

Press Release:

'Cut out' for Success – First Cut and Spear & Jackson's long-standing partnership provides quality cutting consumables to industry

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In a fast-changing and technology-driven world, many people take comfort in returning to a well-recognised, established brand that promises consistent quality and reliability. In the cutting industry, both First Cut and Spear & Jackson represent those qualities, thanks to their mutual longevity in the business.

Spear & Jackson, in particular, offers its customers an especially long heritage of cutting tool excellence going back 256 years. With origins in the heart of the UK's iconic Sheffield steel industry, Spear & Jackson has become a household name in gardening tools and metal, wood and masonry saws.

Neill Tools, another established brand and the original parent company of Spear & Jackson, can chart its history back to the 1700's. Neill Tools started making the world's first composite steel hacksaw blades in 1911, and in 1961 started producing the well-known Eclipse range of hacksaw and power saw blades in South Africa.

First Cut, which purchased Neill Tools' Cape Town hacksaw blade factory in 1998, therefore has strong ties with some of the oldest, most established names in the hacksaw and band saw blade industry. The company – which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year – has a proud history in the cutting industry, dating back to 1956.

Since obtaining approval by James Neill Holdings to manufacture its hacksaw blades using the Eclipse brand, First Cut has become a leading local distributor of cutting consumables and capital equipment, including the renowned Eclipse hand tool range.

"We have been distributing the full Eclipse range of metal cutting and engineering tools to our customers locally for eighteen years, including hacksaw blades, hole saws, riveters, work holding tools, punches, scribes and nut spinners," says Ian McCrystal, Chief Executive Officer of First Cut.

"In so doing, we have established an excellent relationship with Spear & Jackson through our mutual interest in the Eclipse brand of professional tools; and we are proud that such a world -class brand has now become synonymous with First Cut."

With a global presence in 115 countries, Spear & Jackson values First Cut as a long-standing and trusted partner, effectively extending its footprint throughout southern Africa.

This is according to Sandy Boyd, Managing Director of the Spear & Jackson Tool Group. "First Cut has proven to be a reliable, dependable and totally trustworthy distribution partner, successfully developing our mutual business interests throughout South Africa. The many synergies we enjoy with them point towards strong growth milestones in the future."

Some of the synergies that the two companies share include a strong emphasis on product development, a spirit of innovation and the sharing of new ideas.

“In a challenging market, you cannot stagnate,” says McCrystal. “We enjoy a highly productive, dynamic relationship with Spear & Jackson in terms of the sharing of ideas for new ranges, and the mutual opening of doors to new market opportunities.”

Boyd agrees: “I think it is fair to say that our continual product development is the lifeblood of the Eclipse brand – and this, together with our close relationship with First Cut, has been the key to the success of the brand in South Africa.”

Within the last five years, Spear & Jackson has expanded its product offering to include a new range of holding and clamping hand tools such as vices, F and G clamps, sash clamps, pipe and plumbing wrenches, snips and locking pliers. These tools – regarded as essential to the ‘tool box of industry’ - offer exceptionally high quality and are aimed at the professional or industrial user.

First Cut, renowned for its cutting industry expertise, started manufacturing bandsaw blades in South Africa during the 1950’s; and now produces bandsaw and hacksaw blades locally, according to strict international manufacturing standards.

The company prides itself on providing highly reliable products of consistent quality, which are intrinsic to many industrial or engineering processes.

“First Cut manufactures world-class products which offer the kind of reliability that comes from a renowned brand, coupled with extremely good value,” comments Boyd, adding that the company’s extensive range includes a unique-in-the-market double-sided hacksaw blade.

“We look forward to building on the many synergies we have with our important strategic partner First Cut, continuing to provide the Southern African market with the benefits of a professional, quality range of cutting tools which have been known and trusted by industry for decades,” Boyd concludes.

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About First Cut

Celebrating 60 years of industry experience in 2016, First Cut is a leading South African distributor of a range of cutting consumables and capital equipment. In its consumables division, First Cut is able to meet the needs of a vast range of industries through the supply of band saw blades, circular saw blades, hacksaw blades, and other cutting consumables.

Since its acquisition in 2003 of Band Sawing Services, First Cut has expanded its services into capital equipment and this division has grown exponentially, thanks to its partnerships with some of the best-known brands globally.

The company’s capital equipment division specializes in metal cutting, sheet metal processing, structural (such as CNC bending), and tube and pipe processing. First Cut has also invested substantially in its service programme enabling the company to provide repairs and maintenance services for a wide range of machines, from entry level band saws to state-of-the-art CNC controlled drilling and cutting lines.

Employing 240 people, First Cut is based in Benrose, Gauteng but has a national footprint and distribution facilities across South Africa.

Quality is at the top of the agenda at First Cut and the company has achieved the ISO 9001:2008 certification and adheres to strict quality and safety regulations.

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