

SA BUILDER

January 2015

Deryck Spence, executive director of the SA Paint Manufacturing Association (SAPMA)

"The lack of skills will again be the biggest threat to growth in the coatings sector in 2015"



2014 has been a difficult year for the coatings sector as a result of the poor economic growth in South Africa and the lack of activity in the roll out of tenders in the Presidential Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs) programme. During 2014 growth in the coatings sector was merely in line with the GDP growth and reflected a 10% growth in turnover. Currency fluctuations and raw material price increases prevented any further meaningful growth as the industry awaits the release of tenders.

Expansion and acceleration of training in the industry is of vital importance to make up for the enormous skills shortage. No paint application training, for example, has been offered since 1994. The responsibility for training has to be placed back with industry which is best placed to blend theoretical training with workplace experience through the re-introduction of apprenticeship programmes. The government has failed in providing adequate mechanisms to provide training continuity for the entire construction sector as well as related industries. The critical shortage of skills will again be the most formidable obstacle the South African coatings industry will face in 2015.

There will also have to be much more commitment to training by the coatings industry itself next year. SAPMA and its training arm, the SA Paint Industry Training Institute

(SAPITI), are now well equipped to provide training in all sectors of the coatings industry after achieving accreditation of all its training programmes. eTraining now includes Coatings Technologist qualification, registered with the Quality Council for Trades & Occupations (QCTO); and we will also offer Manufacturing Skills programmes training accredited by the Chemical Industries Education & Training Authority (CHIETA) for industry workers; as well as much needed Paint Application Skills programmes for painters, and retail training programmes for retail sales personnel.

The 2015 calendar highlight for the industry will be the Coatings for Africa 2015 conference in May 2015 at the Sandton Convention Centre (www.coatingsforafrica.com). Local raw material suppliers and manufacturers will then have the opportunity to showcase their products to the entire African coatings and construction sector.