

For Coatings SA:

## MEMBER APATHY ABOUT INDUSTRY STATISTICS “APPALLING”

Don't expect SAPMA to provide important market indicators for your company's future planning if you don't supply meaningful statistics for SAPMA to analyse, Deryck Spence, Executive Director of SAPMA, has warned members.

Both Deryck and his UK counterpart, Tom Bowtell, Chief Executive of the British Coatings Federation (BCF), spelt out the immense value of annual individual company statistics to help the two associations provide a comprehensive service to members. But, whereas British members appreciated this give-to-receive situation when it comes to statistics, SAPMA members are still leaving its official industry body in the dark. “It is, frankly, an appalling - and potentially self-destructive apathy - we are experiencing here in South Africa,” Deryck commented.

He told the AGM that only 13 of 45 SAPMA members approached for statistical input on their companies' performance had bothered to respond.

“And then SAPMA could see that in many cases the responsibility for providing annual statistics seemed to be lodged with junior staff members, and nowhere near top management level. The annual statistical input we receive is so repetitive that it is virtually of no value for an accurate assessment of market trends or other informative aspects. Without statistics, SAPMA cannot answer members' questions, nor can we disseminate information that could, for example, help members identify gaps in the market,” Deryck stated.

Tom Bowtell said members should remember that at both SAPMA and BCF the statistical information provided remained confidential and did not provide strategic information to the suppliers' competition. “At the BCF, I personally do not even see the stats provided – the analysis is done by an independent body. But the market feedback we subsequently provide to members are regarded as valuable by no fewer than 78% of our members.”

He added: “Statistical analysis of the annual performance of the coatings sector shows individual companies if they are operating intelligently or merely groping in the dark. The report that SAPMA could provide you with would cover, for example, the average price of raw materials so that you would know if you are buying well. It would also give you ammunition to justify price increases to customers, see how other companies in the industry are coping with health and safety issues, or complying with environmental preservation pressures. It would also tell management what the level of confidence is within the industry you and your competitors operate in. These are just a few vital reconnaissance results no company intent on survival can do without,” Tom added.

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