



NEWS RELEASE

## Associated Bank ranks among top three in national small business banking study by ath Power Consulting

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GREEN BAY, Wis., Feb. 27, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Associated Bank was recently named to **The ath Power Small Business Banking Study™** and received the second highest overall evaluation score in the study, and the top score in the category of "Ease of Doing Business With."

The study revealed what small business clients expect from their banking relationship, gaps in the service experience, and how banks measured up in this all-important market segment. Over 800 in-person branch visits by prospective small business owners at banks across the U.S. were surveyed.

This year's study revealed the impact of a bank's mobile banking offering. Sixty-six percent of small business owners said they would be likely to switch banks for one with a superior mobile offering. Conversely, despite its growing prevalence and importance to small business owners, 37% of bankers in the study failed to even mention their bank's mobile offering.

"Associated is committed to continuously improving our products and services for our small business customers as their needs and expectations rise and this ranking validates we are on the right path," said Doug Kohlbeck, director of business banking, Associated Bank. "Small business customers are increasingly interested in how they can access their bank and Associated will continue to invest in alternative channels to meet their needs."

Results also revealed that bankers from the highest rated banks were significantly better at determining needs and

building rapport with prospective customers. Of those small business owners who reported that the banker built a rapport with them, 91% said they would become a customer compared to 28% of those who did not.

"We have a very disciplined approach to customer service that enables our colleagues to deliver exceptional service to our customers," said Karen Whalen, senior vice president of retail banking and director of service excellence, Associated Bank. "Through the study we learned that small business owners that evaluated Associated found the in-person experience to be the most favorable based on several key indicators including dynamics such as the account opening process, the rapport built with the banker, and the process to switch to your bank."

Along with Associated, other top performers included Bank of the West and Chase.

"Based on the impressive results attained in our study and the noted investment to constantly improve the overall experience for small business customers, it is clear that Associated Bank is making strides in this extremely important market segment," said Frank Aloï, CEO of ath Power. "Associated has been properly educating its front-line staff in addressing the specific needs of small business customers, while also providing innovative and valuable tools to help them operate their businesses more efficiently. The focus to effectively serve this segment is proving to be successful."

## About Associated Banc-Corp

Associated Banc-Corp (NASDAQ: ASBC) has total assets of \$24 billion and is one of the top 50, publicly traded, U.S. bank holding companies. Headquartered in Green Bay, Wis., Associated is a leading Midwest banking franchise, offering a full range of financial products and services in over 200 banking locations serving more than 100 communities throughout Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota, and commercial financial services in Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Texas. Associated Bank, N.A. is an Equal Housing Lender, Equal Opportunity Lender and Member FDIC. More information about Associated Banc-Corp is available at [www.associatedbank.com](http://www.associatedbank.com).

## About the Study

Now in its sixth year, **The ath Power Small Business Banking Study™** is a detailed assessment of the sales and service processes, product and service offerings, delivery methods and customer experiences of the nation's premier institutions within the small business banking target market. The full report is available through [www.athpower.com/home/smallbusinessbanking.php](http://www.athpower.com/home/smallbusinessbanking.php). Performance and market share for financial services organizations across North America. To learn more, please visit [www.athpower.com](http://www.athpower.com).

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