

# PRESS RELEASE

Turning loyal customers into business partners is a win-win for long-term growth

**13 June 2019:** Building strong relationships with existing clients is important for repeat business. This is especially true in the niche South African property development industry, which is dominated by a number of key players. In addition, recommendation and endorsement by clients plays a vital role in entrenching a reputation. One of the best ways to foster strong client relationships is to develop a reputation as an independent professional that delivers exceptional results.

This is where design-and-build specialist Trend Group excels, having delivered over 300 projects in 12 years, and not missing a single deadline in that period, according to Business Development Director **Derek Weimer**. This singular achievement is due to the company consistently aligning itself with industry requirements. By giving its clients impeccable service, it has systematically grown its reputation.

With average lease periods ranging from three to five years, repeat business is only possible if Trend Group remains front-of-mind during these periods. A client is much more likely to approach the company for any additional requirements or further expansions if its initial experience was enjoyable and pleasant, as well as delivering the required end results.

The fact that Trend Group has established such a strong brand gives its business development team a distinct edge in generating new leads, according to Business Developer **Gabriella Green**. When the company was still establishing itself, it was a relative unknown. Now its reputation has given it a critical mass across a range of industries and markets, including an impressive roster of international brands seeking to gain a foothold in Africa.

“With the property development industry in South Africa being relatively small, it is important for us to build relationships with the key players. By never letting them down, we get our name referenced a lot. In essence, getting new business is really a combination of our relationships and our reputation,” Green stresses.

Trend Group’s growing reputation and reference list has also meant that it can be selective in choosing clients that fit in with its business philosophy. However, flexibility in an industry where both budgets and margins are tight is vital. This has allowed the company to cater for small and large budgets. “Clients do go through good and bad times, as does the industry. We have to be there for them at all times. Hence it is very much a long-term partnership that we enter into,” Green explains.

For example, when a client has to downsize, it is important to understand what is happening within that company, and the broader industry itself. The fact that Trend Group deals with such a diverse range of markets and industries means it is at the coalface of what is happening. The advantage for smaller clients is that these have access to the same experience, expertise, and resources that Trend Group dedicates to its larger international clients.

Whether a 100 m<sup>2</sup> or a 1 000 m<sup>2</sup> project, the processes and procedures are the same, from project meetings to reports, costing, sign-off, and liaising with both project managers and directors. “All our clients are part of that, which has helped us forge such strong relationships with them. Clients do appreciate the fact that we consistently offer the same level of service and delivery excellence across the board,” Weimer stresses.

Establishing such close relationships invariably means that Trend Group gains an intuitive understanding of what makes its clients tick. Given the fact that fit-outs and redesigns are potentially costly and disruptive, the aim is to make the process as smooth and as painless as

possible. This means understanding the culture of the client, understanding what it is trying to achieve, and then managing its expectations. Here Trend Group ensures it allocates personnel with the necessary knowledge to meet those requirements, even if it is a construction-heavy project with major steelwork and engineering, for example. Thus, every solution is tailor-made, and based around the best people possible for the project. “We can sell the dream, but delivery is critical,” Weimer points out.

It is important to define client expectations at the outset, as this impacts significantly on developing an ongoing relationship with that client. “Construction drawings are difficult to read, and budgets are often misunderstood. Here we assist our clients visually by painting a picture in order to put them at ease and reassure them as to our capability. We have numerous examples of successful projects we are able to show them in this regard,” Weimer adds. This also points to the wealth of knowledge and experience within Trend Group.

Putting clients at ease and ensuring their buy-in is based on the simple concept of constant communication. As a project progresses, and there is no contact with the client, the end result is that the client starts to feel nervous as they are not in control of the process. Keeping the client informed does not imply holding the client’s hand. It means a single point of contact, and regular updates and meetings to discuss options and preferences.

The psychology of client management has taught Trend Group that clients prefer having choices, as this empowers them. “A single design is not going to impress a client with our design capability. Hence we always give options. Clients prefer choice, as this often guides them in the direction of what they require,” Green elaborates. Again, this links back to the initial budget, which is a key consideration from the outset.

Throwing money at design will not give the client the solution that they want. Instead, smart design tailored within the confines of a particular budget and the client requirements will produce the best end result – and a happy client that will remember, and endorse, the experience of working with such a team of consummate professionals.

“We design around your budget, but simultaneously still present options, as our designers always go that extra mile. It is the detail they are able to add that can change the dynamics of an entire office fit-out. It is all about making your budget work harder. What alternative materials can we use, for example?” Green stresses. “It is often a tough task to stick to a tight budget, but we do appreciate the circumstances of our clients. That is where our designers are so good, and it is simply amazing with what they can come up with.”

Trend Group also has a professional responsibility towards its clients to ensure that its designs are future-proofed, and take into account the latest trends and industry developments. This is especially important given that the workplace has changed drastically over the last couple of decades. As professionals, it must keep up with the trends, but this knowledge also has to be disseminated to its client base. For example, the workplace hierarchy has now dissipated, with open-plan being the norm, but this raises other issues such as noise levels, privacy and the need for quiet spaces, and the requirements of different generations and ages of workers.

What has made Trend Group so successful is that it always sets reasonable expectations, thereby affording its design teams the opportunity to not only impress the client with a solution that exceeds those expectations, but which guarantees that it continues to work with them in the future as their needs evolve according to its own growth and transformation.

Trend Group always has the needs of its clients as its main priority. This results in long-term clients that connect and identify with the company itself. Such a market segment has the potential to be the company’s biggest asset, providing a valuable platform from which to target new customers, as well as nurturing existing relationships.

**Ends****Notes to the Editor**

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**About Trend Group**

Trend Group specialises in office interior design and refurbishments in the commercial, industrial and retail sectors. We are a comprehensive, solutions-driven company that operates on a turnkey basis. We offer a streamlined approach to design, procurement, and construction delivery, covering all aspects of the project solution. We are a proud Level 2 B-BBEE accredited company.

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