



**WaFd**  
Bank

**Brand Relaunch to Double a  
Website Traffic in One Year**

**Financial Services**



Washington Federal is a regional bank with a century-long history based in Seattle, Washington. The bank realized it's name didn't align with its expansion ambitions— “As the bank expanded beyond Washington state into states like Texas and Utah, neither Washington nor Federal resonated well” [\(source\)](#).

That wasn't the only reason that pushed the financial institution to consider a rebranding. Consumer research revealed a lot of confusion about what Washington Federal was — “Is it a credit union, is it a government agency?” [\(source\)](#).

In 2019, the bank revealed its new identity and started actively tapping into the new geographies.

# 1. Brand name update



Embarking on this rebranding journey, Washington Federal had two main challenges to solve:

- 1) “unblock” geographical expansion;
- 2) ensure customers clearly understand that it is a bank.

The Financial Institution opted for a short and self-explanatory abbreviation — WaFd and added “Bank” to its name to eliminate any confusion.

old

Washington  
Federal.



new

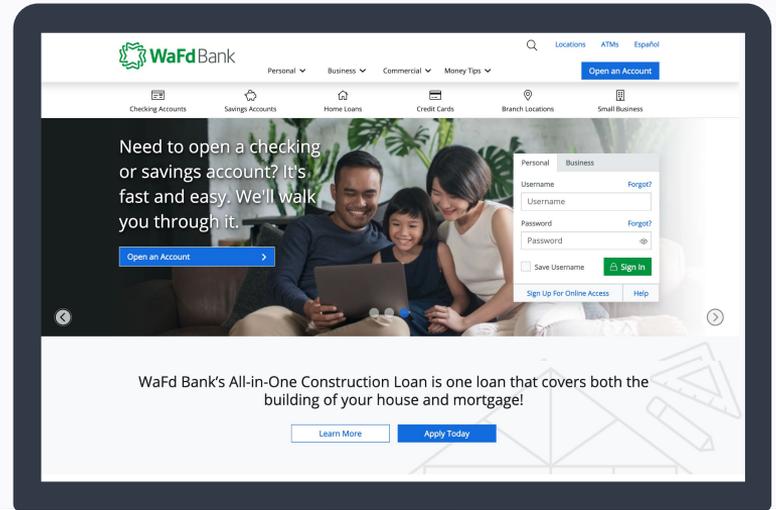
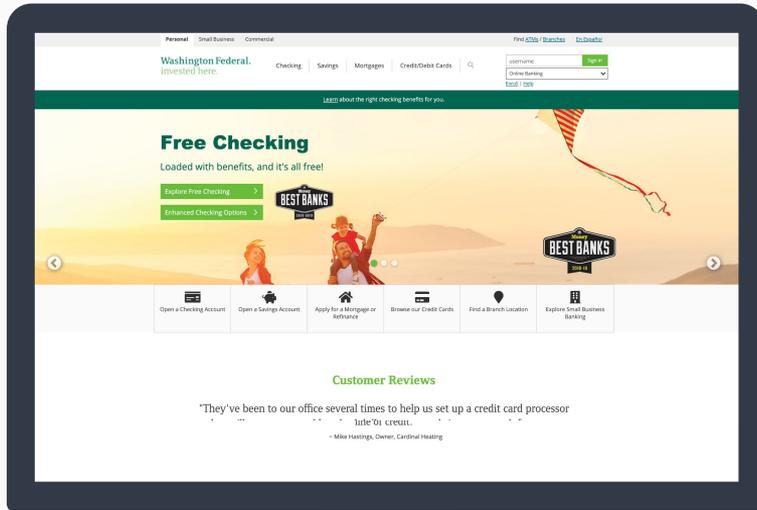
The new logo for WaFd Bank. It features a green, stylized starburst or flower-like icon on the left, followed by the text "WaFd" in a bold, green, sans-serif font, and "Bank" in a smaller, gray, sans-serif font below it.

