Greg Miles, executive vice president of treasury management products and services at Regions Bank

What should corporates consider when building a payment strategy that is efficient, secure, and positioned for growth? And how can financial

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institutions and NACHA help them navigate the complexities of today's payments landscape?

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Welcome to Payment Smartcast, Nacha's podcast channel. I'm your host, Dan Roth, senior director of communications at NACHA.

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Whether a business is establishing its payments operations for the first time or looking to enhance existing processes, decisions around banking

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relationships, a operations, risk management and compliance can have a lasting impact.

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Building a strong payments foundation requires the right technology, an invested financial institution partner,

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and access to trusted education and industry expertise.

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Today, we'll explore the key considerations for businesses as they develop their payment strategy. From selecting a financial institution and

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implementing operational best practices to understanding the NACHA rules and the educational resources available to help businesses make informed decisions.

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Joining me for this discussion are Greg Miles who is executive vice president of treasury management products and services at regions bank and Olivia

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Masiel Aap who is senior director of a education and corporate outreach at NACHA.

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Together, we'll discuss how corporates can build strong banking relationships, strengthen their payments operations,

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manage risk, and leverage education to maximize the value of the AC network.

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Whether you're part of a corporate treasury team, finance department, or payments operation, this episode is for you. So, let's get started. So, first of

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all, Olivia, welcome to Payment SmartCast. We're so excited to have you on the podcast, especially uh to talk

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about how we integrate corporate engagement with financial institutions.

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Uh but because this is your first time on the podcast, I hope you'll take a moment just to tell our audience just a little bit about yourself and your role at NACHA.

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Absolutely. Well, thank you for having me first off. Um I have worked in the payments industry for 16 years uh in

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multiple capacities including product management of the private sector a operator, treasury management, product

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management in a financial institution and now working in the industry for NACHA. Um and then at NACHA my role is

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really centered on engaging directly with corporates, businesses and other organizations that are initiation

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initiating uh those a payments into the NACHA a network and I work closely to

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help uh those corporates answer questions kind of walk through realworld scenarios when they're you know having

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certain scenarios that have come up and support their educational needs whether that's understanding the notch operating rules are building onto their payment um

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strategy and collaborating with internal teams and industry partners to make sure corporates have access to the right

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resources, insights and guidance. So the short answer at the end of the day um is my focus is really helping organizations

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feel confident but also well equipped in how they use the AC network.

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And Olivia, I guess just one quick followup. When a lot of people think of NACHA, they often think of banks, credit unions, and financial institutions. So

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talk to our listeners just a little bit about why creating relationships with corporates is especially beneficial to strengthening the AC network.

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Yeah. So if you think about it, creating strong relationship with corporates, it's really foundational to the strength of the AC network because these are the

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organizations that actually sending transactions into the system every day.

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So by building those relationships, we're able to, you know, better drive adoption, deliver that education in a

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relevant way, and then stay closely connected in what they're experiencing.

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And that ongoing engagement, it almost creates a feedback loop that helps us inform on as we approach risk, security, but also innovation, like the fun stuff.

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Um and that that collaboration is ultimately what strengthens um the security and the efficiency and the long-term resiliency of the AC network.

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Well, and I think relationships is going to be a key theme that we're going to be discussing during this podcast. So, Greg, it's great to have you on and

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welcome to Payment Smartcast. And for our listeners, I hope that you'll also share just a bit about your background and your relationship with NACHA and your role at regions bank.

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Well, thanks Dan. And it is great to be teaming up with Olivia again. By the way, Olivia kind of glossed over the

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fact that she was on our team at Regions leading payment products. Uh she mentioned it, but not by name and it's

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really great to be teaming up with her again. I have been with regions for 42 years starting

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uh with when I joined Amsouth in August 1984 in treasury management operations.

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I believe Nacho was a spritly 10 years old when I uh started. I wasn't much

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older by the way. Um, I've had a number of roles in bank operations, payments,

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electronic banking, digital banking, uh, all before moving into my current role in 2010. So, I've been leading our

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product organization for just over 16 years.

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Uh treasury management product at regions uh includes all payment products

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receivables cash and currency advanced services such as our flagship online product I

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treasury open banking and embedded ERP products information services integrated payables

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integrated receivables and fraud prevention tools and for decades

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electronic payments has meant AC and NACHA

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I see as the referee ensuring we all play fair of the same set of rules.

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There's no question that confidence in the payment system is essential to it working properly

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and having a central rulemaker and standardization body does that

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I know Olivia is in the role now it's focused on education risk [clears throat] management

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innovation and doesn't get the credit it deserves for making what I call the

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original electronic payment tool just work.

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So Greg, you mentioned that there is a lot of products and services that a bank provides that's behind that door. So I'm

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just curious, how do you work to introduce new clients to regions and everything that you

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describe that is a part of that banking service that you that you provide?

