

Ubank spends R25m to boost image

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Ubank has spent about R25-million of the R50-million it earmarked a year ago to attract more customers and shake off its image as a bank for miners.

The bank, formerly known as Teba Bank, is owned by a trust managed by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Chamber of Mines. It hopes to increase its branch network to catch up with its main competitors, Capitec Bank and African Bank.

African Bank has about 2.3million active customers on its book and Capitec has more than 3.2million.

At the time of its revamp - in October 2010 - Ubank had about 500000 customers, most of them miners. NUM represents about 320000 mine workers.

Ubank CEO Mark Williams said that more than 30% of its clients are non-miners.

"The strategy of diversification is starting to kick in quite significantly," he said.

Williams said rebranding and changing the corporate colours from green to orange was part of a strategy of gearing the bank for future growth. Ubank's expansion of its footprint and growth in customer numbers remain key objectives.

Ubank now has 18 new ATMs and is upgrading its 100 branches.

It has introduced seven new branches since the facelift.

Williams aims to roll out another 15 branches by 2012.

The re-branding included the launch of packaged solutions, cellphone banking, SMS alerts and notifications, and airtime contracts.