



Five Star Bank Builds a Scalable Financial Reporting Foundation with Axiom

As California's Five Star Bank grew from a community bank into a publicly traded institution with a rapidly expanding footprint, the finance team recognized that its existing reporting processes could no longer keep pace.

Before implementing Strata's Axiom® Financial Institutions Suite, financial reporting relied heavily on data pulled from a network of interconnected Excel spreadsheets. The team had developed rigorous controls and validation processes, but those processes required significant manual effort.

"We knew the reports we needed to run, how to validate them, and how to make sure they were complete and accurate, but that in itself took a lot of time," said Heather Luck, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at Five Star Bank. "We didn't have very much time to dig into the why, or the what, of what's actually happening in our business."

As Five Star Bank approached going public in 2021, the prospect of Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) reporting requirements, tighter deadlines, and continued growth made it clear the team needed a more scalable solution. "When we went public, we knew we could not keep doing our current process with what we had coming down the pipe with SEC reporting," Luck said.

After evaluating multiple vendors, Five Star selected Strata's Axiom® Financial Institutions Suite for its ability to support not only financial and regulatory reporting, but also profitability analysis, budgeting, forecasting, and future growth initiatives.

One platform, one source of truth

For Sarah Brock, Five Star Bank's Senior Vice President and Director of Financial Reporting and Analytics, Axiom's biggest advantage was consolidation.

"Having everything in one system was really what sold us on Axiom," Brock said. "We don't have one system doing profitability, and another one doing budgeting and forecasting, and then another one doing financial reporting. We have one source of truth now."

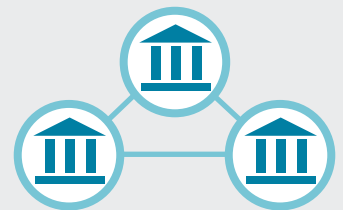
By bringing multiple finance functions together on a single platform, Five Star Bank reduced complexity, improved efficiency, and made it easier for users to



Reduction in SEC disclosure preparation time



On month-end reporting



Easy branch aggregation as bank expands



access trusted data. With fewer systems to learn and navigate, team members can find the information they need more quickly and easily. By making data easier to access, the platform encourages more frequent engagement and broader adoption. The result is greater confidence in reporting across the organization.

Luck said it gives her peace of mind as she conducts reviews. "If it came out of Axiom, I know that there are certain controls that we have in place that I can rely on," she said. "It saves a lot of stress."

Faster reporting and greater financial visibility

One of the earliest benefits Five Star Bank realized was a dramatic reduction in the effort required to prepare critical financial reports. Before Axiom, producing loan and deposit disclosures for SEC filings was a highly manual process.

"Pre-Axiom, just to generate the loan and deposit disclosures for a 10-Q, it was around a 40-hour process," Brock said. "Now with Axiom, it's about half that time."

The bank also streamlined monthly board reporting. Consolidations, eliminations, and reporting workflows that once required extensive manual review are now automated within the platform. Historically, Luck spent roughly an hour reviewing monthly board financials. Today, that review typically takes 30 minutes or less. By reducing manual effort, accelerating reporting workflows,

and embracing new trust in their data quality, the finance team can deliver monthly board financials much earlier than before, typically by 9 a.m. on the first business day after month-end.

The benefits extend beyond efficiency. Axiom has transformed how financial information is shared across the organization, giving managers greater insight into the financial health of their departments and a more active role in performance management.

"Pre-Axiom, a lot of our managers had no visibility into the financial performance of their departments," Brock said. "Now, within three business days after month-end, we can deliver department-level results compared to budget with a historical trend, with just a few clicks."

Greater access to timely information has strengthened accountability and improved financial decision-making across the organization. Rather than relying on a once-a-year budgeting exercise, managers can monitor results and performance continuously throughout the year.

The increased visibility has also improved budget quality.

"The accuracy of the budget has improved significantly," Brock said. "The people contributing to budget inputs aren't seeing their historical expense trends for the first time when we get into the budget cycle. They've seen that activity all year long."

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Supporting growth and future planning

Since beginning its Axiom implementation, Five Star Bank has experienced substantial growth. The bank has expanded from approximately \$2.5 billion in assets to more than \$5 billion while adding three new geographic regions: the San Francisco Bay Area, Central California, and Southern California.

As the organization grows, Axiom provides the flexibility needed to analyze performance across new regions and business units. "We've been able to very easily aggregate branches into regions to report on the financial impact of each region that we now operate in," Brock said. "That wasn't possible before."

By automating reporting and reducing the time spent gathering and validating data, the finance team has been able to shift its focus toward profitability analysis, performance management, and more strategic decision-making. For Luck, that shift represents one of the most important outcomes of the investment.

Five Star continues to expand its use of Axiom, including the implementation of profitability initiatives, management reporting, and incentive compensation planning. The bank's leadership team meets regularly to deepen its understanding of profitability drivers and ensure the organization can fully leverage the insights Axiom provides.

"We're looking at where we can take this next," Luck said. "How can we provide information where it's needed and really use Axiom as that strong backbone for reporting?"

For a fast-growing institution balancing expansion, regulatory demands, and operational efficiency, Axiom has become a critical foundation for the future.

Strata tools leveraged:

- Financial Budgeting, Planning & Forecasting
- Profitability Management
- Reporting & Analytics
- Incentive Compensation Management

