

Bidvest Laundry Group gets behind new industry body

Bidvest Laundry Group has thrown its weight behind the newly formed South African Textile Services Association (SATSA). Formally constituted as a not-for-profit association at the beginning of the year, SATSA aims to provide the industrial laundry and dry cleaning industry with a central voice.

“We are supporting SATSA because we believe that an industry body is needed to set professional standards and maintain levels of integrity,” says Collin Field, group operations manager for the Bidvest Laundry Group. “There are a lot of cowboys out there, and we hope that membership of SATSA will come to mean that a company conforms to a set of standards—it will become a differentiator for us in the marketplace.”

Field adds that SATSA will also be able to act as an objective expert in cases where there is a dispute relating to service delivered by a member of the association.

Ian Harris, a well-known consultant in the industry, is acting as a facilitator for the new association. Steering committees for Johannesburg and Cape Town have already been set up, with support for one in Durban currently being canvassed. Harris plans to hold general meetings in each of these three centres during the month of September, at which the benefits of membership will be explained.

Harris explains that SATSA will soon launch a hotline for customers who have used a commercial laundry or dry cleaning service and have a query or dispute. Member benefits will include a host of value-added products and services. Among them he lists technical advice, and representation on South African Bureau of Standards technical committees. He is also working with the Services SETA to address the question of training for operators.

SATSA will also provide a way for the industry to interact with government departments such as the Department of Health and the Environment to address issues that affect everybody. It will also provide members with specialised guidance relating to legislation such as the Consumer Protection Act.

“The industry employs more than 50 000 people and services clients across many industry sectors. The formation of SATSA is a great indication that it is maturing and becoming more professional, and that’s good news for its clients in particular,” says Harris. “SATSA is joining hands with similar associations in the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, so an added benefit will access to international trends and best practice.”