

**Filene** Research Institute 



# **DIFFERENTIATION & STORYTELLING**

## **CENTER OVERVIEW**

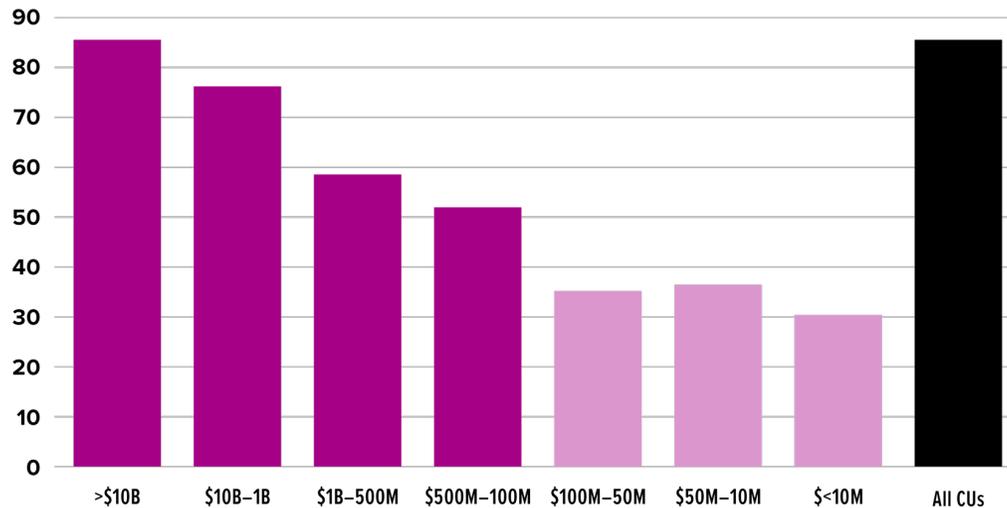
Filene's Newest Center of Excellence | Launching July 2026

# Credit union messaging isn't breaking through the noise

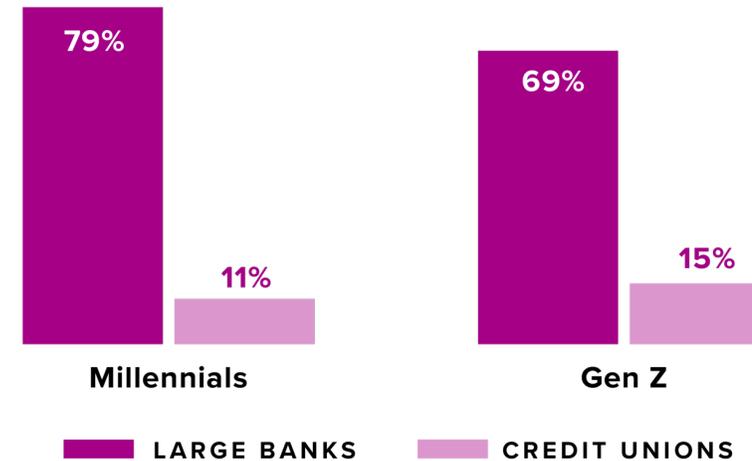
Despite the large campaigns to increase awareness of credit unions, **56% of all credit unions**, and 60% of credit unions under \$1B in assets, **lost members in 2024**.

Most people under 40 use large banks and have very **little knowledge of what a credit union is** or why they would choose to be a part of one.