WaFd  
Bank

## 2. New website



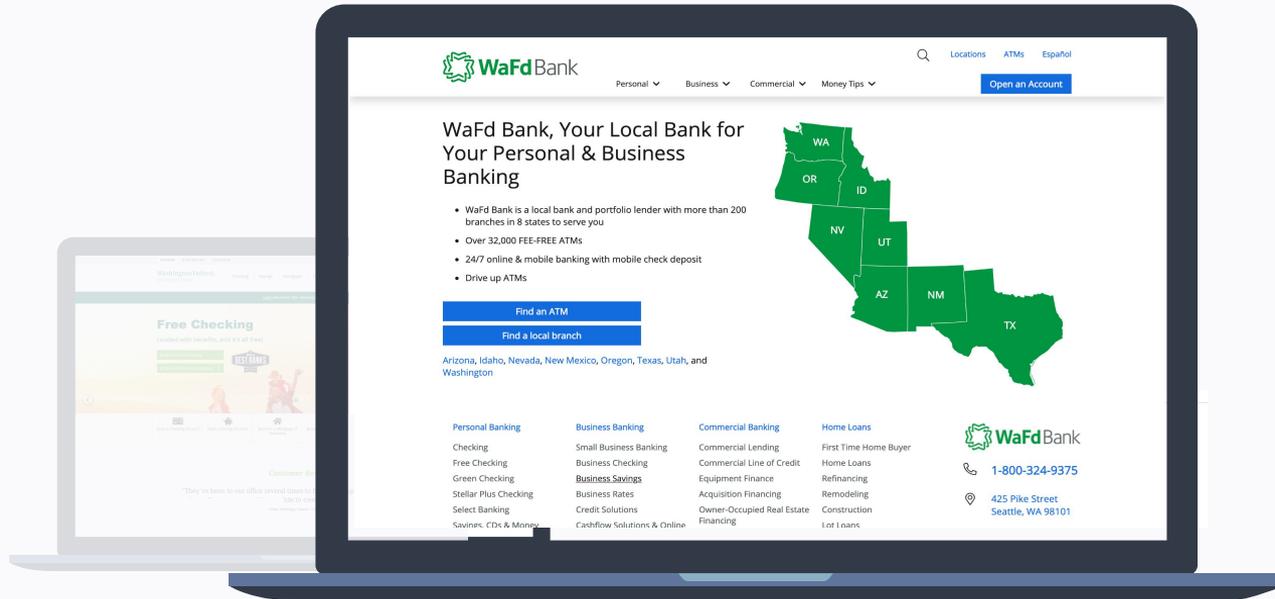
WaFd Bank updated its website to match new branding and provide more details about its services. In the time of rebranding, the brand made a few remarks about its digital-first approach and follow up with a website update. WaFd also updated its domain name from washingtonfederal.com to wafdbank.com.



