



GOLDEN HANDS

VISIONARY CEOs

Who have turned around organisations, people, markets and industries



ABC Bank eyes strategic partnerships to expand regionally

ABC Bank has achieved a lot over the years; rolling out key strategies and winning several industry awards.

BY MILICENT MWOLLOLO

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African Banking Corporation (ABC) Group is eyeing more strategic partnerships to cement its leadership position in supporting SMEs in the region. The Group is also banking on such partnerships to deliver more new products, quicker and at lower prices. This has made collaborative business arrangements a winning formula for ABC Bank whose success story is formed in part by several such agreements. "For instance, in 2012 we partnered with the European Investment Bank to enable us to lend to our customers for longer tenures and at better rates," Mr. Savani discloses.

Over the years, ABC Bank has achieved a lot; rolling out key strategies and winning several industry awards. "These, I believe are a result of a concerted team effort by our management and staff," Mr. Savani says, adding that the visionary leadership of the Board of Directors has been very instrumental in the success story. A key transformation for ABC Bank was moving from a single entity in Kenya to a group with regional interests in insurance, capital markets, banking and financial services. With the new expansion structures in place, Mr. Savani is optimistic that ABC Bank Group is on a winning formula.

The Group will give its customers alternative investment opportunities in the stock market and in other areas through their stock brokerage firm ABC Capital and an in-house custodial services unit.

Through ABC Insurance Brokers, the group intends to service its clientele with insurance needs. "With our presence in both Uganda and

We listen, understand and promptly respond to our customers' evolving needs and constantly shift expectations in unique and creative ways.



**Mr. Shamaz Savani
Group MD, ABC Bank Group**

Kenya, business people in the EAC region will have a single settlement platform that is secure and fast," says Mr. Savani.

The Group also intends to increase its footprint across the EAC region through an increased branch network. Four new branches - two in Kenya and two in Uganda - have already been commissioned and are expected to be operational by the end of the year. "We plan to open more branches over the next five years as we identify suitable locations," says Mr. Savani.

The bank is investing in electronic (alternative) channels aimed at increasing touch points for their customers to access their services faster and more conveniently. The bank seeks to consolidate its leading position in SME segment through product differentiation and to service businesses that require longer tenure facilities. This will meet a demand that has existed over time. Mr. Savani explains that the bank will get funding from a private bond offer that it recently issued to their investors.

Leadership

Mr. Savani joined the ABC Bank Group in 1997 and has risen through various leadership positions. He strongly believes that good business leadership is not only the bottom line of a business, but also how it contributes to the well-being of society including those working with the organization. "Our people are the most important asset as they are the custodians and key movers of our strategic objectives," he says.

ABC Bank's winning formula

Mr. Savani attributes the success of business at ABC Bank Group to innovation. "We have invested in developing unique products as well as adopting emerging technologies to enable us offer premium service to our customers," says the MD.



Shamaz Savani receives an award from Info Track's Angela Ambitho during a past Think Business Awards ceremony.

A couple of years ago, ABC Bank embarked on a deliberate and systematic assessment of the company culture. "This saw a pragmatic culture shift that has led to dramatic improvements in our decision-making processes, attitudes towards work and customers as well as self," Mr. Savani says.

The bank strives to get it right the first time by hiring the right people and encouraging stewardship. This has given all employees a sense of ownership of systems and processes and hence a greater feeling working for ABC Bank.

ABC Bank prides itself in customer satisfaction. The bank has defined superior service quality that 'puts service in customer service,' Mr. Savani emphasizes.

Giving Back

As a way to give back to the society, the bank is paying school fees and upkeep for a group of high school students. When on holiday, the students are invited to the bank to gain an early exposure of the business and workplace environment. "We

also use the opportunity to guide them in career choices and personal development. The beneficiaries are bright students from challenged backgrounds, some having been orphaned.

The bank also sponsors the annual ABC Bank Baringo Half Marathon and also supports various community initiatives in the areas of health and education," says Mr. Savani.

"When not in the office, I spend time with my family. I believe family is very crucial. Any success in my personal capacity would not be possible without the support of my family.

I am an ardent information seeker. I spend time reading about global, regional and local business and economic trends and an array of other topics to stay updated on what's current. Apart from reading, I love nature and spend as much time as possible in nature and meditation as a way to relax and stay in touch with my inner being," he concludes.



Shamaz Savani with ABC Bank - sponsored students Jesse Walter (L) and Marygoretti Atieno (R) in his office.



Shamaz Savani and a European Investment Bank representative during the signing of an MoU to increase lending to SMEs.