

2025

Best-In-Class Modern Card Issuer:

Why Data Analytics Features Distinguish
Best-In-Class Platforms



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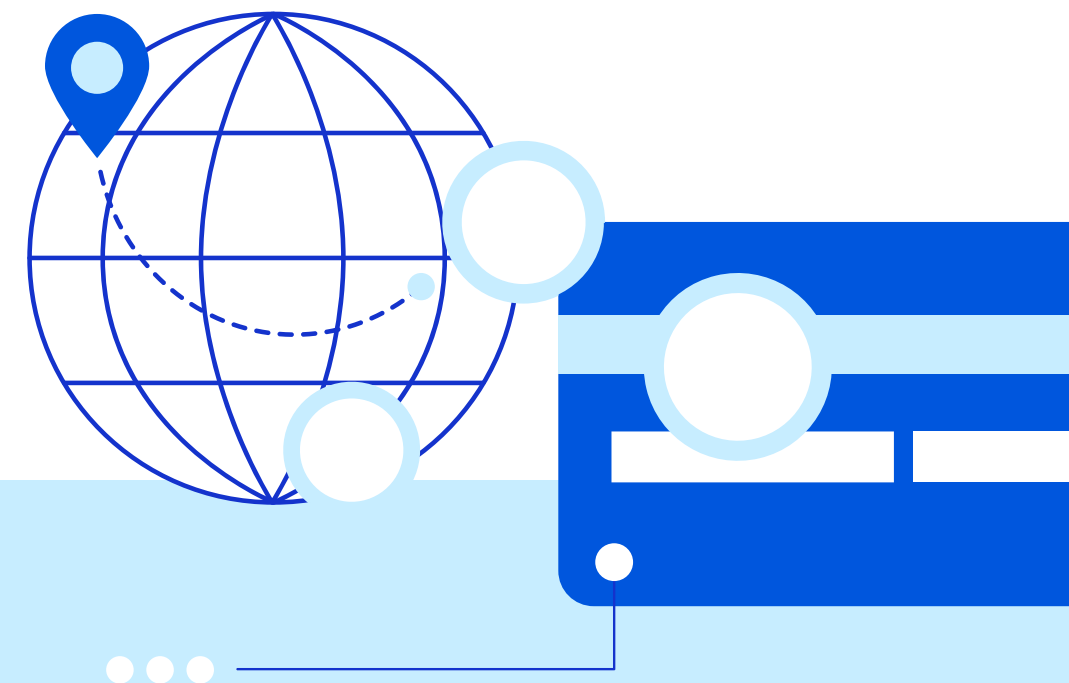
The Best-In-Class Modern Card Issuer:

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What's at stake

Card issuing platforms enable banks and other financial institutions to issue credit and debit cards to consumers. These platforms, along with the issuer processors that stand behind them, provide the tools necessary to create and manage card accounts, process transactions and keep everything secure. This makes issuer platforms the center of all related data flows, and issuers increasingly need to leverage this data to maximize customer lifetime value (CLTV) and keep their competitive edge.

For this reason, issuers view powerful analytics as something that defines best-in-class card issuing platforms. In-demand features include consumer and transaction segmentation tools, performance dashboards, advanced forecasting and fraud intelligence, among others. Yet today, most issuers say their platforms lack such capabilities. While this is especially true for smaller financial institutions such as credit unions and local banks, more than half of FinTech issuers and many large national banks say the same. This gap puts a spotlight on the importance of financial institutions choosing an issuer processor whose platform includes robust analytics features.

