

RETRACTALINE MANUFACTURING



Chris Frost

www.retractaline.com

QUALITY, LOCALLY MANUFACTURED GOODS

Retractaline is a market leader in the design, manufacture and supply of a comprehensive range of laundry care products and accessories.

The company was founded in 1985, and current owner and managing director Chris Frost purchased the business in 1995. Frost has since transformed Retractaline from a garage operation to become one of the country's leading manufacturing organisations.

Driven by the need to expand, the company relocated to, and started operating from, the Dube TradeZone on the 1 December 2015.

One of the main driven behind his decision to invest into a new facility was so that local retailers could source quality, locally manufactured goods for their customers.



"The move was linked to the whole growth strategy through which we aim to go on an import replacement drive by expanding our product range to be able to offer the stores products that they are currently importing from countries in the Far East," Frost states.

"We are also looking to grow our export business. Part of that was to reverse integrate our manufacturing processes and bring everything in-house. To achieve that we needed a new factory facility. We looked all over the market and Dube TradeZone was attractive because of its Special Economic Zone status, which comes with certain tax benefits for manufacturing entities. We acquired the land and commissioned a custom designed facility for our requirements. The building took around one year and was split into two phases. Phase one began in 2015 and included the first two buildings and phase two was started in 2017 with two more buildings completed."

Funding for the new factory came from international venture capitalists and resulted in Frost sharing a stake in the business. He highlights the investment as a shining example of how foreign funders are still keen on South Africa as a manufacturing investment destination, especially when a sound business plan is presented.

Retractaline's focussed approach to business development and quality has seen the company rise to claim an enviable market share across the categories in which it operates. Frost is keen to continue growing and is looking at new products and new routes to market to keep the company developing.

"We dominate the South African market with around an 80% share of clothesline sales," says Frost. "We split our range into five categories: retractable clotheslines, rotary clotheslines, wall-mounted folding clothes lines, folding airers, and ironing boards and accessories. We don't dominate with 80% market share in each of those categories, but we

are growing rapidly. In retractable clotheslines and rotary clotheslines, we probably have more than 80% market share but in ironing boards, where a lot is still imported, we probably have 5 to 10% share. Our goal is to dominate the retail market and be the brand of choice across all categories.”

Innovation has always been a key component of the company’s success in producing quality, durable, and reliable laundry products. Frost describes himself as being hands on in the in-house development stages and he will continue to support product expansion. The manufacturing process is handled by a very competent team led by the factory manager, Anand Haripersad who has been with the business since inception.

On the product side, Frost explains that the company will continue with its laundry theme when introducing new homeware ideas.

“We have started with self-assembly wardrobes, we are making shoe racks, and there is a lot of product development ongoing. We launched the self-assembly wardrobes last year and they have been phenomenally successful, growing to become roughly our third biggest selling item across the range in a short space of time.”

Currently, Retractable products are found in some of the country’s major retail stores including Builders Warehouse, Brights Hardware, Bu Co, Game, Makro, Mica Hardware, Takealot, Pick n Pay, and more.

“We’ve been growing so rapidly locally that our international focus tapered but in 2019 we will be expanding that and Retractable will also aim for continental growth by teaming further with its existing customers that have a strong African presence.”

In the future, Frost expects online retailers to play an increasingly important role in the distribution of Retractable products. “There is a lot of growth in ecommerce, not just in South Africa,” he says. “We are seeing big growth in ecommerce whereas traditional retail has slowed significantly. We have set up stores



with Amazon UK, USA and Australia so we will go direct through the online route,” says Frost.

According to Frost, all this success comes from the company’s fantastic staff base. The staff complement currently includes administration and sales staff, packers, assemblers, key machinery operators and engineers.

“We have around 100 people and as the employee base grows, it does come with certain challenges. but any manufacturing business has those issues to deal with and we are fortunate with the calibre of staff we pull from the local community. We have high staff loyalty and there are people with the company that have been here since day one. We always look out for people that fit our culture and have a strong team and work ethic. The company prides itself on its skills training programmes, which are conducted in-house to suit the product development and manufacturing processes.

The ability to be responsive to market needs has ensured that Retractable is a leader in its field and is in the right place to continue to meet economic trends with assurance.

Full Name of Company: Retractable Manufacturing (Pty) Ltd

Nature of Business: Manufacturing

Services / Products: Laundry care products and accessories

Date Established: 1985

Customer Base: Retail and hardware stores

KEY PERSONNEL

CEO: Chris Frost

Factory Manager: Anand Haripersad

CONTACT DETAILS

Head Office

Physical Address: 15(a) Mzimkhulu Drive, Dube TradePort, King Shaka Airport, La Mercy 4399, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)32 814 0330

Fax: +27 (0)32 814 0339

E-mail: info@retractaline.com

Website: www.retractaline.com