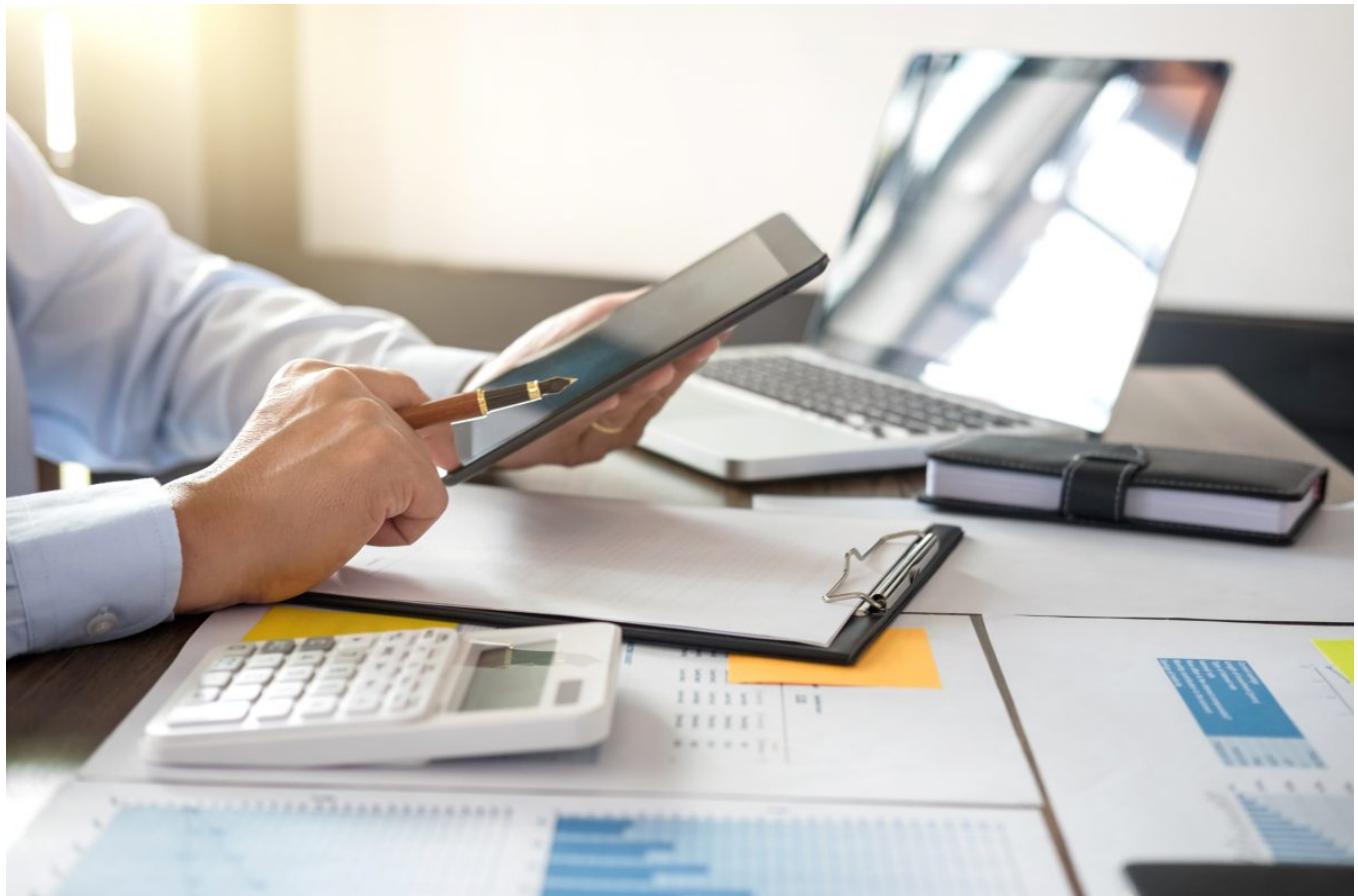


JANUARY 2026

## Banking Consolidation Reshapes the Executive Landscape in Financial Services

---

Slayton Search Partners



## How M&A momentum and technology demands are redefining leadership requirements in financial services

### 2025 Financial Services in Review

Regional and community banks pursued strategic consolidations throughout 2025 to achieve operational scale amid mounting economic pressures. Challenges included escalating technology investment requirements for core banking systems, digital platforms, and cybersecurity infrastructure, combined with mounting regulatory compliance costs that smaller institutions struggled to absorb independently. For many regional banks, consolidation became less about opportunistic growth and more about competitive viability, as the fixed costs of modern banking infrastructure made scale increasingly essential.

This M&A wave reshaped the executive talent market. Organizations gained access to leaders with deep operational expertise, transformation experience, and post-merger integration capabilities. Simultaneously, institutions prioritized executives skilled in digital transformation, data analytics, and AI-enabled decision-making as technological capability became critical for competitive differentiation.

The resulting environment demanded greater adaptability from both organizations and executives navigating ongoing transformation, with successful leaders demonstrating proficiency across financial acumen, technology fluency, and change management.

### 2026 Outlook

Consolidation will accelerate as cost pressures and technology requirements intensify. Success will require executives who combine banking expertise with transformation capabilities, manage integration complexity, and drive innovation while maintaining operational resilience. Our expertise helps organizations secure leaders who execute strategic mergers and acquisitions, advance technological capabilities, and sustain performance in a rapidly consolidating market.

### Select 2025 Closed Financial Services Searches

**Chief Information Officer**

Community Bank

Search executive: [Stuart Smith](#)

**Head of Commercial Real Estate**

Privately Held

Community Bank

Search executive: [Stuart Smith](#)

**Controller**

Privately Held Industrial

Real Estate Company

Search executive: [Stuart Smith](#)

**Head of Wealth**

Privately-Owned

Financial Services

Company

Search executive: [Stuart Smith](#)

**Chief Credit Officer**

Community Bank

Search executive: [Stuart Smith](#)

**General Counsel & Chief Operating Officer**

Privately Held

Community Bank

Search executive: [Stuart Smith](#)

[View More Closed Searches >>](#)

**Select 2025 Financial Services Insights**

- [Increased M&A Activity Creates an Employer Market in Financial Services](#)
- [Women Leaders Set to Transform Banking & Financial Services](#)
- [Building Resilient Leadership in Financial Services Organizations](#)

[View More Insights >>](#)

**Meet the Team**



**Stuart Smith**

Senior Vice President & Principal

312-667-1837

[ssmith@slaytonsearch.com](mailto:ssmith@slaytonsearch.com)



**Kevin Strohl**

Vice President & Principal

312-706-7861

[kstrohl@slaytonsearch.com](mailto:kstrohl@slaytonsearch.com)

[Meet Slayton Search Partners >>](#)