PERCENTAGE OF CUS WITH POSITIVE MEMBER GROWTH IN 2024



YOUNG MEMBER MARKET SHARE:  
LARGE BANKS VS. CREDIT UNIONS



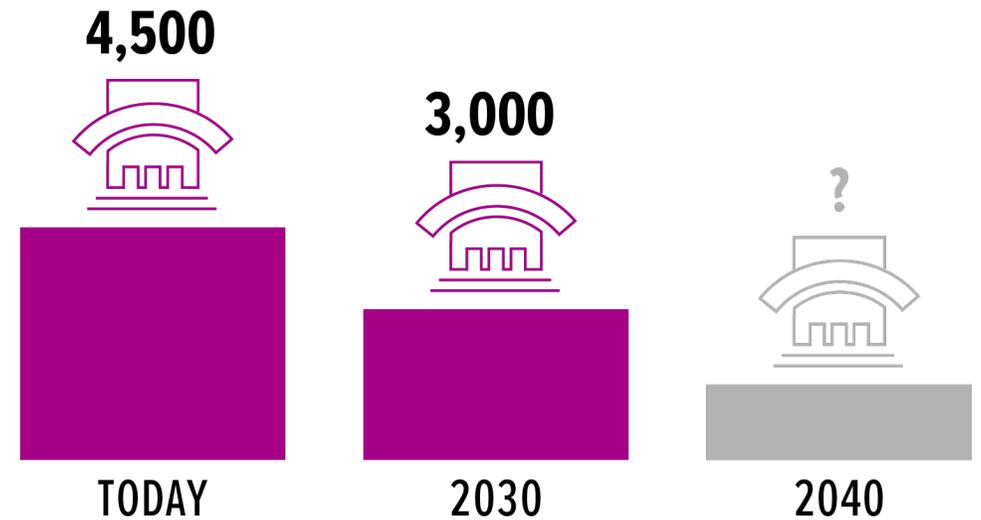
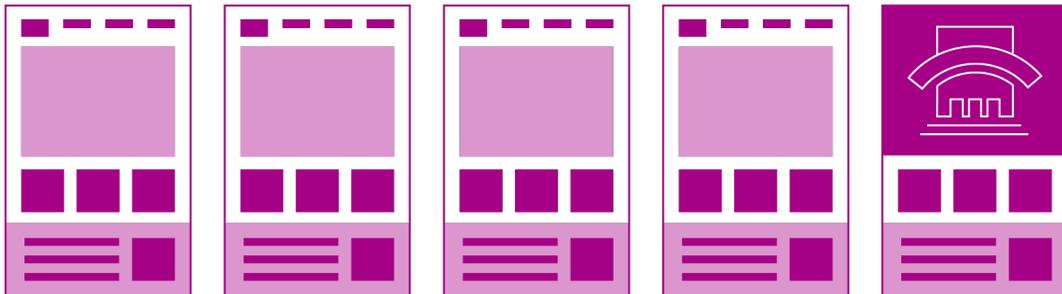
NCUA; Filene Report #647

# Credit unions are becoming indistinguishable from banks and from one another.

In a review of 378 credit union websites,

# 83%

were effectively indistinguishable from any other financial institution



Credit union consolidation creates fewer options and more sameness.

# Relied upon affinities aren't driving growth anymore.



**“We’re in the community!”**

Increasingly large fields of membership create **more competition** and make the organic **connection between people and credit unions more tenuous.**



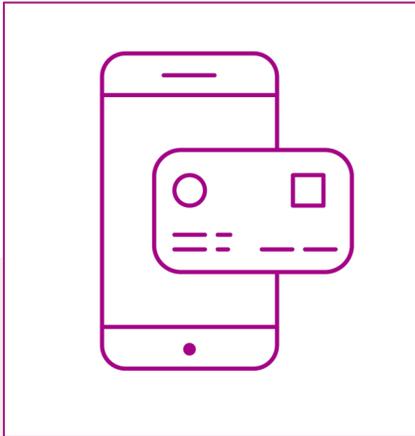
**“We’re mission driven!”**

While many consumers care about aligning with a mission-driven organization, they **may not be willing to sacrifice speed and ease of doing business.**

*Forthcoming Filene Next Generation of Member Growth Report*

# Banking is fading to the background.

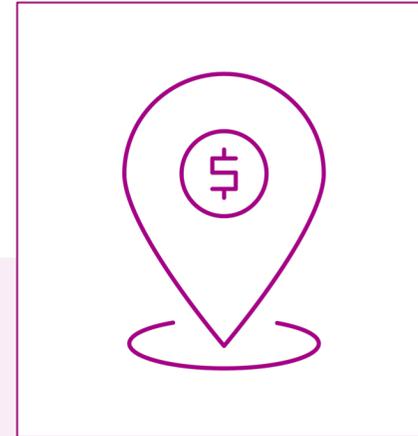
Credit unions want consumers to better understand what they are and why they're the best option, but the entire notion of banking is becoming less visible.