### 3. Highlight business footprint



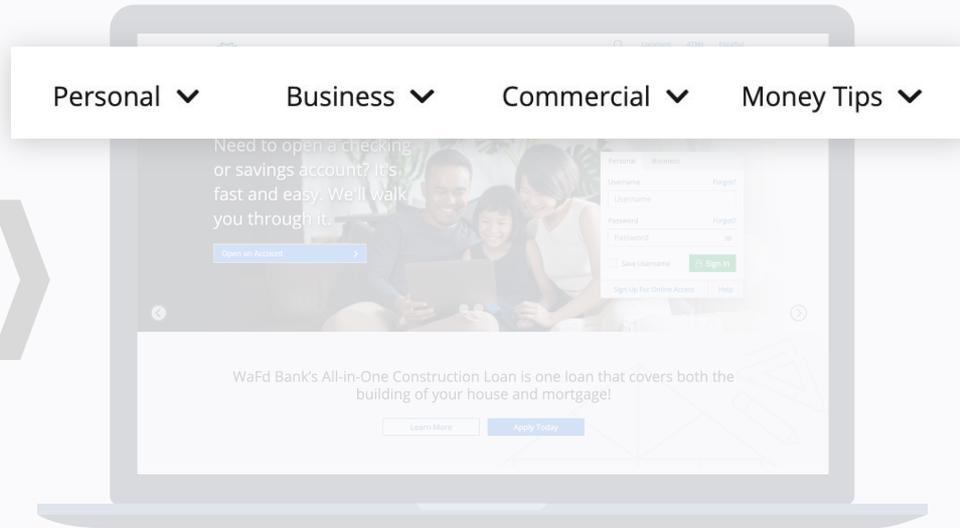
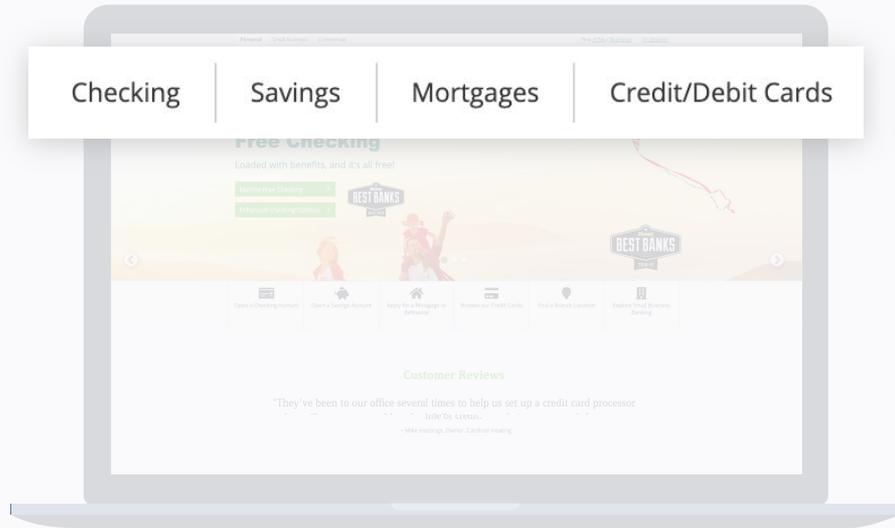
One of the main changes WaFd Bank made to its website is adding a large section to the homepage showcasing its business footprint. The bank also added relevant calls to action: "Find an ATM" and "Find a local branch." WaFd Bank created location-specific pages for each state it operates in, listing all local branches and highlighting some testimonials (example of the Arizona-specific page). Rather than mentioning its Washington origin on the state-specific pages, the brand uses broader terms such as "serving communities of the west".



## 4. Focus on consumer segments



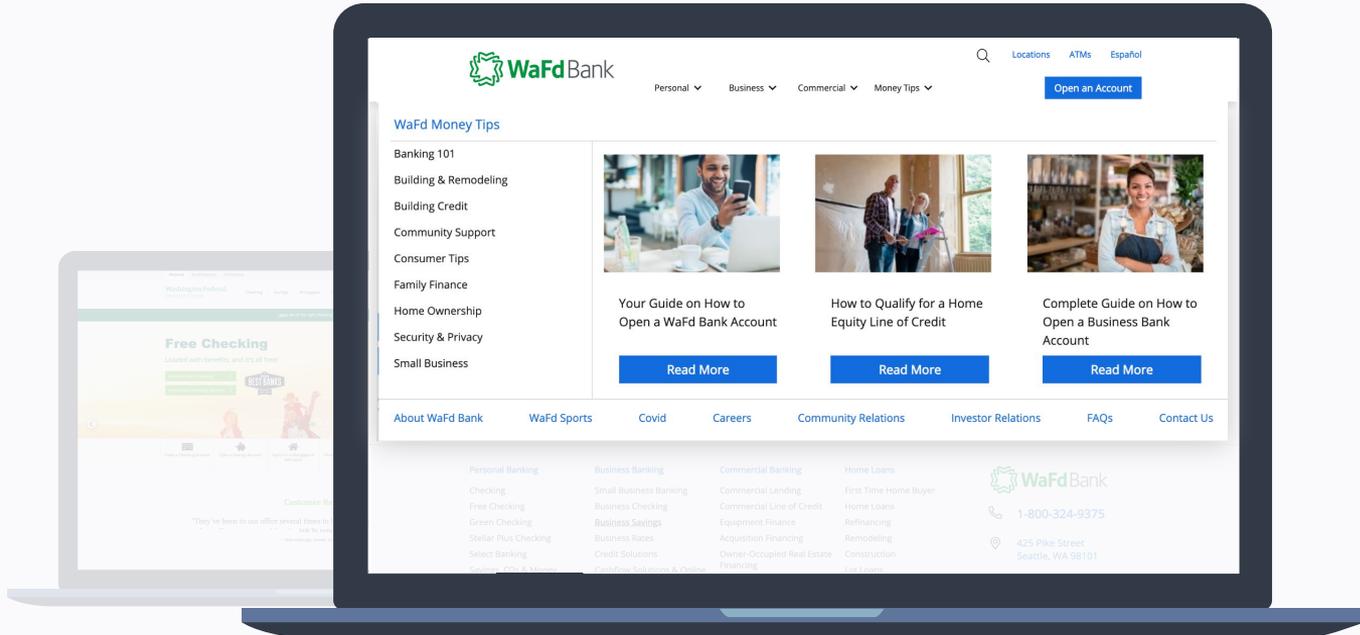
Another notable change WaFd Bank made to its updated website is introducing a customer-focused navigation. The financial institution reorganized its website architecture to suit specific user groups (Personal, Business, Commercial), making it very clear that it works with both individuals and businesses.