How Card Issuers Define a Best-In-Class Issuing Platform from the Perspective of Data Analytics Capabilities

“ Agile analytics environment that offers real-time trend forecasts and streamlined visualization tools ”

Credit union

“ Comparison with industry standards through peer benchmarking ”

Credit union

“ Real-time tracking that offers quick insights into transaction patterns and customer behaviors ”

Local or regional bank

“ Integrated data pipelines and dashboards providing actionable intelligence ”

FinTech

“ Analyzes customer feedback and interactions to assess tone and satisfaction ”

Credit union

These are just some of the findings detailed in *The Best-In-Class Modern Card Issuer: Why Data Analytics Features Distinguish Best-In-Class Platforms*, a PYMNTS Intelligence and Visa DPS collaboration. The report examines why card issuers need cutting-edge analytics capabilities in their platforms and how this drives growth in CLTV. It draws on insights from a survey conducted from Dec. 13, 2024, to Jan. 17, 2025, of 451 executives who fill head of payments roles at U.S.-based bank and nonbank card issuers.

This is what we learned.

Average CLTV



Average CLTV is an indicator of best-in-class issuers

We use average CLTV as an indicator of best-in-class issuing because it offers a comprehensive metric of the total revenue potential of a cardholder over their entire relationship with the issuer. We separated issuers into three groups—high, medium and low—based on the CLTV they reported to us.

What CLTV is: The total revenue a cardholder is expected to generate for an issuer over the entire duration of their relationship, including income from interest, fees and transactions, minus any associated costs such as rewards, marketing and servicing.

Why it matters: For card issuers, CLTV is a critical metric that reflects the profitability of a cardholder, allowing bank and nonbank issuers to segment their customer base and prioritize strategies to enhance retention, reduce churn and attract high-value customers.

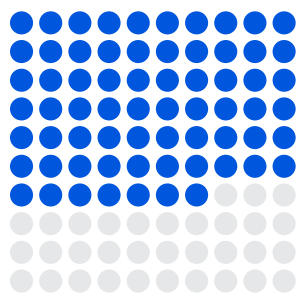
What drives high CLTV: Higher CLTV is driven by a combination of strong customer engagement, profitable fee structures and effective retention strategies. Cardholders who spend frequently or on large-ticket purchases contribute to higher interchange fees, while annual fees provide consistent revenue. Customers who carry balances generate substantial interest income, further boosting issuer profitability.

Key findings

01

Rich analytics

Issuers want platforms with advanced analytics across cardholder behaviors, risk and fraud, products and offers, customer engagement and portfolio performance that provide rich, data-driven insights that help boost CLTV.



67%

of issuers say enhanced performance tracking and profitability metrics define a best-in-class card issuing platform.

02

Consumer insights

Top issuers prioritize consumer analytics in their choice of issuer processor.

53%

of high CLTV issuers say that consumer analytics capabilities are important when choosing an issuer processor.

03

Upgrade plans

Relatively few issuers have advanced data analytics in their issuing platforms currently, but many financial institutions, particularly FinTechs, see this as a key area to upgrade.

29%

of high CLTV FinTechs see data analytics as the most important area to add or enhance in their issuing platform in the next year.

The Full Story

Robust data analytics capabilities distinguish best-in-class issuing platforms from the rest of the pack.



Most issuers say performance and profitability metrics are core to a best-in-class card issuing platform.

