

Local manufacturing vital to economic growth

Many South African companies that have developed a reputation for developing world-class quality products on African soil have also proven themselves to be resilient, even in difficult market conditions, as well as worthy competitors to global counterparts. Local manufacturing is also an important component for the stimulation of the economy, not only encouraging and providing further skills development but also providing much needed employment, which in turn accelerates nationwide growth and development. This month we focus on some of the security sector's leading local manufacturers.

Frank Street: dedicated to sustainability

Since its establishment in 1998, Frank Street has become a leading local name as one of South Africa's foremost distributors of CCTV equipment in Southern Africa. In addition to providing an enviable range of CCTV products and digital recording solutions, Frank Street is a company committed to local development and local manufacturing of world-class products.

"We currently concentrate our manufacturing on point of sale surveillance. This is because it is a unique niche market where our product is widely known and accepted," says **Abie Ali**, director of Frank Street. "We manufacture niche products, and so we are not specifically competing with products from abroad," he added. "However, our biggest challenge is the immediate availability of components. Most of the component suppliers hold stock in Europe. This takes careful planning to balance the availability of components to the production run."

According to Mr Ali, Frank Street's development, and much of its future manufacturing, will be concentrated on renewable energy products. "We see this as a big part of the future and our development team is, at this stage, busy preparing products for this sector."

In terms of the industry in general, Mr Ali believes the local manufacturing industry is under a great deal of stress. "This is largely due to the strong rand which makes imported products more cost-effective and exporting products less attractive. This is the main reason why we only manufacture niche products at this stage. It's important to encourage local industry. This country can only grow if the



Abie Ali

manufacturing sector is strong and we are doing our part to make this happen," says Mr Ali.

Based in Ormonde, Johannesburg, with branches in Durban and Nelspruit, this 100 per cent black empowerment company is one of the foremost CCTV, network video, IP and digital video solutions sources in South Africa, providing solutions for car dealerships, petrol stations, chain stores, corporate companies and tertiary institutions and petrol stations. Frank Street views CCTV products and services not only from a security perspective, but also from a business management and enhancement standpoint.

Frank Street provides ample on-site support services and assistance with installations where required. To ensure its clients get the maximum results and ultimate benefit from all their CCTV solutions, Frank Street places great importance on the value of training.

With Mr Ali personally overseeing the training

process, which includes a basic CCTV course, DVR and IP training courses, Frank Street's technicians are also available at all times to visit sites and provide hands-on solutions for CCTV applications, giving advice for designing and integrating CCTV systems. Frank Street's director believes that when making such a significant investment in security equipment – it is absolutely imperative that you are aware of all its capabilities and that it is used to its full extent.

Frank Street also has a novel approach to its personnel policy, whereby all staff are regarded as fellow colleagues within the business, and far more than just employees. "This creates a sense of allegiance and commitment to the business and our employees know that they will grow and develop along with the business. Showing a deep sense of appreciation also helps you in getting the best results from people. The company's success is their success," says Mr Ali.

In terms of continuously extending the company's local manufacturing capabilities and expertise, "We have an in-house, highly skilled research and development (R&D) department doing the full hardware and software development of our products.

"This allows us to develop, manufacture, test and market quality products."

"Our biggest strength is our ability to develop products which are tailor-made to address the specific need in our somewhat unique security market. Our R&D capabilities enable us to provide solutions which fit our customers' needs perfectly." ■

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