

ENTREPRENEUR AWARD

Bright Spark wins for easy-access ATMs

Natasha Bezuidenhout

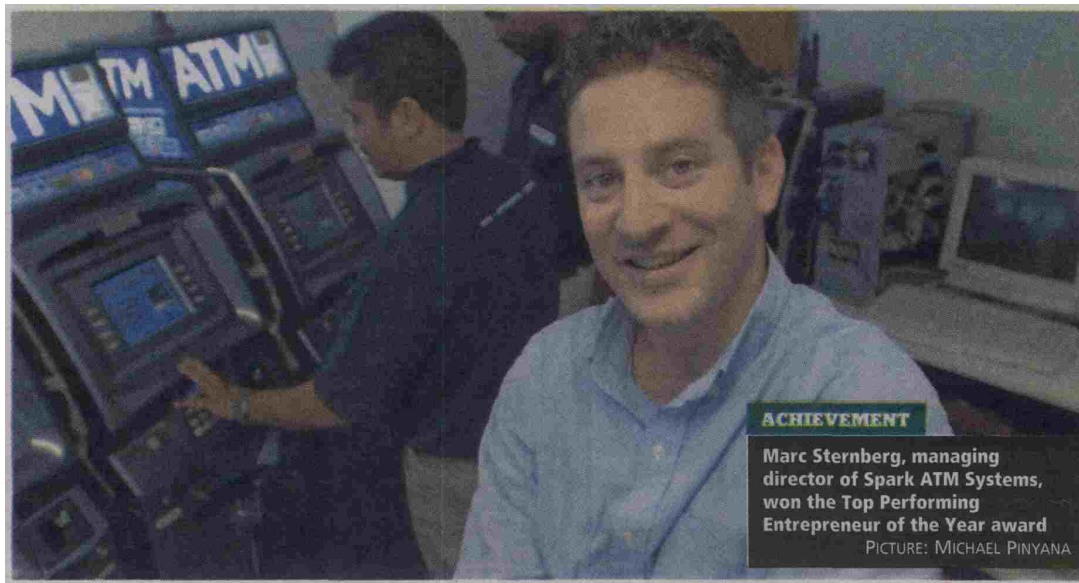
BUSINESS REPORTER

THE CAPE Town businessman who revolutionised the ATM industry has clinched the Top Performing Entrepreneur of the Year award at the 2012 African Access National Business Awards.

Marc Sternberg, managing director of Spark ATM Systems, has won several accolades in the past year, including Sanlam/Business Partners 2011 Overall Entrepreneur of the Year and was recently named the co-winner of the Business Person – Entrepreneur Award at the 2012 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

“I sincerely hope this acknowledgement serves to inspire the youth of South Africa to foster their entrepreneurial abilities by identifying opportunities in the market and acting on them.

To be a good entrepreneur involves a lot of hard work, dedication and passion, but it can pay off in the end through the creation of a sustainable and profitable business that also assists



our country though much needed job creation,” he said.

The annual African Access National Business Awards, now in its 10th

year, honours outstanding local businesses for their contribution to the SA economy.

Spark ATM Systems, founded in

2005, places ATMs at supermarkets, hotels, bars and other locations.

Sternberg recognised the opportunity and need for convenient access to

cash in SA when he returned from his time spent working in Sydney, Australia.

“I returned to Cape Town from Australia for my uncle’s birthday and needed to draw cash when I noticed how far it was to drive to an ATM. I had a light bulb moment and thought how easy it was to draw cash at ATM systems in Australia and other countries.”

He returned to Australia and then started visiting various countries which had ATM systems worldwide, and put a business plan together.

“I met with various people and picked their brains. In September 2006 we launched the first Spark ATM and now we have over 1 700 ATMs nationwide.”

Sternberg said SA should focus on policy to promote entrepreneurship.

“Look at us: when we first started out, we employed one person and now employ 100. If you look at the dependants of one person, one person may have a family of five which means employing 100 people is feeding, housing and clothing 500 people.”

natasha.bezuidenhout@ml.co.za