

Always keen for growth, Verni looks to acquisition for expansion

Verni – Speciality Construction Products, which specialises in corrosion protection, performance flooring, refractory linings and construction chemicals, is preparing to ring in changes with an acquisition.

MD Vernon Botha, who is founder and major shareholder of the Boksburg, Gauteng-based firm, says Verni plans to announce an acquisition within the next 12 months. However, still keeping his cards close to his chest, Botha says he has earmarked a “couple” of potential businesses and has started talking to some of them.

“The acquisition will expand one of our current divisions. It will be a company that is doing predominantly that divisional work,” he said during an interview with *Mining Weekly*.

Verni is constantly looking for growth and has expanded significantly since it was established 13 years ago. Today, the company is a considerable player in acid proofing and corrosion protection of concrete, epoxy and polyurethane floor coatings, resin screeds, concrete repair and structural carbon fibre reinforcing, concrete waterproofing, crystal growth systems, bandaging systems and refractory linings.

The company expanded into refractory linings



Verni MD and founder Vernon Botha

in 2012 and established a concrete repair and structural reinforcing (carbon fibre) division earlier this year.

Botha is excited about the prospects for carbon fibre, which is typically used for old concrete structures, buildings and bridges where corrosion has spoilt the concrete. Instead of using metal-type bracing, Verni is now able to repair and structurally reinforce concrete structures with carbon fibre laminate or carbon fibre plates.

“It is quite a unique method of re-establishing the strength of the concrete. The main reasons being ease of application and the light weight of the product, while offering substantial strengths,” Botha explains.

Mines with structural reinforcement sites and older Johannesburg buildings in the central business district have expressed interest in Verni’s carbon fibre concrete repair offering.

Botha, who established Verni in 2001 and continues to run a hands-on business, attributes the company’s success to the quality of its products and systems offered.

“We started out only as a material manufacturer, but after the first year, we had a huge demand for single-line guarantee, which prompted us to manufacture and do our own installations. That was the best decision we ever made.”

“We are also aggressive in what we do – our quotes are submitted on a very professional level and we have a high standard of marketing,” Botha continues.

Verni further aligns itself with international companies, which are leaders in their own fields.

Besides its head office and factory in Gauteng, Verni has a subbranch in Cape Town, in the Western Cape, and recently registered an entity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where it sees the potential to pick up a lot more work, especially in the mining industry.

“With the current situation in the South African mining industry – which is a substantial portion of our business – we had to look elsewhere and obviously we are finding the work in Africa,” Botha says, adding that about 35% of its business originated from outside South Africa last year.

“We are geared to contract from our head office to wherever. We have worked in Ghana, Zambia, the DRC, Namibia and Seychelles, among others.”

Verni has local representation in Zambia and an agent in Mauritius.

Although the bulk of Verni’s business remains in South Africa, the company is “aggressively” marketing itself into Africa by attending and exhibiting at trade shows.

The secret for success at trade shows, Botha says, is to follow up. “We record all the visitors, their needs and immediately follow up.”

At Electra Mining Africa 2014, Botha and his technical team will be at the double stand that Verni booked in Hall 6.

The company will put on display the latest technology related to acid proofing, corrosion protection, concrete repair and structural reinforcing, epoxy polyurethane flooring, waterproofing of water retaining structures, refractory lining and construction chemicals. ■

Hall 6 Stand B6

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