

Herbert Wigwe: The Tech Driven Leader

Diamond gained tremendous ground and a solid reputation as the number one technology led retail bank. There was the introduction of the SMEzone to the market. An information-sharing platform, the SMEzone was aimed at positioning entrepreneurs for competitiveness. This tech driven retail and digital strategy supported the expansion of its financial inclusion program. The bank also introduced the Diamond Visa Signature Debit card that offered a global spending experience. Customers could use the Signature debit card globally and unlock exclusive privileges.

There was ADA 'Ada Zainab Ajayi', an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Chatbot launched by Diamond bank in partnership with Facebook messenger. ADA provided human-like interaction and personalized experience for Diamond Bank customers. At the time, the banking industry was witnessing the rise of AI solutions and Diamond bank was one of the few banks to capitalize on it. Diamond also hosted the TechFest which doubled as a networking event and featured a startup competition where startups from pre-selected hubs around Nigeria pitched to win a N5 million prize. TechFest organized in partnership with MTN, Deloitte, and Visa.

Then comes the Herbert Wigwe led Access bank in an astounding merger that marries Diamond's digital expertise and leadership with Access commercial success and capital base. But Access is not new to tech and are a big supporter of innovation. Africa FinTech Foundary, an Access bank initiative which seeks to nurture, fund, and accelerate the growth of FinTech startups in Africa was launched in 2017. The AFF boasts of a mentorship and accelerator program that fast-tracks the growth and maturity of these startups and allows them deliver relevant solutions to the market.

In its launch year, AFF also organized a 48-hour hackathon titled 'Recode Nigeria with a \$50,000 prize. It had the support of industry giants such as Microsoft, IBM, Access Bank, and Idea Nigeria. The hackathon invited teams of gifted developers, designers, problem-solvers, and critical thinkers to build brilliant solutions to the most vexing problems in financial services. The winner went home with the prize while runner ups were comforted with consolation prizes.

Access' PayWithCapture, an advanced technological innovation, is largely recognized as Africa's First Digital Banking. PayWithCapture allows you make payment by scanning a QR code with the camera of your mobile phone. It also allows for easy transfers and other day-to-day transactions.

When the bank later leveraged WhatsApp social media platform to bring its Banking Relationship Managers nearer to its customers, Access Bank reiterated its commitment towards providing simple banking expertise to customers.

The bank also partnered with Microsoft to enhance security and banking expertise for customers in Nigeria and continent.

In these ways and more, Herbert Wigwe has shown his predilection for technological led innovations.