## 5. Prioritized educational agenda



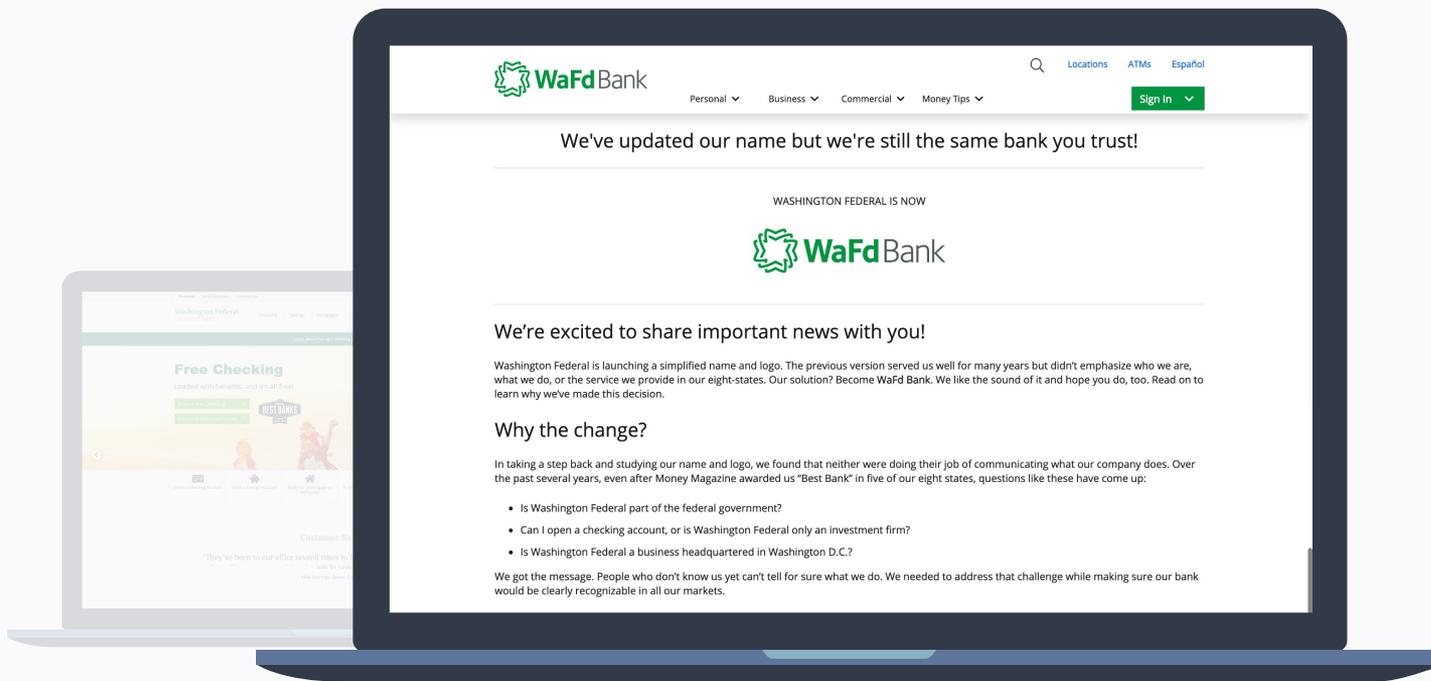
WaFd Bank prioritized its educational agenda by adding a “[Money Tips](#)” section to the main navigation. The bank provides advice on topics ranging from basic financial concepts (Banking 101) to [Family Finance](#) planning and [Small Business](#) money management. This also signals the banks’ ambition to capture search traffic as each article leverages a set of relevant keywords.