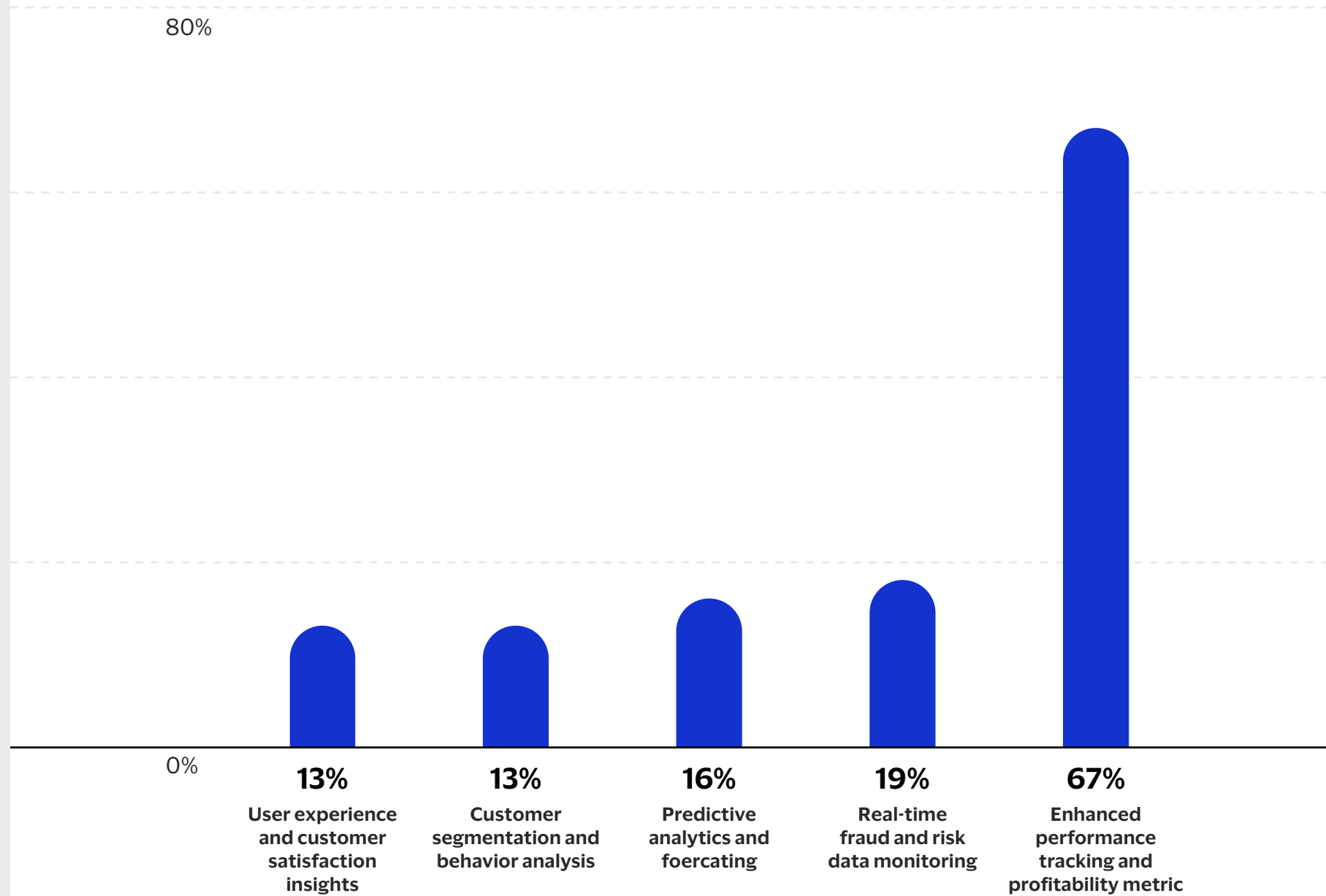
We asked issuers to describe what defines a best-in-class issuing platform from an analytics perspective. While they mentioned many capabilities, one theme stood out clearly: analytics that drive meaningful insight into business performance and profitability. Specifically, 67% of issuers emphasized that enhanced performance tracking and profitability metrics are the most critical features, far outweighing other capabilities like forecasting or customer segmentation. This reflects a strong preference for analytics that go beyond descriptive insights to deliver actionable impact on financial outcomes. Issuers aren't discounting the value of customer behavior data or predictive tools—features like real-time fraud and risk data, customer segmentation, and forecasting were each cited by 13%–19% of respondents—but these are seen as inputs. What matters most is what those inputs reveal about future profit expectations. In short, issuers are saying all the data in the world matters only if it helps them understand how they are performing and where they are headed financially. That's why selecting the right issuer processor—with the ability to surface this level of insight—has become a defining decision.

