



## Bank of Montreal Beats Peers Where it Counts

### Description

The results from the 12th annual Surviscor Canadian Banking Service Level assessment were released February 7. Atop the list of 26 Canadian banks was **Bank of Montreal** ([TSX:BMO](#))([NYSE:BMO](#))

The annual survey assesses how long it takes a bank to respond to an online inquiry whether through social media, email, online contact forms, etc. Once a response is received, it evaluates the quality of that response in terms of actually answering the customer's question.

Surviscor utilizes mystery shoppers to carry out the assessment; 174 online-service inquiries were sent out at approximately the same time to each firm. Once all of the inquiries are responded to, Surviscor gives each firm a Service Level Index (SLI) rating between 0% and 100% based on its proprietary evaluation process.

The higher the percentage, the better the online customer service experience — not to mention the bank's ability to handle anonymous service questions.

### 2016 Canadian banking service level rankings: top five

Bank	Service Level Index
Bank of Montreal	95%
<b>Desjardins</b>	92%
<b>Assiniboine Credit Union</b>	87%
<b>Manulife Bank of Canada</b>	84%
<b>Steinbach Credit Union</b>	84%

*Source: Surviscor website*

Do you notice anything about the top five? I sure do. With the exception of BMO in the number one position, none of the other Big Five banks made the top five.

**Toronto-Dominion Bank** ([TSX:TD](#))([NYSE:TD](#)), which takes pride in its customer service, was ranked

seventh with 74%; **Royal Bank of Canada** ([TSX:RY](#))([NYSE:RY](#)) came eighth with a 66% SLI, while **Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce** ([TSX:CM](#))([NYSE:CM](#)) came in a disappointing 21st position with an 18% SLI.

Conspicuously missing from the rankings was **Bank of Nova Scotia** ([TSX:BNS](#))([NYSE:BNS](#)), although its **Tangerine** brand did make the list in 19th position for an SLI of 25%.

In terms of average response time, no bank was able to deliver in less than four hours. However, Desjardins came close at 4.8 hours, while BMO's average response time was 7.4 hours.

As Canadian banks move closer to a branchless business model, it's incumbent upon them to up their online responsiveness.

"Generally speaking, Canadian consumers are being offered more customer service alternatives than ever before, including social media, live digital interactions and traditional methods," said Glenn LaCoste, president of Toronto-based Surviscor Inc. "The troubling fact is, for the most part, Canadian banking customers are not being properly serviced through non-branch interactions provided by leading banks and credit unions."

As consumers, we ought to be seriously concerned about the poor showing by our major banks, because the last time I checked, banking is still a service industry. As investors, we ought to at least question our Canadian bank investments if they can't get their act together.

For me personally, I've been a big supporter of CIBC in recent months, [arguing](#) that CEO Victor Dodig has done a good job running the bank since taking the top job in September 2014.

However, CIBC's ranking is abysmal with an average response time of more than 24 hours. If it ran an ambulance service and you were having a medical emergency, you'd be dead. While I'm willing to look at the glass being half full, for now, CIBC had better make some tangible changes to how it responds to online inquiries, because this is simply an unacceptable performance.

I also think investors ought to take a closer look at BMO stock. This is its fourth consecutive year at the top of Surviscor's rankings, which suggests it is the bank that truly understands where the banking industry is heading.

It's not my favourite bank — that goes to CIBC, despite its obvious service issues — but this certainly moves it up a notch or two.

## CATEGORY

1. Bank Stocks
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## TICKERS GLOBAL

1. NYSE:BMO (Bank of Montreal)
2. NYSE:BNS (The Bank of Nova Scotia)
3. NYSE:CM (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce)
4. NYSE:RY (Royal Bank of Canada)
5. NYSE:TD (The Toronto-Dominion Bank)

6. TSX:BMO (Bank Of Montreal)
7. TSX:BNS (Bank Of Nova Scotia)
8. TSX:CM (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce)
9. TSX:RY (Royal Bank of Canada)
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## **Author**

washworth

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