## 6. Forthcoming storytelling



WaFd Bank updated its [About Us](#) page to explain the rationale behind its name update and reassure its loyal customers about the unchanged breadth and quality of its services.



## 7. Unified message



WaFd Bank simultaneously published the same message across all of its social media channels to update its audience about the brand name change and to reassure them that its mission hasn't changed — “to provide you with the financial tools you need when, where and how you want them, helping you to be successful now and in the future.”

**We're excited to share important news with you!**

**We're updating our name to WaFd Bank.**

We've had the nickname “Wah-Fed” for decades, now we've adopted it as our trade name. Our goal won't change - to provide you with the financial tools you need when, where and how you want them, helping you to be successful now and in the future.

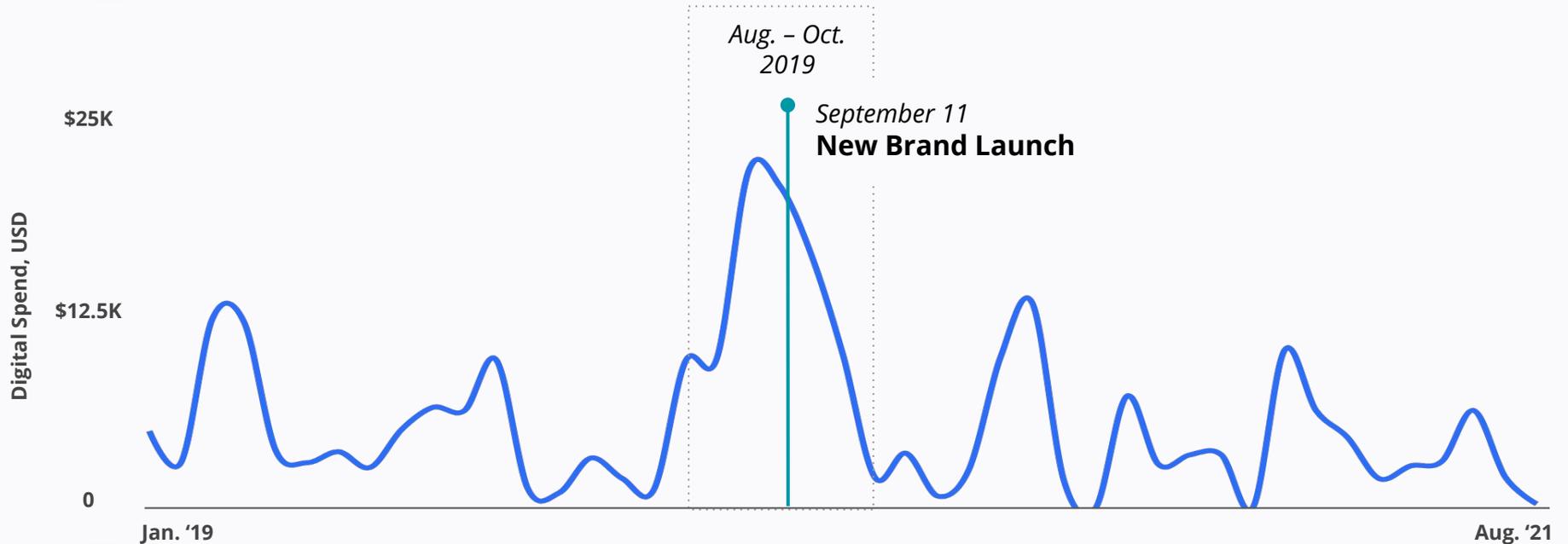


Member  
FDIC

## 8. Additional digital support



During the rebranding time period (Aug. – Oct. '19), WaFd Bank amplified its digital advertising efforts. The financial institution has invested \$58K to run digital ads. WaFd Bank focused its advertising efforts on display advertising (mobile display — \$25K | desktop display — \$23K), followed by Facebook (\$10K).



