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My Apology to You

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Last week, a small number of customers experienced serious issues with their Simple accounts.

Of all the things I want to tell you, this is most important: I am deeply sorry. I have spent the past week working alongside our Customer Relations team, answering your questions and hearing your frustrations. I know there is nothing I can say that will fix the damage, and I know a few of you still face issues. We let you down. We're doing everything we can to help make things right.

By way of explanation, I'd like to tell you about the major project we completed, why we did it, and why this disruption is very unlikely to happen again.

We rebuilt our infrastructure from scratch

The initiative that culminated on Wednesday morning was the result of a massive project to replace our partner processor with one we've built. Most banks in the US rely on one of just a handful of third-party transaction processors, as we previously did. A transaction processor fulfills three vital functions: it processes transactions on the card network (Visa, in our case), keeps us connected to other partners (like our bill pay provider and partner bank), and tracks money as it moves in and out of customer accounts.

So why did we do it?

We chose to build our own processor for two reasons. The first reason was to improve our ability to innovate by giving us more control over the technology that powers our product and services. Being reliant on a partner for such an important part of our system meant that we could only go as far and as fast as they would allow. Now that we're in control of our own processing platform, we can innovate more quickly.

The second reason, ironically enough, was to improve system stability. As many of our customers know too well, our prior processing partner suffered periodic, unexpected downtime that we had little insight into or control over. Now we are much more in control of our own uptime, and have more safeguards in place to prevent future unplanned downtime.

What happened

Simple's systems are now running on the new processor we spent 18 months building. What led to the disruption some of you felt were issues with the actual process of moving to the new platform.

In order to stop processing on our old platform and begin processing on the new one, we needed to take customer cards offline. We scheduled that for last Tuesday night from 11pm to 6am PDT. For well over 90% of customers, that planned downtime ended at 6am as expected.

For a small group of you, the disruption lasted much longer. For some, it's still lingering.

Our engineers are researching to complete a technical post-mortem where we'll detail the timeline and root causes of the issues you experienced. Small groups of customers faced disruptions like card declines, payments being delayed, and discrepancies between their displayed balances and their actual balances. At no point was customer data or financial information compromised.

Since this was a very rare project, and since the issues were with the one-time process rather than the platform itself, it's unlikely that a disruption like this will happen again.

We exist for you

We want to be the bank that does the right thing. It's a guiding principle as we hire new employees, make product decisions, and conduct company business. When something goes wrong, the right thing to do is explain why and how. We deal with a lot of sensitive information and technology, but by being as transparent as we can, we hope to earn your trust. We're listening. We love hearing from you when we get things right and we listen even more intently when we get it wrong.


Making it all up to you starts here, with the most heartfelt apology and clearest explanation I can offer. But it doesn't end here. It continues every day as we regain your trust with a more innovative, faster, and more reliable Simple.

Learn what makes Simple different and how you can be proud of your bank.

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