



Starling Bank opening up the world for UK SMEs



<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/sme/finance> worldbank.org

Challenge

Since its launch in 2018, Starling Bank has worked to level the playing field for UK-based small and medium enterprises (“SMEs”), opening international growth opportunities through its international payments and receipts banking platform.

Starling Bank, solving global challenges for SMEs.

Traditional banks are geared towards supporting larger corporations, even though SMEs make up more than 90% of the global business population, generate 70% of employment, and are responsible for 50% of GDP in developed countries, which includes roughly 30% of global imports¹. In the UK, SMEs have historically been under-supported by banks, leading to struggles with business growth, caused by obstacles such as hidden and explicit bank charges, as well as a lack of understanding of the true cost of FX. Additionally, late payments have caused substantial debt for SMEs, placing them at risk of failure.

Recognizing that UK-based SMEs wanted to expand their global footprint, Starling Bank set about relieving the pain of international payments and collections for them.

The solution

Starling Bank: giving SMEs global access

For too many SMEs, when they want to make an international payment through a traditional legacy bank, the process is opaque, time-consuming, and costly.

The use case for helping SME customers transact globally while appearing local to their customers.

1. A UK-based SME is doing business in the US. Its US clients want to be invoiced in USD and to pay in USD.

2. Using a USD virtual account, the UK-based SME can transact like a local business with its US customers. The clients in the US don't need to worry about FX hassle or expense.

5. The UK-based SME can hold and manage balances across currencies, which can help reduce risk and help promote transparency at every stage.



3. Once the UK-based SME collects USD from its customers, it can hold on to the USD for future use or convert to GBP or 18 other currencies at competitive FX rates, available 24/7.

4. The SME can direct funds to its UK domestic account, or pay invoices, or make investments in 18 global currencies.



Starling and Currencycloud are united in our aim to provide better products and services to businesses, believing in the power of technology to deliver transparency, resilience and scalability. With our USD accounts, we listened to the immediate currency needs of our customers and worked with Currencycloud to deliver a seamless way to send and receive the money they need to grow their business.

Helen Berton

Chief Banking Officer at Starling Bank



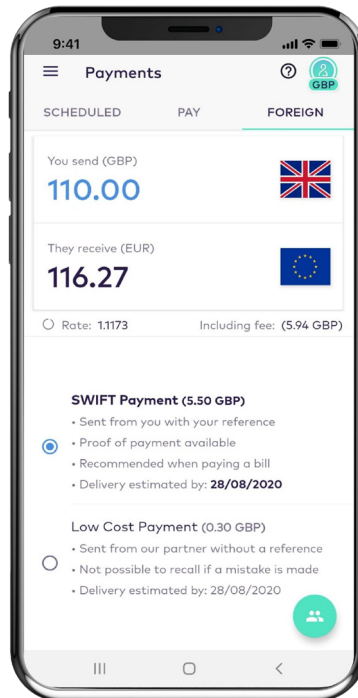


Results

Through our integration Starling provides the capability to its customers to send and receive USD quickly – a critical element of doing effective business whether buying or selling. Costs are not only reduced but transparent, as Starling customers can send and receive payments via ACH and Fedwire like a local and via CHIPS SWIFT for international payment.

Starling Bank has an embedded cross-border capability that enables its SME customers to seamlessly pay and get paid, exchange, and manage funds with their international suppliers, customers and clients in 18 different currencies, and be local in the US.

Starling’s customers can make FX conversions at their convenience, not tied to when a payment is made or received, while benefiting from highly competitive exchange rates - and no added fees. Customers can benefit from Starling’s holistic approach which integrates cash management and FX trading. Starling’s business customers can reconcile their accounts much more easily, with the amounts sent and received in full via our APIs.





Empowering business as they expand to the US

Starling Business Banking customers who are growing their business in the US are supported by [US Dollar business accounts](#). This allows customers with a limited company to hold, send and receive USD and manage every transaction through a single app.

A symbiotic collaboration

Currencycloud's API platform is integrated with Starling's [B2B Banking Services](#) to enhance our capabilities by providing access to the UK Faster Payments rails. This enables us to deliver a real-time pay-out service to thousands of customers who rely on this infrastructure to send and receive payments in the UK.



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Since 2018 our platform has helped deliver¹:



\$2bn

Deliver over \$2 billion in payments



848 000

Process over 848 000 payments



18%

Lead to an annual payments growth rate of 18%

¹Currencycloud data obtained July 2023

To find out more about Visa Cross-Border Solutions contact EUcrossbordersolutions@visa.com

