

Local clothing manufacturer grows from strength to strength

It is common knowledge that South Africa's clothing and textile industries have been decimated and thousands of local jobs lost due to the tsunami of cheaper and often inferior clothing imports from Asia. However, one clothing company is an exemplar that there is potential and opportunities to create locally made clothing and textiles at competitive pricing, excellent quality and create much needed employment.

Based in Hammarsdale, KwaZulu-Natal, Umuzi Clothing Manufacturers has created more than 100 much needed jobs and its staff contingent continues to grow as it penetrates new markets and increases production with its current clients. The company has its own in-house skills development unit and all new employees undergo a stringent course that emphasises the essentials of quality, production management, and service delivery.

Providing a unique service

Some of the Umuzi's current supervisors have never worked in the manufacturing sector. Acting human resource manager, Renato Palmi, says that they recognise the potential and work ethic of their staff and give them further training and have promoted them to positions where they are now managing an entire production line.

With its linkage to one of South Africa's oldest textile companies, Mediterranean Textile Mills, which is also based in Hammarsdale, Umuzi is able to provide a unique service to the market. To add more value, and ensure the products it produces are impeccable, Umuzi is a member of Proudly South African allowing it to carry the logo on its products. The company is also undergoing a stringent audit with the SA Bureau of Standards, which will further enhance its credibility and quality standards.

Complies to labour laws

"The company values its staff, and they are part of our family that is why we are proud to be a certified member of the Clothing Bargaining Council, which makes us a fully compliant company in terms of SA's labour laws. To provide more jobs for the many hundreds of unemployed people in this area and in South Africa it is essential that consumers support locally made clothing and textiles," says director Greg Ginsberg.

Lesile Sedibe, CEO of Proudly South African, confirmed the need to support the local clothing and textile industries when he said that consumers and organisations need to buy local goods to sustain the producers, manufacturers and suppliers, and their workforce. This company is proof that South African clothing manufacturers can compete with the influx of clothing from Asia if they are dedicated and prepared to invest in skills development.

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