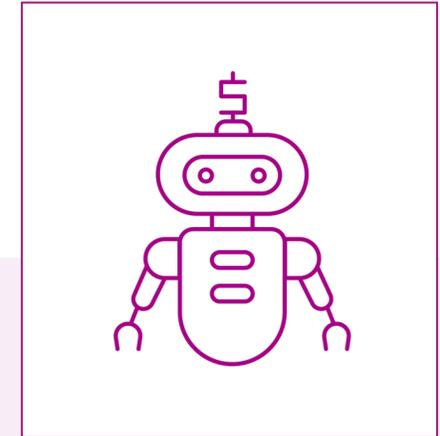
**Digital wallets** reduce focus on individual accounts and financial institutions.



**Non-financial services players** offer traditional financial products.

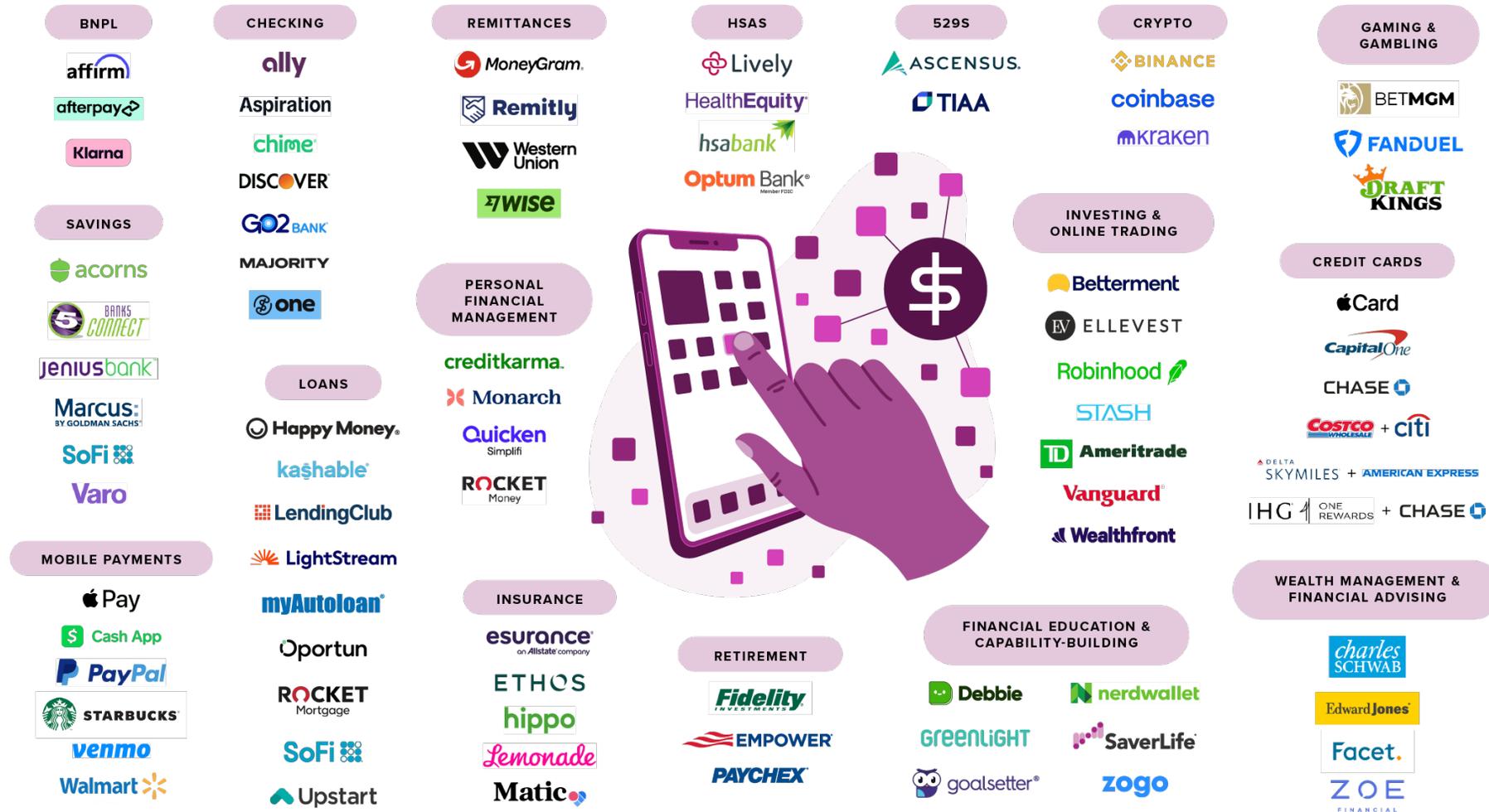


**Embedded finance** shows up where consumers are, not financial institutions.

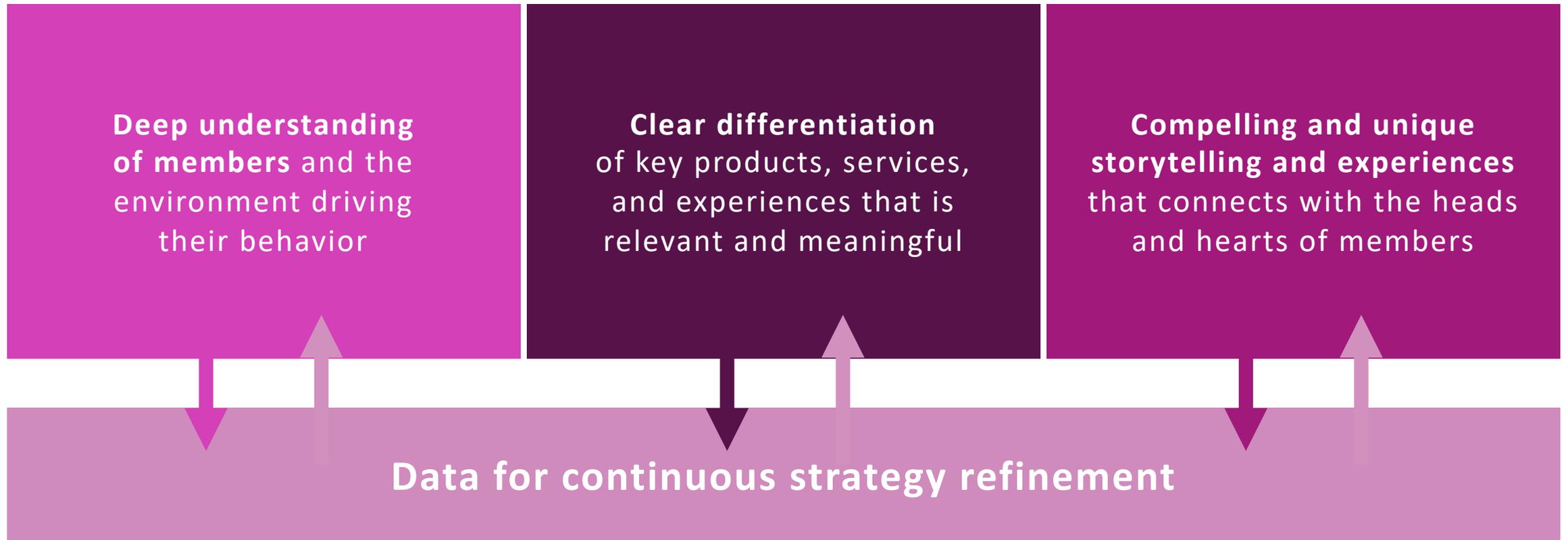


**Agentic commerce** reduces consumers' need to think about payment options.

# Today's competition is loud, digital-first, and data savvy.



# Credit unions need clarity to change their trajectory.





**OUR NEWEST CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

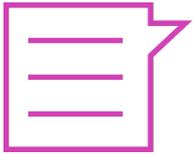
# **DIFFERENTIATION & STORYTELLING**

## The Center's Focus



The goal of this center is to help credit unions use data to clarify their unique value, align their strategy around the member, and communicate their story in ways that build trust, relevance, and long-term loyalty.