## 9. Top campaigns



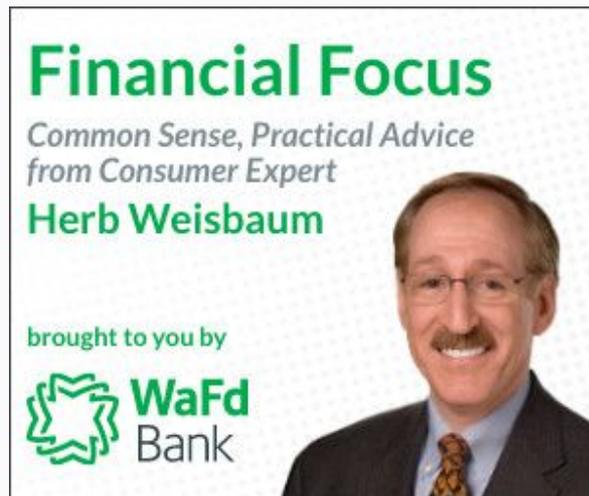
WaFd Bank chose not to run ads communicating the name change. Instead, the financial institution emphasized their Huskies (Washington state football team) sponsorship, promoted its free checking account and drove traffic to a piece of financial advice published by its consumer expert, Herb Weisbaum.



Spend: **\$14.8K** | Impressions: **1.3M**  
CPM: **\$9.9K**



Spend: **\$11.4K** | Impressions: **978K**  
CPM: **\$11.7K**



Spend: **\$8.4K** | Impressions: **684K**  
CPM: **\$12.3K**

## 10. Geo-targeted ads



In 2021, WaFd Bank launched geo-targeted ads, leveraging its “Best Bank” recognition by Newsweek. Ad copy promoted a Fee-Free checking account and called to “sign-up online with a local “Best Bank” in Idaho [and other states WaFd Bank operates in].” Such geo-targeted ads help to capture the attention of audiences in the states of WaFd Bank’s recent expansion.

**WaFd Bank** ✓  
May 18 at 3:24 PM · 🌐

Enjoy the simple things like FEE-FREE checking that lets you spend less for more. Sign-up online with a local “Best Bank” in Idaho.

WAFDBANK.COM  
**OPEN A FEE-FREE CHECKING ACCOUNT** [LEARN MORE](#)

Spend: **\$8.2K** | Impressions: **987K**  
CPM: **\$8.3K**

**WaFd Bank** ✓  
4 hrs · 🌐

Invest in yourself by making the switch to a free checking with a local bank that’s got your back. WaFd Bank is rated 2021 Best Bank in Washington by Newsweek.

WAFDBANK.COM  
**Free Checking with Washington’s Best Bank** [LEARN MORE](#)

Spend: **\$1K** | Impressions: **150K**  
CPM: **\$6.7K**

**WaFd Bank** ✓  
July 6 at 4:03 PM · 🌐

Enjoy the simple things like FEE-FREE checking that lets you spend less for more. Sign-up online with a local NEW MEXICO “Best Bank”.

- No-monthly fees
- No minimum balance
- 24/7 online + mobile banking

WAFDBANK.COM  
**FEE-FREE CHECKING IN NEW MEXICO** [LEARN MORE](#)

Spend: **>\$1K** | Impressions: **23K**  
CPM: **\$8.7K**

### 3. CEO-led PR coverage



WaFd Bank CEO was the face of all rebrand-related communications. Brent Beardall made TV appearances, attended podcasts and was quoted in various publications. Having the CEO updating the public on the rebrand signals seriousness of intention and strategic importance of the move. This also helped to keep the story cohesive, share relevant details and stir conversations in the right direction.

**WaFd Bank CEO Brent Beardall on the rebrand and the stock's performance**

Brent Beardall, WaFd Bank CEO and president, joins 'The Exchange' to discuss the bank's rebrand and the company's stock performance.