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We're constantly looking at our set of products and we look at it as a kind of a client spectrum really looking for

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places where there are gaps where there are client potential client needs that maybe have not been met and we lead with

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a relationship first needsbased approach to uh to treasury management. I will say

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from the inside looking out that's one thing I really appreciated at regions was it was an like an assessment and an

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analysis and not just like a like oh here's a question this is the answer kind of you know workflow and I I really

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I thought that was a great way to um work with clients I really did so Olivia I'm really glad you brought

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that up and I think anyone who's worked with anyone who's at a seuite at a large corporation or the owner of a small

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business and anyone in between knows that business owners are really professional problem solvers. They got a lot that they need to think about. So, I'm just really curious from your point

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of view view, what are things that businesses should be thinking about when setting up their payment systems? And Olivia, let me start with you.

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Yeah, absolutely. So, as not only a former banker, you know, someone that's seen so many perspectives in the

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industry, but as a small business owner myself, when setting up any kind of payment system or platform, I think businesses really need to take a

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holistic approach. So, I'm going to speak now kind of from the AC perspective. So, that starts with

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understanding and complying with the NACHA operating rules, which you will hear me say the Nacha rules a lot, but there are reasons. Um, but then from

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there it's about building a long-term a strategy. So that's going to include things like risk assessments, audits,

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and then even operational planning. But it's also really important to stay informed on industry developments and take advantage of education like

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webinars and training really keeps u your teams up to date. And finally, you know, things like same day a, you know,

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they should understand where same day a fits in with their strategy and work closely with their financial institution among other products on how to implement

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it effectively. Um, but I think all together these are all variables, right?

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And they create a more informed, efficient, but also a scalable payments approach no matter what size your organization is.

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And Greg, from your point of view, since you've worked with a a wide number of businesses and a wide variety of businesses, what's your point of view of

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what they should be thinking about when setting up their payment systems?

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Well, for starters, when a business has that kind of rare opportunity to reassess their payment systems, because

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that doesn't that opportunity doesn't come around every day. They need to focus on things like sustainability,

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efficiency, uh cost optimization, and of course risk management. And when

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you think about those individually, processes need to be streamlined in a

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way that don't require unnecessary manual effort to free up

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time for other core business opportunities. Now that being said, the the flip side of that is there are

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opportunities to strengthen your risk posture by having other people available for secondary approvals and things of

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that nature. So you can't totally get rid of people, but being efficient and uh automating where you can is key.

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uh evaluate your payment rails which would include AC but also RTP

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wires all payment types to balance timing

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payment optimization and cost effectiveness and of course embedding strong controls from a fraud perspective

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such as dual approvals, account validation monitoring tools

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ways of fielding and dealing with alerts that banks often offer about what's going on in their payment activity into

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their internal processes as well as their their platforms.

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A well-designed payment system will support growth while minimizing

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risk and minimizing operational friction.

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So I guess Greg to ask the other side of that question then is that what should businesses be thinking about when they are selecting a financial institution?

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I think so. I think all of those are factors. Uh but organizations

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need to look beyond products and solutions. And I'm a product guy, so I I don't say that lightly,

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but they need to determine whether a bank can provide advice, guidance,

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education, uh, strategic guidance, and long-term support through all of the challenges

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and opportunities that are around the corner. Uh th those key considerations would include the ability to be an

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advisor. Does the bank know what they're talking about? Can they offer insights into their industry

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or their business model? Is a bank demonstrating a commitment to innovation and investment?

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So the right banking relationship serves not just as a provider but as a key resource

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helping helping the business be successful, helping the business grow.

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And I'm glad you brought up helping the business be successful because businesses are very unique. So how does the strategy vary based on the client's business model and their needs?

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Well, you know, in some respects, the strategy of not leading with product,

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but instead focusing on the client or the clients or prospects business model, their their

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challenges, their needs allows this playbook to really work irrespective of the business. Our

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teams invest time in understanding accounts payable and accounts receivable

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workflows, industry specific challenges, growth plans and from there

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we identify inefficiencies and develop a customized payments

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roadmap that evolves alongside the client's business. So this combines to ensure that

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solutions are relevant, scalable, and you know, we have an eye toward the

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long term, that these are aligned to their long-term objectives.

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I was going to say I feel like a lot of that is education, right, Greg? Like as far as Oh, absolutely. know whether it's on the

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specific product the flows and I I think that people only think of education as like a webinar you know or something

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similar but the whole process is such an education every client interaction is an education

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opportunity a call to client services ostensibly to deal with a question or problem

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turns into that educational opportunity right so Yeah, you're absolutely correct.

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Well, and I would love to have this podcast be a little bit of an educational opportunity. So for Olivia, Greg talked about both sending and

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receiving a payments and the importance of the a network and the description of NACHA as the arbiter of the rules. Just

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from your perspective from educating, what should businesses know about the NACHA rules when sending and receiving a payments?

