

## **Grand Tellumat - Local Manufacturer Of The Electronic Products You Use Every Day**

In the industrial area of Retreat in Cape Town's deep south sits a large (9000m<sup>2</sup>) but unassuming factory, whose slumbering façade belies a hive of activity on the inside, and whose output touches your life in a dozen secret and remarkable ways, probably on a daily basis. To be allowed onto the factory floor of Grand Tellumat Manufacturing (GTM) is like entering a Silicon Valley blockbuster. All around are eerily identical technicians in white lab coats and antistatic protection, busily overseeing automated production lines doing rapid-fire, precise electronic component placements as well as manual product assembly, testing, quality checks and packing. **Mind-blowing line-up**

What they're pumping out in various parallel production lines might just blow your mind. "In a busy month, we've made tens of thousands of LED TVs for the likes of Sony and other global brands," says Murison Kotzé, managing executive of GTM. GTM, is one of a very limited number of contract electronic manufacturers in South Africa with the capability to do this. What that means is that it engineers, industrialises, procures, assembles, tests and despatches thousands of products every month. What's more, it does this for clients that are the electronic brands behind many of the products that automate, regulate, communicate and even protect your life every day. 'We manufacture and assemble on contract for a wide range of customers and brands – some of them competitors of one another – and that's why confidentiality and the protection of client intellectual property is paramount to us,' continues Kotzé. "We can however disclose that the factory manufactures computer monitors, digital commercial display units and TV units for home and office use. In addition, GTM assembles vehicle tracking units, used locally and exported internationally for security as well as fleet management purposes." Have you ever wondered who makes the boxes on street corners that manage 'robots' at traffic intersections? That's right, it's GTM. The factory also makes a golf radar, used locally and internationally in golf pro shops and at driving ranges, for a US-based customer. The radar is used to test and trial new golf clubs and to assist with coaching. Whether outside at a range or indoors at a practice net, the device tracks club head speed, ball trajectory and the angle of the club face at impact (amongst other measures) – and, after some quick and clever calculations, displays it on a screen. This graphically shows the distance and trajectory a player would have hit the ball, whether he or she hit a 'draw' or 'fade', and how clean the strike was. "We have also manufactured many electricity meters on behalf of our clients," says Kotzé. "We continue to manufacture a number of military avionics devices like the IFF [Identification Friend or Foe] aircraft transponder, on behalf of our sister company Tellumat, that identifies friendly aircraft to other friendly

ground, air or sea forces. In the commercial airspace, we manufacture satellite communication antennas which are now used on many commercial airliners. GTM is also involved in the green energy sector where it has already produced components for solar energy farms on behalf of a German customer, and is presently busy with a similar localisation project for a US-based customer. And lastly, the company is the first true local manufacturer of slot machines in South Africa, thanks to the efforts of its majority shareholder Grand Parade Investments.

“Presently, machines are mostly fully imported into SA, but we contract manufacture and assemble limited payout machine cabinets for two international customers. We trust that soon, based on our local and B-BBEE credentials, we will be doing the same for many more slots OEMs.” **Making a name**

That’s some pretty cool stuff right in our own backyard, so why doesn’t anyone know about it? Kotzé says the electronic contract manufacturing scene in South Africa is relatively small and unknown. “Further, when you are manufacturing on behalf of a customer and its brand, the customer brand is the point of consumer interaction, so that is where the recognition should and does go. We provide a service to our customers that allows them to focus on product development and sales, and in so doing afford them the opportunity, once a product is developed, to not have to worry about manufacturing. Most companies get excited about developing and selling their ideas, the making is often what lets them down and that is where we come in with our engineering, sourcing and assembly expertise.” But leaving aside GTM’s contract electronic manufacturing focus, will we ever see a GTM-branded electronics goodie in our everyday lives? “With our sister company Tellumat, we have developed our own set top box and hope to be a significant participant in South Africa’s pending migration to digital TV, with a locally designed and manufactured unit,” says Kotzé. **B-BBEE** Chances are they might just nail it. GTM is a joint venture between JSE-listed Grand Parade Investments Limited (51%) and defence and communications technology company Tellumat (Pty) Ltd (49%). The JV has significant B-BBEE credentials, offering value to local and international clients alike. “Most major South African government procurement projects require a large percentage of local content. Added to this, the revised B-BBEE codes place an even larger emphasis on local procurement and enterprise development. This is done, in part, to enforce government’s stated objective to drive job creation both directly and indirectly. GTM is perfectly positioned to provide this local content,” says Kotzé. **One stop shop**

With a full turnkey service portfolio ranging from design to manufacturing, testing and post-manufacturing services, among others, and being able to handle volumes from prototyping phase to high volume runs, GTM further stands head and shoulders above other electronics manufacturers, which either do only product integration,

surface mounting or other standalone services. “We can take on someone with just an idea and, having the ability to take them from concept to a working proto-type, provide full manufacturing and ultimately facilitate the packaging and delivery of the product and even after sales support,” he continues. On the flipside GTM can just as easily provide any of the stand-alone services within the production cycle. “For example, if someone just needs testing done or a PC board populated, we can do that. We can also assist with just design or industrialisation, if that is what a client wants,” says Kotzé. “We’re literally a one-stop-shop. I doubt there is anybody in South Africa, at the moment, who can offer our full suite of services and volume capabilities under one roof.”