[Click to view](#)

**What's a WaFd? Washington Federal changes its name**

Sep. 4, 2019 at 4:36 pm | Updated Sep. 4, 2019 at 5:42 pm

By Rami Grunbaum

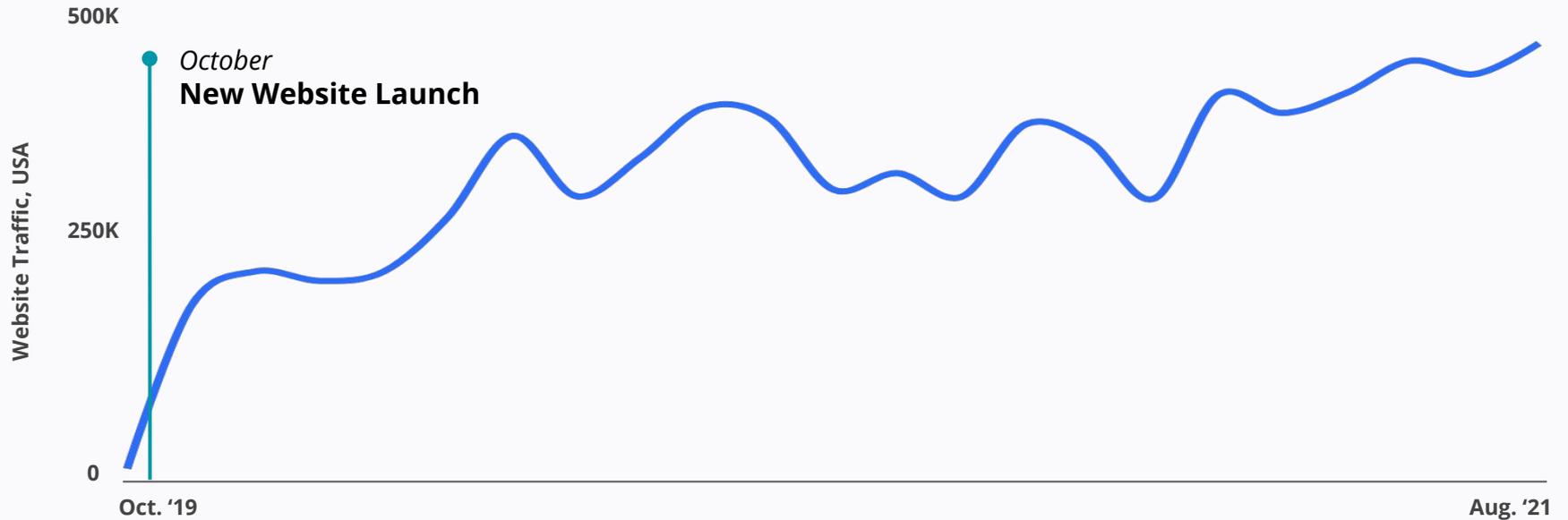
[Click to view](#)

