

*Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:*

# S.A. Coatings Industry Struggling To Remain Competitive

The South African coatings industry's global competitiveness has taken a hard knock in the past year, says Terry Ashmore, chairman of the SA Paint Manufacturers Association (SAPMA).

Delivering his 2014-15 Chairman's Report at the recent SAPMA annual general meeting in Sandton, Ashmore said the coatings sector, just as it was looking forward to increased growth, was "knocked backwards" by more events that moved South Africa down the foreign investment ladder.

"The re-emergence of Eskom power problems with no definite - or believable - solution date, the return of xenophobic attacks that have no place in any civilised society, and the continuing problems of unemployment, skills shortages, undisciplined trade union action, all added more pressure on our industry's global competitiveness.

"I believe most of these setbacks can - and must be - resolved by good governance, but unemployment numbers in the private sector can only be realistically improved in the long-term by investments and economic growth - not by increasing the size of the public services," Ashmore stated.

He said SAPMA and its training arm, the SA Paint Industry Training Institute (SAPITI) had, however, made progress during the past year towards its target of fully implementing paint-specific education and training for the coatings industry.

Also speaking at the SAPMA AGM, Sanjeev Bhatt, vice-chairman of SAPMA and chairman of the association's Associate Members, said 2015 could be a make-or-break year for the global community. "With the global economy still not fully recovered from the great recession that began in 2008, South African industry would have to take positive steps to combat declining investor confidence so that our economic activity and export performance are not affected. Businesses will have to adapt, change and implement new strategies at every point. The coatings industry will need out-of-the-box thinking coupled with focus on individual core businesses to yield positive results," Bhatt urged.

He appealed to packaging manufacturers, whom he described as "an integral part of the coatings industry", to join SAPMA to make its membership more representative and meaningful.

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*Caption:*

*Deryck Spence (left), executive director of SAPMA, pictured with Arun Devani (centre) of Synresins in Nairobi, a leading Kenyan coatings executive, who attended the SAPMA annual general meeting held at the Coatings for Africa 2015 expo in Sandton recently. On right is SAPMA member, Kiran Roshania, of Marindec Paints.*

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