other banks have left behind."

The idea is catching on. Today, Current has more than 500,000 active users, a number that's up 58% in just the last six months. Their rapid growth means they must choose systems and processes that scale quickly and sustainably—and eliminate those that don't. Chief among them is onboarding new customers.

To fund a new account, Current's customers must link one of their other bank accounts. Initially, they had to do it with microdeposits, but the process wasn't a good experience. The results were lower conversion rates and fewer customers for Current.

At the same time, they had to figure out how to keep bad actors out of their system. To address these problems, Current partnered with Onfido and Plaid.

130%

Since partnering with Plaid, Current has seen a 130% improvement in their overall conversion rate.

"Together, Onfido and Plaid improve our ability to understand the identity of our customers. They build trust in our platform, and that creates a big impact in terms of conversion and retention."

TREVOR MARSHALL,
Chief Technology Officer, Current

A better customer experience

Before founding Current, Stuart Sopp was an investment banker. There he witnessed a digital revolution in commercial banking: a raft of exciting new financial products based on data. But for one reason or another, many of these innovations never made it to everyday people.

To Sopp, that represented both an underserved market and an exciting business opportunity. To fill the gap, he and his team built a custom banking engine that offers the following features:

- Customers can get their paychecks up to two days faster
- No minimum-balance, hidden, or overdraft fees
- Customers can opt to receive instant push notifications on every transaction
- Gas debit holds are instantly re-credited to customers' accounts
- Parents can instantly transfer money to teen checking accounts

\$400K

In less than six months, Plaid and Onfido have helped Current prevent more than \$400,000 of confirmed fraud.

“We aren’t cutting corners on fraud prevention. When it comes to document verification, Onfido is best-in-class.”

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“The dollar amounts tied to these features may seem small,” said Marshall. “But for some of our customers, gas credits and early paychecks determine whether or not they can put dinner on the table.”

But before Plaid, Current’s customer onboarding experience was at odds with its inclusive mission and tech-forward approach.

To link an outside account with microdeposits, Current’s customers would have to fish out their checkbooks and manually enter their account and routing numbers. The process was frustrating and error-prone. It took, on average, six days to complete, and many prospective customers never finished at all.

Now, when Current’s customers want to connect their outside accounts, they simply enter their bank login and password. Plaid connects to all 11,642 US banks and credit unions—often in a matter of seconds.

The results are worth noting:

- 1 Plaid connects customers’ outside bank accounts 250 times faster than microdeposits.
- 2 As a result, Current’s overall conversion rate has improved by 130%.
- 3 That has led to a 75% reduction in Current’s new customer acquisition cost.

“Building Plaid into our onboarding experience has improved our conversion rates,” said Marshall. “It has also increased the lifetime value (LTV) of our customers.”

Let the right ones in

The vast majority of people who attempt to create new Current accounts are well-meaning, but a non-trivial number attempt to commit fraud. Keeping these bad actors out is essential to running a sustainable business.

Plaid data is an important first step. With Plaid, Current can access the name, address, phone number, and email associated with a given account. Comparing them to the information the user provided during signup provides an important early signal on potentially fraudulent behavior.

To further reduce fraud risk, Current partners with Onfido. Onfido uses AI to help companies digitally onboard new customers. Their mission is to help consumers prove their identity so that they can access the services they want without adding friction to their user journey.

To accomplish that, Onfido verifies government IDs and compares them with facial biometrics. Founded in 2012, they work with more than 1,500 fintech, banking, and sharing-economy clients around the world.

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Each time they onboard a new customer, Current feeds data from Onfido and Plaid into their internal identity verification model. Surprisingly, the result has been a 30% increase in Current’s overall conversion rate.

And the savings are nothing to sneeze at. Over the past six months, Onfido and Plaid have helped Current prevent more than \$400,000 of confirmed fraud.

“Together, Onfido and Plaid improve our ability to understand the identity of our customers,” said Current’s Trevor Marshall. “They build trust in our platform, and that creates a big impact in terms of conversion and retention.”

Do the right thing

Current is on a mission to help everybody—especially the underbanked—get better financial outcomes. That means giving them a leg up in ways that legacy banks can’t or won’t.

For example, before they attempt to fund a new customer account, Current uses Plaid to make sure there is enough money in the customer’s outside bank account. That may seem like a simple and obvious step, but most banks don’t take it.

As a result, Current has seen a 29% reduction in failed deposits due to insufficient funds and saved their customers more than \$315,000 in overdraft fees.

“It’s never been easier for customers to switch away from big banks,” Marshall said. “Onfido and Plaid have helped us create that reality.”

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Plaid is a technology platform and data network that enables applications to connect with users’ financial accounts. We focus on lowering the barriers to entry in financial services by making it easier and safer to use financial data. Today, we support developers across North America and Europe.