

# case study

# diary of a business problem

## COMPANY

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NorStates Bank

**Base:** Waukegan, IL

**Branches:** 8

**Assets:** \$633 million

## BUSINESS PROBLEM

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You know the feeling: deep down, you know your brand is special and unique—but it's frustrating that others can't recognize it. You're sure it

has the potential to be remarkable, but you're struggling to make it so. Often times the problem is that your brand simply needs to be further refined, focused and better communicated, in order to bring it to life. Such was the case for NorStates Bank, who realized there was a lot more that they could be doing to prove their story.

NorStates Bank lacked clear positioning. Their corporate identity, website and marketing collateral didn't convey a clear message about who they were or what they stood for. The bank's graphic identity was a confused mishmash of typefaces, and other than its signature navy blue, the brand had no color palette. Imagery consisted of generic stock photography that neither differentiated the brand, nor spoke to customers on a personal level. Critical touch points such as the website and print materials lacked cohesive and consistent layout design, font treatment, photo style and other graphic design elements, not to mention messaging. What NorStates Bank needed more than anything was brand focus and clear positioning.

# the CBC solution: Finding, Telling and Proving the Story

## Step 1: Finding the Story

NorStates Bank bends over backwards to accommodate customers and make the banking experience simple and enjoyable. After an in-depth Find the Story process, CBC discovered that the bank's unique brand focus was centered around the ideas of flexibility and simplicity, and that the bank embodies a strong sense of optimism. The bank practices creative problem solving, striving to find unique ways to help customers reach their goals.

### TOUCH POINT AUDIT

CBC's Touch Point Audit applies a quantitative approach to an otherwise qualitative topic: assessing the brand relevance of the customer experience. The Touch Point Audit measures what percentage of the available opportunities the bank is capitalizing on to Tell and Prove its story, and makes recommendations for how to improve. The Touch Point Audit resulted in a long list of recommendations of additional ways to Tell and Prove the Story—thereby enhancing the bank's brand.

## Step 2: Telling the Story

Once the bank's story was clear, it was time to begin articulating that story using words and images, across all the bank's communication channels. First, we began by conveying the bank's primary brand attributes of optimism, flexibility and simplicity through the tagline, "Think Possible," and then turned our attention to applying it to a wide range of communication materials.

### WEBSITE

CBC developed a new website for NorStates Bank – one which clearly conveys the bank's positioning. The homepage and subpages are all visually consistent and employ the same fonts, colors, photography style and layout. In order to add interest and diversity, we expanded the brand's color palette and incorporated new graphic design elements into the site. Fresh, brand-centric copy was developed for the entire site, to convey the unique brand positioning. A new photography style that spoke to the bank's brand was selected, and fluid curves were added to the site to better reflect "flexibility."

website

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**NS** NorStates Bank  
think possible

Personal Banking Business Banking More Services Community Involvement Ambassador's Club About NorStates Bank

CHECKING SAVINGS **LOANS**

ONLINE BANKING

ACCESS ID:  
PASSCODE:

**LOGIN**

[Forgot Passcode?](#)

[Click here to try!](#)

Consider smart choices  
for smart business.  
options to grow  
your **business**

[Give Us Feedback...](#)

**SIMPLE CHECKING**

Simple Checking offers no monthly fee and no minimum balance requirements.

[> Learn More](#)

**Choose® DEBIT CARD**

Valuable rewards on purchases you were already making.

[> Learn More](#)

**CHANGE BANKS**

Say goodbye to your old bank and hello to NorStates Bank.

[> Learn More](#)

MEMBER

## PRINTED MARKETING COLLATERAL

In creating new marketing collateral and stationery for NorStates Bank, CBC emphasized consistency across all print pieces and web – something that was sorely lacking with the old materials. The new sales collateral for business and retail customers was die cut with soft waves to resemble design elements on the website. For congruity and to reflect the bank’s positioning, the same typeface, color palette and photography style were used. The stationery system, annual report and branch posters also emphasized flexibility, simplicity and optimism through the use of curved lines, clean and uncluttered layout, and simple typefaces.