Figure 1:

What analytics look like for a best-in-class issuing platform

Issuers prioritize performance and profitability insights

While most issuers prioritize performance and profitability metrics as the defining features of best-in-class analytics, high CLTV issuers take it a step further. They are twice as likely to cite predictive analytics as the most critical capability, not because they value customer segmentation or forecasting in isolation, but because they see predictive tools as essential for connecting the dots between user behavior and future financial outcomes. For these high-performing issuers, predictive analytics isn't just about anticipating trends—it's the engine that translates data into forward-looking profitability and performance insights. In other words, they recognize that truly understanding and influencing CLTV requires more than measuring what's already happened; it requires the ability to anticipate what comes next and act on it. This suggests a maturity curve: As issuers become more advanced, they don't abandon the emphasis on profitability and performance—they achieve it through more sophisticated, predictive means.



Source: PYMNTS Intelligence

The Best-In-Class Modern Card Issuer: Why Data Analytics Features Distinguish Best-In-Class Platforms, August 2025

N = 451: Complete responses from card issuers, fielded Dec. 13, 2024, to Jan. 17, 2025



High CLTV issuers are the most likely to say that consumer analytics are important in their choice of issuer processor.

Fifty-four percent of high CLTV issuers cite consumer analytics as important to their choice of issuer processor. This indicates that top performers want to make the most of data-driven insights about their customers and the wider target for their marketing. The shares of medium and low CLTV issuers that prioritize consumer analytics when choosing an issuer processor are smaller, at 48% and 47%, respectively. The gap between high CLTV issuers and the rest shows that top performers are the most likely to view consumer analytics as a key strategic tool that can drive growth, not just a “nice-to-have” technical feature.

Figure 2:

The importance of consumer analytics

Issuers that say consumer analytics are important to their choice of issuer processor

Sample



Low CLTV



Medium CLTV



High CLTV



Source: PYMNTS Intelligence

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Three in four high CLTV banks are already equipped with advanced analytics in their issuing platform.

Most high CLTV large national banks already have advanced analytics in their issuing platforms, at 75%. All surveyed high CLTV digital-only banks also report having advanced analytics capabilities in their issuing platform. However, relatively few other issuers report the same, highlighting the need to ramp up data analytics to be more competitive with the industry's top performing players. Credit unions lag especially far behind, with just 33% saying they have advanced analytics in their issuing platforms today. Local and regional banks do not fare much better, at 41%. Even among FinTech issuers, less than half have access to advanced analytics in their issuing platforms, at 43%.




68%

of large national banks have advanced analytics in their card-issuing platforms.

High CLTV issuers generally have higher adoption rates of advanced analytics in their card issuing platforms, though this varies by issuer type. For example, among large national banks, 75% of issuers have this capability, compared to 50% of those with low CLTV.

However, the more striking insight is this: Many local and regional issuers—even some with strong CLTV—are still underutilizing advanced analytics, missing a key opportunity to gain a competitive advantage. Capabilities like multi-dimensional profitability analysis and predictive churn or lifetime value modeling can surface targeted insights that drive smarter decisions and long-term growth. To fully capitalize on performance and profitability potential, financial institutions must ensure their issuer processors are equipped with advanced, insight-driven analytics, not just basic data reporting.

Figure 3:
Issuers that currently have advanced analytics in their card issuing platforms

	Sample	 Low CLTV	 Medium CLTV	 High CLTV
Large national bank	67.9%	50.0%	62.5%	75.0%
Local or regional bank	41.2%	38.8%	44.1%	42.1%
Credit union	32.7%	29.1%	43.2%	20.0%
Digital-only bank	45.5%	41.7%	37.5%	100.0%
FinTech	42.7%	39.1%	55.2%	37.5%

Source: PYMNTS Intelligence

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33%

of credit unions have advanced analytics in their card issuing platforms.

