b1BANK partners with Covecta to deploy agentic AI

The multi-year partnership will integrate agentic AI into key stages of b1BANK's banking lifecycle, helping teams work faster, improve controls, and increase capacity while maintaining strong risk and compliance standards.
b1BANK is Covecta's first banking partner in the U.S.

Baton Rouge, LA, US – Feb. 17, 2026

b1BANK and Covecta announced a strategic partnership to deploy agentic AI across the bank's day to day workflows. The collaboration focuses on streamlining and automating repeatable, policy-driven activities across core deposit and loan operational processes, reducing manual effort and operational friction so that teams can devote more time towards higher value-adding work including analysis, exception handling and customer engagement.

Covecta's agents will embed into b1BANK's existing workflows performing structured, policy-aligned assessments and presenting clear, well-referenced outputs that are easy for operations and risk teams to review. These specialized agents are engineered to enhance accuracy, operational efficiency, and customer outcomes while ensuring compliance with rigorous standards and company-specific policy requirements.

Covecta's approach to strengthening auditability and consistency while supporting higher throughput across loan and deposit operations is evident in the 50% productivity uplift reported by its United Kingdom-based clients. This improvement reflects the effectiveness of Covecta's technology solutions, which enhance operational efficiency and streamline processes, ultimately benefiting both clients and their account holders.

Covecta's partnership with b1BANK is centered around a connected set of use cases rather than a single point solution, initially focusing on automating repeatable, policy-driven activities within core deposit and loan operational processes and extending across various stages of the operational lifecycle to collectively elevate assessment quality and promote strong data integrity, consistency and control over the full lifecycle of deposit and loan activities.

Because Covecta's agents will either be integrated or embedded within the bank's existing systems and processes, there is no need to migrate off an existing platform. This will allow b1BANK to move from contractual agreement to go-live in eight weeks, transforming the way innovation is deployed across the company.

“We selected Covecta because they offer purpose-built agents that carry deep banking domain expertise right out of the box,” said Jude Melville, Chairman and CEO, b1BANK. “Instead of spending months on custom development, we can deploy agents that already understand the complexities of our workflows and policies. This allows our teams to immediately focus more of their energy on relationship building, complex decision-making and strategic growth, while AI agents handle the repetitive checks and reconciliations that have historically created bottlenecks.”

“We are excited to work with b1BANK as they take a lifecycle view of AI across their enterprise,” said Scott Wilson, Co-founder and CEO at Covecta. “By starting with high-value controls like post close review and extending into upstream and downstream use cases, we are focused on delivering measurable improvements in capacity, quality, and transparency for their operations.”

About b1BANK

As of Dec. 31, 2025, Business First Bancshares, Inc., (Nasdaq: BFST) through its banking subsidiary b1BANK, had $8.2 billion in assets, $5.7 billion in assets under management through b1BANK’s affiliate Smith Shellnut Wilson, LLC (SSW) (not including $1.0 billion of b1BANK assets managed by SSW) and operates Banking Centers and Loan Production Offices in markets across Louisiana and Texas providing commercial and personal banking products and services. b1BANK is a 2024 Mastercard “Innovation Award” winner and multiyear winner of American Banker Magazine’s “Best Banks to Work For.” Visit b1BANK.com for more information.

About Covecta

Covecta is a leading provider of purpose-built agents that handle highly complex and manual tasks that still exist in today's Financial Services sector. Covecta empowers front, middle and back office teams by automating critical activities and workflows across the banking lifecycle—from lead acquisition to ongoing servicing—using domain-specific AI agents. Covecta is backed by Salesforce Ventures.

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