## Top-of-mind issues in this space



How can **organizations access and use insights more effectively** to create deep, meaningful connections with consumers?



How do credit unions **define and demonstrate a distinct value proposition** that resonates with today's diverse member segments?



How do credit unions **reconcile consumer self-reported beliefs and their contradictory behaviors**?



What is the right narrative and approach to **increase awareness of credit unions without “teaching”** about credit unions?



What strategies **drive consumer action with purpose-driven messaging**?



How do credit unions create **brand moments and experiences that break through the noise** of the competition?



How should credit unions **measure and increase loyalty**? Which actions, moments, or experiences have the greatest impact on long-term relationship strength?

# How we make an impact with our CoE research annually

- 2+ Research Publications
- 2+ Derivative Outputs  
(podcast, infographic, slides, etc.)
- Coverage in Media Outlets
- Quarterly Cohort Calls  
(Inner Circle only)
- Annual Inner Circle Meeting
- Annual Conferences  
(big.bright.minds. & EDGE)



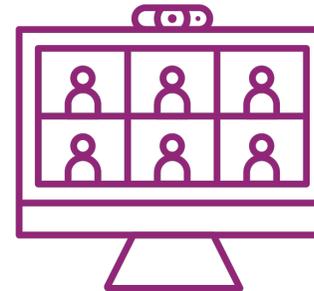
IN-DEPTH  
REPORTS



TOOLS &  
GUIDES



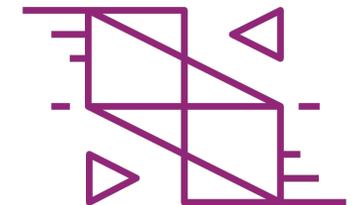
MEDIA



REAL-TIME KNOWLEDGE  
SHARING



INNER CIRCLE



EVENTS

# The driving forces behind this work

## Researchers



Experts in strategy, banking, and technology and currently employed by a research university or future-focused organization.



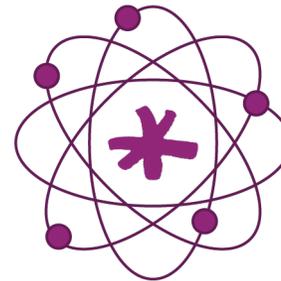
## The Inner Circle



Leaders from ten leading credit unions who help to shape and push forward this critical work.



## Filene

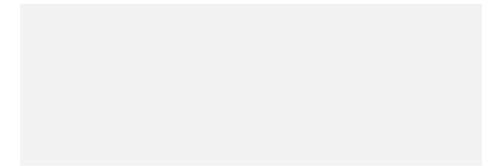
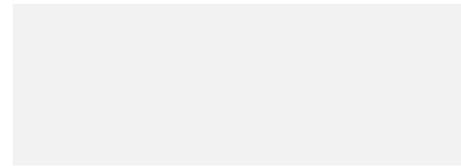
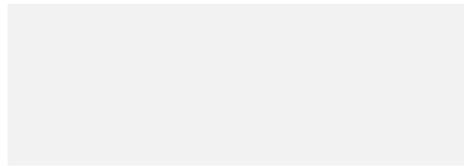


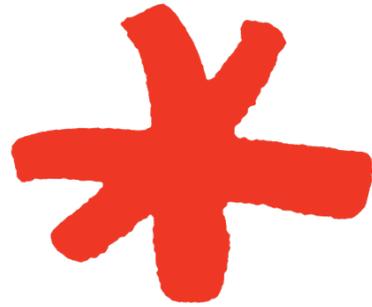
With day-to-day support from our research team, Filene brings its entire organization and network to support and drive impact for our CoEs.



OUR NEWEST COE

# The driving forces behind this work





**DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?**

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