

Capitec Bank's journey to becoming one of the world's strongest banking brands

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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Capitec Bank has been placed in seventh place among the world's strongest banks, as recognised by [Brand Finance](#). Leading the charge at Capitec is François Viviers, the group executive of marketing and communications, boasting more than a decade of experience within the bank's ranks.



François Viviers is group head of marketing and communications. Source: Supplied.

With a background in marketing and a keen understanding of business dynamics, Viviers has played a pivotal role in establishing Capitec as a household name domestically. Now, as the bank embarks on its next phase of growth, Viviers' hopes that his strategic vision will continue to propel the bank towards even greater heights on the global stage.

■ **Capitec Bank has been recognised as one of the strongest banking brands globally. What key factors do you believe contribute to this reputation?**

I believe the magic behind the Capitec brand is a powerful purpose, clear brand fundamentals, and consistent delivery over time. This may sound simple and obvious, but the key is how well everyone in the company lives up to it.

At Capitec, we have a clear vision of why we are here: to help people improve their financial lives and ultimately live better. We do not focus on profit in our meetings, we focus on the needs of our clients and their ideal experience. This is part of our DNA. We also use the same principles that the business was founded on in our decisions every day. This helps us stay loyal to our purpose and execute in the right way.

From there, our efforts to position the brand and our value proposition to our clients are much more successful because what we position is fundamentally aligned with our clients and designed to help them live better.

■ **What attracted you to working for Capitec?**

I joined Capitec in 2011. At that stage, I gained excellent retail marketing experience at Africa's leading retailer (Shoprite), and I was ready to move to the next challenge and experience building a young brand in the service industry. I was attracted to Capitec's position as the disruptor in banking and I was impressed in my experience when I opened my Capitec account.



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The ability of this challenger brand to deliver a seamless experience and allow me to walk out of the branch with an active account in minutes without the need to fill in a single form was groundbreaking.

This was at a time when traditional banks still had countless forms, were only open from 9 am to 3:30 pm on weekdays and were overly complex and expensive. The Capitec ethos of questioning the norm and innovating to find a better solution appealed to me. I realised this early in Capitec's life and was fortunate to get the opportunity to join the team and help shape it over the past decade.

■ ***The banking industry is evolving rapidly, especially with the rise of digital banking. How does Capitec adapt its marketing and communications to stay ahead of these changes?***

At Capitec, we believe in embracing change. To remain relevant, you must be agile enough to adapt as quickly or even faster than the world around you.

In marketing, we have successfully achieved this over the years, resulting in a function that looks remarkably different than it did five years ago. While traditional and digital media are still essential components of our marketing strategy, we have evolved to focus on building robust teams and technology for client engagement and experience management.

We firmly believe that strong brands are not built solely through beautiful and emotive advertising but through solutions that solve real needs, well-crafted experiences, and personalised communication. With close to 22 million clients at Capitec, we have the potential to create 22 million brand advocates – this is our next frontier.

■ ***Capitec has a strong focus on financial inclusion and accessibility. Can you share some initiatives or campaigns that reflect this commitment?***

While most people in South Africa have access to financial services, they are still financially excluded due to their lack of financial literacy and high levels of financial distress.

To address this issue, our strategy is to offer financial support tips and educational tools easily and seamlessly that helps people understand how to manage their money better. We profile our clients based on their banking behaviour and provide them with tips and "next best actions" on our app or in our branches to help them bank better.

We also offer digital financial education through our Live Better Academy online, and MoneyUp Chat solution on WhatsApp. These platforms provide micro-modules that allow anyone to learn how to build a strong credit profile, plan for expenses, invest responsibly, and more.

To date, close to 750,000 people have actively engaged with these platforms, and we continue to innovate and integrate this education into our client engagement.

■ ***The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in consumer behaviour. How has Capitec adjusted its marketing strategies to meet the evolving needs of customers during these times?***

During the Covid outbreak, Capitec responded quickly by shifting our marketing approach to focus on educational content and community involvement initiatives to support our clients. This approach was maintained for a few months, after which we refocused following our company strategy to maximise growth opportunities.

Our growth strategy was centred around the ability to analyse data for better marketing and personalisation, integrating a new marketing tech stack, and understanding consumer behaviour. We invested significantly in digital marketing technology and client engagement skills.

As a result, we were able to re-platform our website, implement a leading CRM and marketing cloud solution, and re-establish Capitec's position as an innovative brand under the theme of 'Better Never Rests.'

This positioning campaign speaks to the DNA of our brand and our company culture, which is constantly asking if there is a better solution without fear of disrupting ourselves. Better Never Rests became a battle cry for everyone at Capitec and set the platform for launching new and innovative payments, credit, business banking, insurance and service solutions.

■ ***Looking ahead, what can customers and stakeholders expect from Capitec Bank in terms of innovation and growth, particularly in the realm of marketing and communications?***

The future of marketing for us lies in personalisation at scale delivered through data and technology and founded on human insight. We want our clients to feel like Capitec is their financial friend, not their bank.

We want the emotional bond with our clients to be built on personalised service and real value rather than promotions and incentives, and we want our brand to be built by our clients and employees as advocates rather than increased advertising budgets.

To achieve this we will grow our ability to use our first-party data combined with machine-learning models to ensure we communicate the most relevant message to the right people at the right time.

This will be delivered using a combination of some of the leading marketing technologies, such as Salesforce Marketing Cloud, and positioned using principles founded in behavioural science.

Most importantly, we are building a team of dynamic people who bring a diverse set of skills and who are all passionately united behind our purpose to help people live better.

ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

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