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So you know a lot of the times in my 16 years education has been the answer when there has been a question uh looking for

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a solution. So education is critical because businesses need an clear understanding of their role under the

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NACA rules and number one that starts with having access to the rules and resources to support compliance but also

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working closely with their financial institution to establish and understand sound a processes and procedure both

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internally but also with their external partners like their their you know bank or or vendor. Um, but organizations

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should also have strong risk management practices in place and a clear understanding of their responsibilities

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because there are responsibilities outlined in the rules and regulations um that uh pertain to the actual sender

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of the transaction and and things like this include how to handle scenarios like unauthorized credits or debits for

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example. From a resources standpoint, NACHA offers a range of support from end-user webinars and rules updates to

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the corporate insights newsletter as well as in-person events like smarter faster payments and the payments innovation alliance. These not only

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provide the education, but they also provide opportunities to connect with peers and learn from different perspectives across the industry.

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So for Greg, Olivia has talked about a lot of uh materials that Nacha provides.

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I'm just curious from your point of view, what are some of the best practices that you use across client relationships?

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Well, as I, you know, mentioned earlier, you know, we start with discovery, insight, getting to know the client,

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getting engaged with that client, understanding their business, their goals, etc.

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And then we emphasize kind of persistence if you will or consistency, proactivity, collaboration.

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That would take the form of regular touch points to ensure that our engagement goes

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beyond just processing their transactions, right? We provide proactive insights on

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fraud trends, industry developments, innovation opportunities.

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Well, and Greg, I'm glad you brought up fraud because that is an important topic in the payments industry. And so for Olivia,

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just for our listeners, what do the NACHA rules say about risk management and compliance as they are thinking about a payments?

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So yeah, there are a couple ways that NACA kind of tackles um risk management and compliance. So you've got the NACHA

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operating rules which outline the requirements for the different participants as it relates to risk

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management. So that means um you know the broad monitoring rules that just came out for all participants in the

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network. Um, so even things like the ECH riskmanagement handbook that we have

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available um are a big help and just a little another tool that you kind of have in your tool belt for uh you know

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working with risk management and compliance in the network.

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And Greg, building off what Olivia talked about, how do you work with clients when it comes to risk management and compliance with the Nacha operating rules specifically for risk management?

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Well, my riskmanagement uh professionals at the bank will be very pleased to hear me say this, but this is true. Okay,

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risk management is a continuous integrated component of the client relationship.

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It's not a one-time discussion. We talk about ROA, which is risk ownership and awareness, and

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emphasize that risk management is everyone's full-time job. So, we focus

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on things like promoting strong security practices across all of

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our payment solutions. Uh we provide ongoing fraud education and alerts. As

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threats evolved, we may peak into the client's activity and suggest that you

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haven't done an international wire in 3 years. Do you need that capability at all? Uh we share insights on industry

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standards and regulatory topics including NACHA rules and ISO developments.

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Thank you, Greg and Olivia, for carving out time. I know that you're both very busy uh and I really have appreciated the conversation. We've we've talked about a lot everything from how to

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really think about uh that business relationship that they should have with a financial institution. We've delved into the not the rules, especially when it comes to risk management. And Greg, I

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really liked what you had to say at the end about how risk management is something that everyone should be uh owning and everyone has a responsibility

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in. So to wrap up, I really would like to know what are your final thoughts for corporates as they think about their

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payment strategy? And I'm going to start with you, Olivia.

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Yeah. And I think um to wrap up, I'd really emphasize and I think Greg, you mentioned this in your the way you cater

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to your clients. I'd emphasize that building an effective payment strategy is not a one-time effort. It's ongoing.

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It's something you continue to work on and taking a holistic collaborative approach both as you start and then over

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time can really make a meaningful difference both internally and with your external partners and that means working

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with your financial institution but also staying connected to that broader a community. Um at NATO again we're pro

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we're focused on providing the education the tools and the insights um that organizations need. So I would encourage corporates, companies, businesses, etc.

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to take advantage of those resources.

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Stay engaged, but just as importantly, don't hesitate to ask questions. Um whether it's to NACHA, your financial

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institution partners, because those conversations are ultimately going to lead to stronger, more informed, and then more resilient payment strategies.

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and Greg for your final thoughts on what corporate [clears throat] should be thinking about as they think about their payment strategy.

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I have to agree with everything Olivia said and I want regions to take credit for everything that Olivia said too. I

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think that uh all of that comes from her great experience with us. But at the end of the day, success in payments comes

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down to relationships, understanding the business, anticipating

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change, uh working together to solve problems become before they become barriers.

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And when corporates combine strong internal strategy

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with a bank that truly understands their business along with the guidance of an organization like NACHA, they're not

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just keeping up, they're positioning themselves to to get ahead and to lead.

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So again, a big thank you to Greg and Olivia for joining us for this discussion. I really thought today's conversation highlighted that building

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an effective payment strategy is about more than processing transactions. It requires thoughtful planning, a strong

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banking partnership, a solid understanding of the NACA rules, and a commitment to ongoing education and risk management.

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For businesses of every size, taking the time to build that foundation can help improve efficiency, strengthen controls,

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and position organizations for long-term success.

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And thank you again to our listeners for tuning into Payment Smartcast. Be sure to subscribe so you never miss an episode featuring the experts and

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industry leaders helping shape the future of payments.

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And we'll be back soon with speakers from across the payments ecosystem discussing the trends, innovations, and best practices impacting the industry.