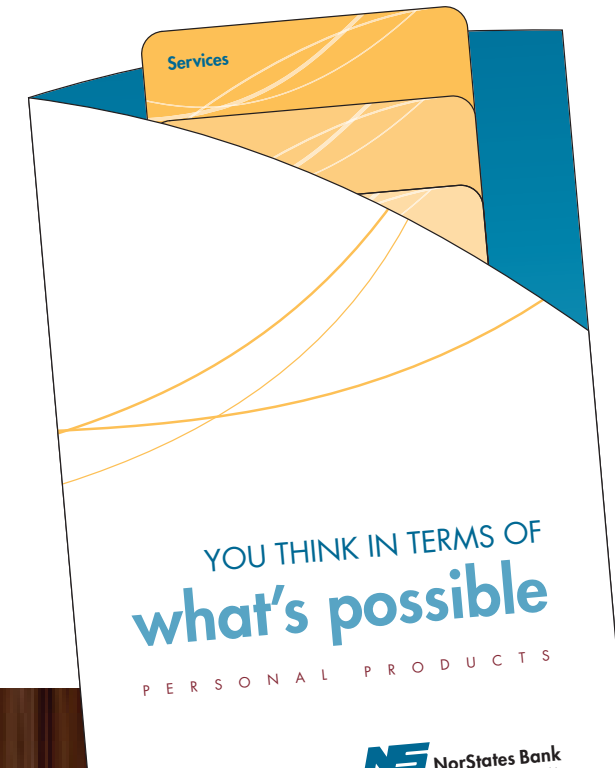
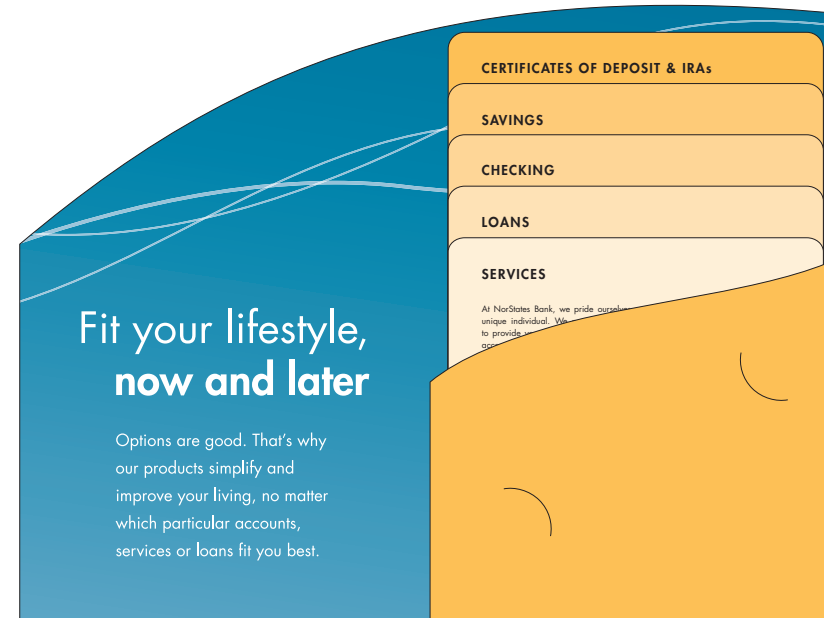
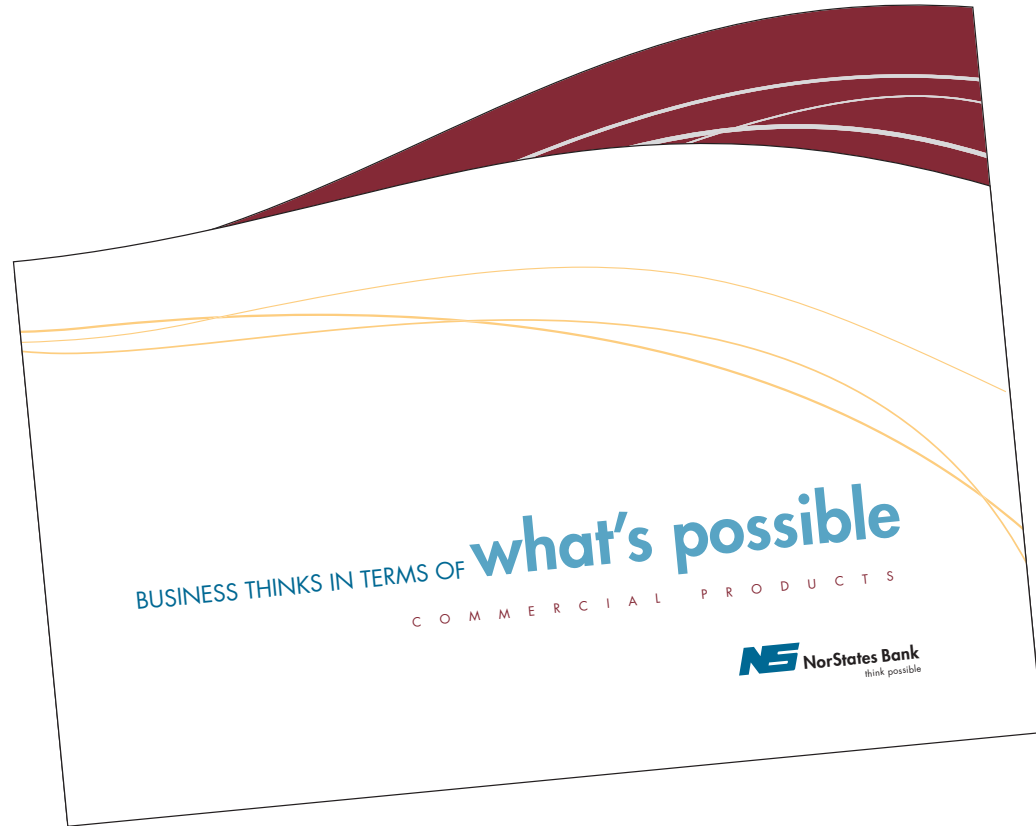
## BRAND LAUNCH MARKETING CAMPAIGN

