

Packaging to label paint quality

In a move to simplify the specification and purchasing of paint, the South African Paint Manufacturing Association (SAPMA) is planning to introduce a multi-tiered quality band packaging system to guide consumers and specifiers regarding the quality of various paints for both domestic and commercial projects.



Deryck Spence, executive director of SAPMA, believes this initiative is one of the single biggest developments in the history of both SAPMA and the coatings industry.

He explains that after many unsuccessful, prolonged approaches by SAPMA to get cooperation of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) to recognise

established international paint specifications in the form of an SABS approval or "mark", the Association has decided to take matters into its own hands.

"The application for an SABS mark is exorbitantly expensive and the laboratory testing for these products can take as long as a year to complete. When one considers that each paint manufacturer produces at least ten products for which SABS marks are available, it is not surprising that few manufacturers can afford the luxury of an SABS mark, relying instead on their own branding and advertising," he states.

"The situation is further exacerbated in that the consumer is unable to readily identify the various qualities of paint in the market which can range, in pricing terms, from R1 500 per 20 litre to as little as R150 per 20 litre – for paint bearing the same labelled description such as 'Exterior PVA' paint.

This leads to dissatisfied consumers who justifiably feel that they have been misled when the quality of the paint bought is not what they had expected."

CLASSIFYING STANDARDS

According to Spence, the SAPMA multi-tiered quality band system will classify standards in minimum, medium and upper level quality bands which would be depicted on the packaging by a descriptive shield, and supported by promotional material in-store.

"The SAPMA Technical Committee will establish the standards under which the quality band system will be launched," Spence adds.

SAPMA is further planning to develop an independent SAPMA laboratory to which paint manufacturers can send samples for compliance testing of products falling under the various specifications of the quality band system.

"These tests will be conducted by qualified paint chemists at a fraction of the cost of SABS testing. This will afford manufacturers the luxury of having quality shield marking on multiple products at affordable prices. The SAPMA Technical Committee will make recommendations regarding the establishment of the SAPMA laboratory, as well as the equipment necessary for the initial and ongoing testing of the quality band system.

"The new system will afford the smaller manufacturer the opportunity of competing in the market place with products complying with an accepted industry standard," adds Spence.

The SAPMA Technical Committee, under the leadership of Dr Siphilisiwe Ndlovu, has been entrusted with all facets of the establishment of the SAPMA quality band system.

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