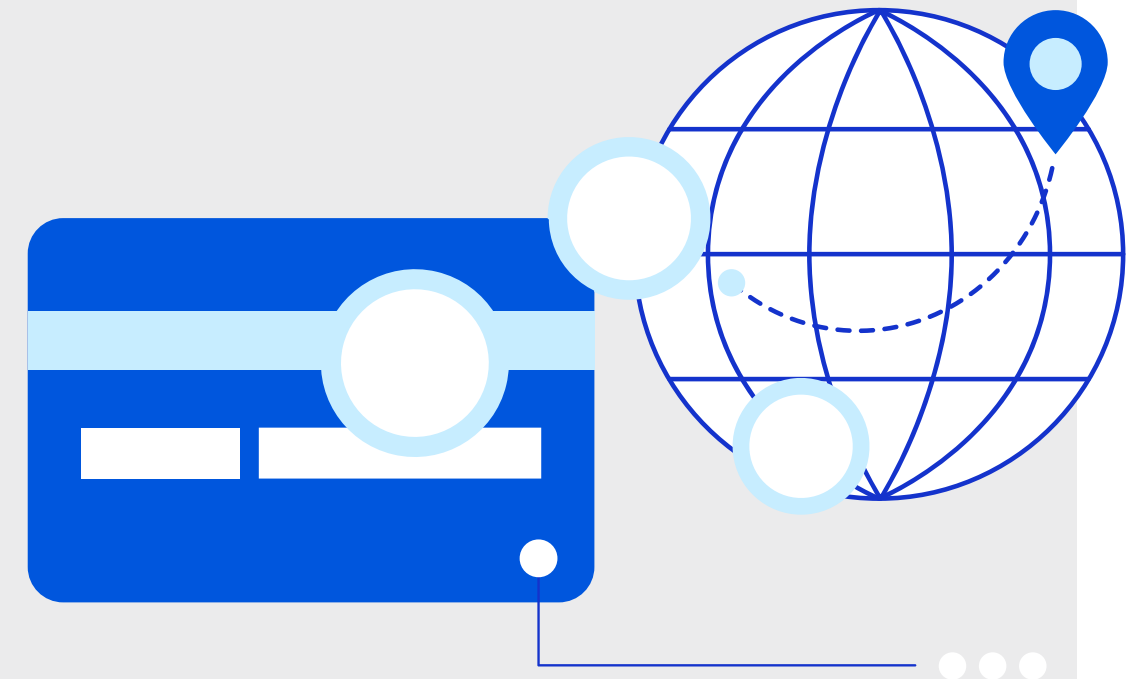





Figure 4:

Enhancing data analytics

Issuers that view advanced data analytics as the most important capability in their card issuing platform to add or improve in the next year

	Sample	Low CLTV 	Medium CLTV 	High CLTV 
Large national bank	10.7%	25.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Local or regional bank	9.0%	8.8%	5.1%	15.8%
Credit union	6.5%	3.6%	8.1%	13.3%
Digital-only bank	13.6%	16.7%	12.5%	0.0%
FinTech	16.2%	7.8%	24.1%	29.2%

Overall, 11% of issuers see data analytics as the most important capability to add or enhance in their issuing platforms within the next year. High CLTV issuers are much more likely than low CLTV ones to hold this opinion, at 18% and 7.9%, respectively, though this varies considerably across issuer categories. FinTechs show especially strong enthusiasm, with 29% of high CLTV and 24% of medium CLTV issuers naming data analytics as the most critical upgrade. This suggests that FinTechs will soon catch up to large national banks in having robust data analytics capabilities in their issuing platforms.

56%
of all issuers plan to add or upgrade their advanced data analytics capabilities in the next 12 months.

Source: PYMNTS Intelligence

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Actionable insights

01

Issuers can learn from top industry performers by prioritizing analytics capabilities in their choice of issuer processor:

Card issuers with high CLTV recognize that robust data analytics capabilities are a defining characteristic of best-in-class issuing platforms. Regardless of size or type, many financial institutions, including FinTechs and large national banks, currently lack that capacity in their platforms. Issuers can benefit by partnering with issuer processors that understand how consumer analytics can help them boost CLTV and overall performance.