**Podcast: With Rebrand, WaFd Puts Its Bank Identity Front and Center**

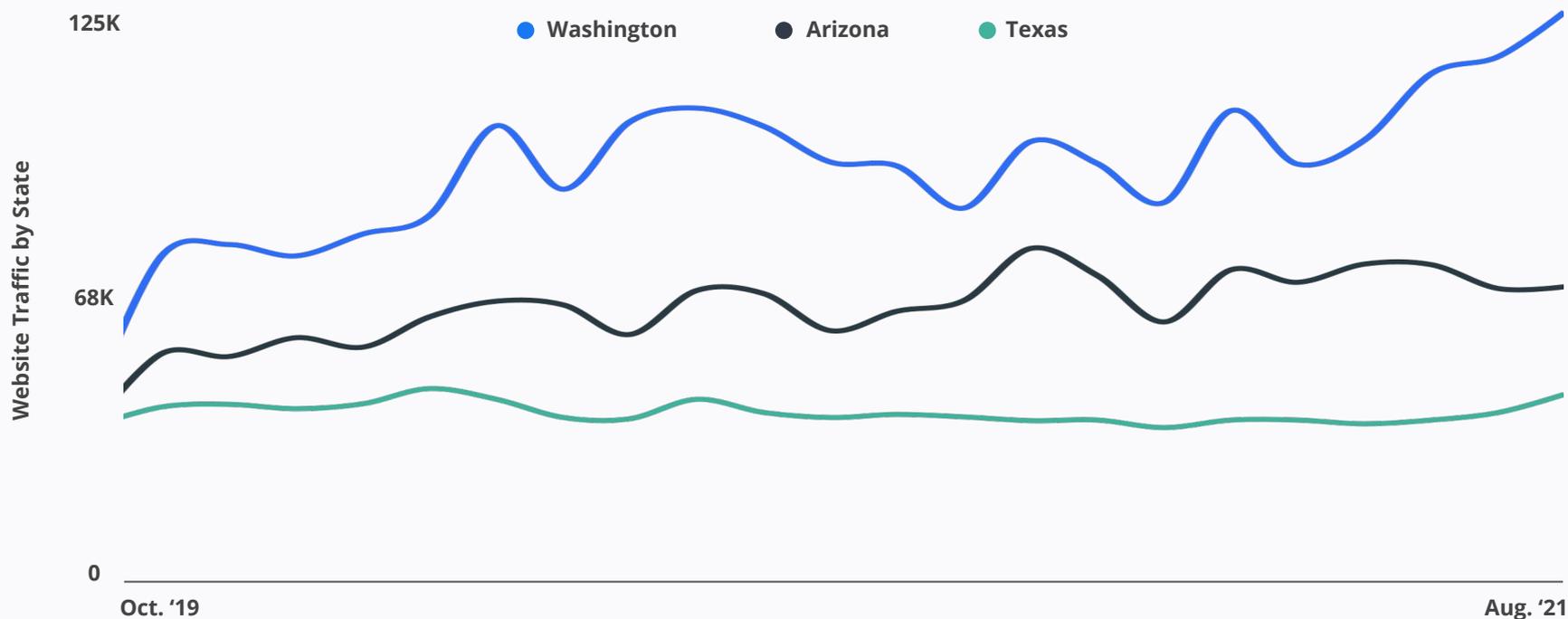
Washington Federal — a \$16.4 billion regional institution based in Seattle — had a problem: many in the general public didn't realize exactly what it did. Was it a federal government agency? Was it a credit union? To make it clearer, the company recently rebranded itself to WaFd Bank.

[Click to view](#)

WaFd Bank saw a +5% MoM website traffic grow since the website relaunch.



Looking into selected states, visits from Washington and Arizona are stably growing at 5% MoM, whereas traffic from Taxes sees more month-on-month fluctuations and remained stable.



## Key Takeaways

Washington Federal is a regional bank based in Seattle, Washington. When the bank set its course on the expansion trajectory, it realized that it was limiting its growth by its name. In addition to that, research revealed a lack of understanding of what services the institution provided — “Is it a credit union, is it a government agency?” (source). To unlock its growth, Washington Federal did the following:

- **Brand position — Washington Federal changed its name to WaFd Bank.** When tapping into new geographies, it was important for the financial institution to ensure that prospects didn’t have any doubts about what services it provides. Hence, “Bank” was included in the name. Abbreviation stirs away from a specific location and eliminates any confusion caused by “Federal.”
- **Digital direction — New website Supporting Digital-First Direction.** WaFd Bank updated its website with new branding and reorganized its information architecture. The bank created more customer-centric navigation, which groups its services under Personal, Business, Commercial titles, making it clear that WaFd Bank provides services to all three. The bank added a new section to the homepage that prominently showcases all states the bank operates in and leads visitors to state-specific pages where they can find local branches and ATMs.
- **Messaging — CEO-Led Rebranding Press Communication.** WaFd Bank’s CEO led all public communication (TV, podcast, press) that concerned the bank’s rebranding. This way, the bank could always stir the discussion in a favourable direction and cohesively present a new brand. WaFd Bank invested additional advertising dollars to run more digital ads during the rebranding period (Aug. – Oct. 2019), however, instead of communicating a new name in the ads, the bank promoted its services (Fee-Free checking account). In 2021, WaFd Bank ran geo-targeted ads aiming to capture the attention of users in the new states. The ads called to “sign-up online with a local “Best Bank” in Idaho [and other states WaFd Bank operates in].”