CBC also developed an external marketing campaign to introduce the newly refined brand positioning, messaging and look and feel. From print advertising to direct mail and other media, the comprehensive campaign let the local market clearly know how NorStates Bank does business.

## Step 3: Proving the Story

Proving the Story is a process that begins...but never ends. To kick off the bank’s new commitment to proving the story, CBC was closely involved in a company-wide staff meeting, held offsite in the evening. CBC helped deliver a presentation that introduced the newly focused brand positioning to staff in a way that demonstrated the brand’s authenticity, and greatly impacted staff buy-in.

marketing collateral



branch poster

TOMORROW  
can be promised  
TODAY

We're a group of possible thinkers.  
We see your potential.  
We see the answers.

We invite you to discover all the  
possibilities with us.



employee handout


NorStates Bank Key Messages

As Possible Thinkers, we believe that Flexibility leads to Simplicity.

This means:

- We are easy to work with and experts at what we do
- We listen, and are responsive to our customer's changing needs
- Our commitment to our communities is clearly visible and valued

We share this mission together.  
We aspire to always **Think Possible.**



"This is my year."  
"This is my year."

SOME CALL IT  
WISHFUL THINKING.  
OTHERS, POSITIVE THINKING.  
AT NORSTATES BANK, WE CALL IT  
**POSSIBLE THINKING.**

And this year especially, we invite you to  
make all the financial changes you've  
been dreaming of.

Come in and tell us how you'd like  
to make 2009, **2000-MINE.**


Sign-up for  
High-Yield Checking today

**4.50% APY\***  
on balances up  
to \$25,000

experience the new...  
**NS NorStates Bank**  
think possible

1601 N. Lewis Ave., Waukegan, IL  
847.244.6000  
www.norstatesbank.com

\* Annual Percentage Yield accurate as of February 18, 2009. Minimum deposit to open account is \$50. Rate tiers are as follows: 4.50% APY applies to balances of \$0.01 - \$25,000 and 1.01% APY applies to balances over \$25,000 as long as qualifications are met each statement cycle. 0.15% APY will be earned on all balances if qualifications are not met. Rates subject to change. \*\*ATM fees are refundable up to a maximum of \$25 per statement cycle when account requirements are met.



print ad

No  
Financial  
Potholes

ROADS OPEN  
WHEN YOU  
THINK POSSIBLE

Make 2009, **2000-MINE.**

experience the new... **NS NorStates Bank**  
think possible

www.norstatesbank.com

billboard

# results: a clear message, consistent experience and differentiation

NorStates Bank's newly focused positioning based around flexibility, simplicity and optimism is now clearly conveyed by many of the brand's touch points. Throughout web, print, and physical environments, there

is consistency in appearance, messaging and experience. In a crowded market, the NorStates Bank brand is now differentiated and easily recognizable.

thank you

Creative Brand Communications, Inc. is a Portland, Oregon-based full-service multi-sensory marketing and experiential brand development agency, specializing in building experiential brands for forward-thinking financial and professional services companies.

## CBC CAPABILITIES AND SERVICES

Brand Strategy

Campaign Strategy

Product Launches

Naming

Mergers & Acquisition Marketing Strategy

De Novo Marketing Strategy

Logo & Tagline Development

Copywriting

Collateral

Business Systems

Web

Out of Home

Word of Mouth/Buzz Marketing

Media Planning

Media Buying

Experience Creation

Environmental Design

Merchandising

Switch Kits

Event Planning

TV/Radio

Illustration/Photography

Animation

Print Production

Mailing & Fulfillment Services



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