02

Focus on the key elements of consumer-centric data insights:

Issuers aiming for best-in-class performance and higher CLTV should prioritize integrating several key analytics capabilities into their strategy. Key features to select in an issuer-processor include consumer and transaction segmentation tools, user satisfaction metrics, advanced forecasting and fraud intelligence.

03

Don't ignore the bigger picture of profitability and performance analytics:

Issuers that want to lead should move beyond static reporting and embed profitability analytics into real-time decision-making, using insights to dynamically optimize pricing, incentives and credit strategies at the segment and customer level. Prioritizing tools that tie financial outcomes directly to product and customer behaviors can help sharpen margins and accelerate growth.

Methodology

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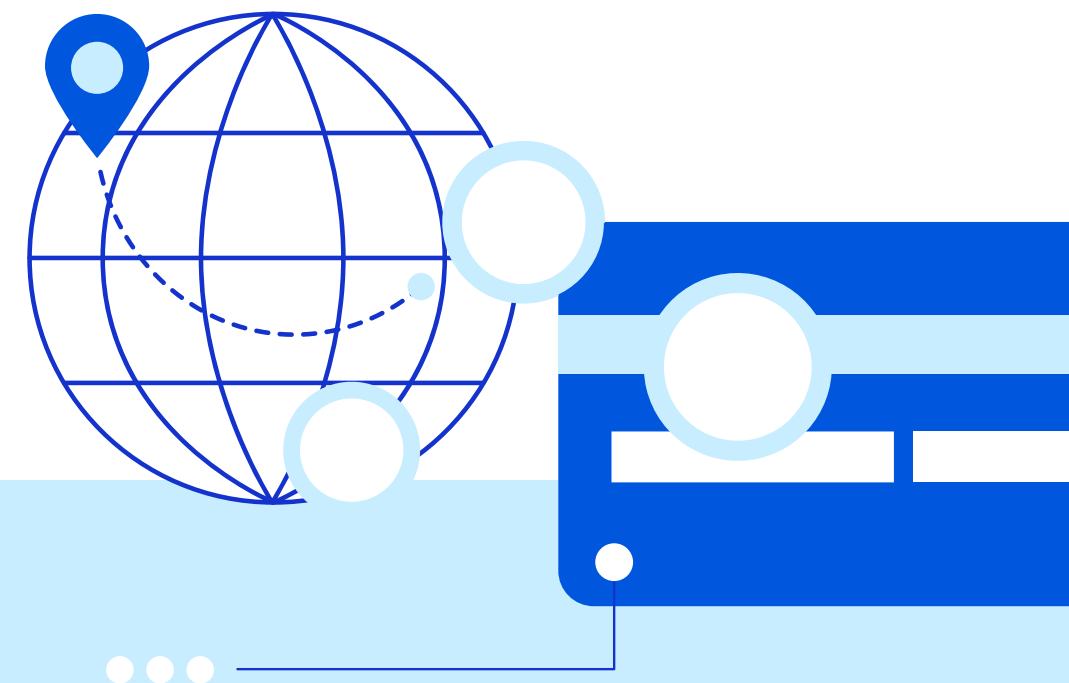
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The company's relentless focus on innovation is a catalyst for the rapid growth of digital commerce on any device, for everyone, everywhere. As the world moves from analog to digital, Visa is applying our brand, products, people, network and scale to reshape the future of commerce.

Visa DPS is part of Visa Issuing Solutions, the foundational technology and consumer engagement portfolio under Visa's Value Added Services Business.

For more information, visit www.visa.com, <https://corporate.visa.com/en/solutions/issuing.html> and <https://usa.visa.com/sites/visa-dps.html>

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