

ALL ABOARD FOR ACCELERATED LEARNING



GUEST CFO

JAMIE BRITTON

Texas Security Bank

The expression “accelerated learning” has been used by a number of our recent CFO guests to distinguish periods within their careers when circumstances demanded a hastened pace of knowledge gain.

For Jamie Britton, this period of time began when an economist at SunTrust Bank pulled him into a conference room and offered him a position on a newly formulated team being tasked with supporting the bank’s senior management in the midst of the economic downturn.

“All eyes were on capital adequacy due to the massive losses that banks were having to recognize, and I had to come up to speed very quickly to learn how to calculate regulatory capital for the bank,” explains Britton, who had first been hired by SunTrust in 2006 to help develop to a scenario analysis process for the bank’s operations.

The new role, which Britton eagerly accepted, involved the creation of tools and metrics capable of serving senior management as it sought to maneuver away from the economic calamity.

Recalls Britton: “We were charged with coming up with something that was fast, reliable, and reflective of all of the types of decisions that the board and senior management were having to make almost on an hour-by-hour basis.”

Having added some luster to his risk credentials, Britton eventually joined Texas Capital Bank, where doors swung open to the finance executive as he introduced stress-testing processes to a number of functional areas.

“When we did a good job in one area, we were then asked to partner with another one,” says Britton. “It was just a great way to learn the different parts of finance as well as the organization.”



Podcast Link



CFOTL: Tell us about Texas Security Bank ... what sets it apart from other banks?

Britton: This bank was built by entrepreneurs, largely, or people who had come from an entrepreneurial family —like me, for example. We were built by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs, recognizing that the small business owners in this country play such an important role in the economy and in each of the communities where we live. They’re providing a significant portion of GDP and a significant portion of the employment opportunities in this country.

We really wanted to make sure that we were supporting them as much as possible. One of the things that Craig Scheef and the other founders recognized up front when starting the bank was that a lot of small business owners had started their business with a particular idea in mind or they were passionate about something, but they may not have had any formal business training or any business training at all. They just had a great idea and were willing to take the risk and jump out there and give it a shot.

What Texas Security has done is to establish a TSB Academy where small business owners, clients or not, can come to learn about different aspects of managing cash flow, managing the balance sheet, managing expenses and operations. We have a speaker series through which we provide additional topics of interest throughout the year so that clients and others in our communities can come and join in to learn about different topics. I thought that the focus on small business owners and the importance that Texas Security placed on education really meshed with what has been such an important part of the navigation of my career through the years.

I really feel that this is one of the most important things that you can do. It really resonated with me that Texas Security was taking such a sort of interesting approach to supporting business owners in the communities. I feel that this is a real differentiator for us and something that I intend to learn about and contribute to a lot more over my career here.

