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UOB launches banking service for 'rising rich'

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It targets those with investable assets of \$100,000-\$350,000

UNITED Overseas Bank (UOB) has started a new banking service aimed at the growing number of people in Singapore who have substantial savings to invest but don't qualify for the private banking treatment that the very wealthy enjoy.

The bank said it had identified 'an underserved but sizeable and growing segment' of banking customers in Singapore who have not benefited from financial services relevant to their needs.

The 'rising rich', as it calls them, comprise individuals who have investable assets - deposits, investments and insurance - of \$100,000 to \$350,000.

The bank already offers customised services to richer customer segments - Privilege Banking for those with \$350,000 to \$2 million to invest, Privilege Reserve Banking for those with \$2 million to \$5 million, and Private Banking for those with \$5 million or more.

Those with \$100,000 to \$350,000 to invest make up one-quarter of the working population in Singapore, aged between 30 and 55, based on the bank's analysis of labour force statistics here, UOB said. It expects the number of people in that segment to grow by 20 per cent by 2015.

They include young achievers in their early 30s, over-35s who are married with young children and those over 40 who have been accumulating wealth through their business and their careers, UOB added.

Such individuals often have little time to explore the types of investment that suit them best, the bank said.

Its new Wealth Banking service is aimed at such customers, offering them financial services and dedicated relationship managers to help them manage their finances and investments more effectively, UOB said.

'What is commonly reserved for the high net worth consumers, we reserve for our rising rich,' said James Phoen, managing director and head of sales and distribution at UOB.

The bank will offer them products typically reserved for very wealthy clients, including shorter-duration products designed to ride market trends, such as currency, index, commodity and interest rate-linked products, it said.

It has opened a dedicated Wealth Banking branch at Scotts Square, Orchard Road, for customers to access trading ideas and stock recommendations and get investment advice from relationship managers.

The bank plans to open two more such centres in the first quarter of 2012 - one in Katong and another in Tampines - and will further enhance the Wealth Banking service over the next two years, it said.

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