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When choosing a financial partner, one must consider at least four important factors: services, fees, rates, and convenience. The first thing is a financial partner that offers the services that you desire. Beyond basic checking and savings, institutions offer many types of loans (business, auto, home, and educational), health savings accounts, and investment options. Do you do online banking or need access to cash after hours? Do you travel frequently and need an expanded network of ATMs or perhaps a credit card with a low interest rate?

Secondly, one should consider the fees associated with the services that you need. Among the most popular fees are maintenance fees, minimum balance fees, and overdraft fees. You also should consider hidden fees that all lump together to affect the profit that you make.

You also want a financial institution that offers competitive rates on the services that you need. If you are looking for an auto, college or home loan, you want to find a low interest rate. If you are saving money, a high interest rate will appeal to you. Shopping around and looking for the best possible rates can put more money in your pocket.

The final factor is convenience and customer service. Are the hours and location convenient? Do they offer that customer-focused, personal touch? Can you access your accounts online and if so, is convenient and safe?

Members Choice Financial Credit Union excels in all of these areas. It offers services that meet the needs of a wide range of customers without unnecessary fees. It offers competitive rates on both loans and investment products. It is focused on the needs of the local community and is customer friendly. Because it is member owned, profits are shared among members offering a win-win situation.

To increase awareness, the credit union should promote and highlight these characteristics that set them apart. Traditional advertising, commercials, and social media will help spread the word. Informative classes in the local schools as well as for the public will help consumers make educated choices. Recruitment of more businesses and being involved in community activities offer additional avenues to expand membership. By investing in future generations of consumers via the scholarship program, awareness and appreciation is sparked early. I for one am thankful for the many services and benefits of Members Choice Financial Credit Union membership.