



Hi! I'm Hal, your automated teller

BY THOMAS GRILLO
Wednesday, November 4, 2009

In the 1970s, the ATM revolutionized banking.

Now, the PTM - personal teller machine - could be the next step in bringing banking into the 21st century, says the Utah-based company that created it.

Ugenius has introduced a hybrid that combines an ATM and a teller. The technology connects the customer with a teller, who appears on the machine's video monitor.

"We think the next evolution in banking is to provide the convenience of real teller services via video," said Jed Taylor, Ugenius' vice president and chief operating officer.

Taylor, in Boston this week for the Bank Administration Institute's convention at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, said the company was founded to help financial institutions be more focused on sales and less on customer transactions.

"The personal teller machine was born out of our vision to allow tellers in a call center to provide transactional services while the people inside the branch sell loans, mortgages and other products," he said.

The terminals provide a video and intercom link to tellers offsite. Customers can show their driver's license to the teller via the two-way video.

Currently, Ugenius, with 20 employees, has only six customers, mostly credit unions outside of New England.

At a cost of \$80,000 for a PTM or \$30,000 more than a conventional ATM, Doug Johnson, an American Bankers Association vice president, said he's not sure his members would make such an investment.

"Is \$30,000 worth it for the addition of video? We don't know yet," he said. "But anything that allows a financial institution to have the flexibility for a more personal touch at an ATM is a good thing."