

# Growth through franchising

The King's Paint & Hardware chain continues to penetrate the paint and hardware industry with its wide range of products and its dedication to service. Report and pics by Thabsio Lehoko.



The King's Paint & Hardware head office is based in Woodmead.



A bird's-eye view of the Woodmead store's stock.

Our primary reason for living is paint," says Gary Hinde, managing director of King's Paint & Hardware. This may well be the secret to the success of the company, which was founded in 2002.

In October 2006, the company went through a restructuring process where the ownership changed and Matthew joined his brother Gary Hinde in the group. "An important aspect of our business is partnering with paint manufacturers that support and encourage sales through our branches," says Gary, adding, "We have a wide range of paint and DIY related materials, but

the stores tend to stock more paint than DIY accessories." Matthew is the King's Paint & Hardware chartered accountant while Gary, having been in the retail industry for well over two decades, is the managing director.

#### BRANCHING OUT

King's Paint & Hardware currently has 18 branches operating primarily in the Gauteng area, with its head office situated in Woodmead. It is currently embarking on a new strategy of targeting and moving into the more outlying areas, which have been identified as having a high growth potential.

Speaking about the benefits of being part of a franchise with King's Paint & Hardware, Gary says, "The franchisee can concentrate on acquiring a business and leave all the operating and sourcing systems to us. Also, King's Paint & Hardware is a brand that people feel comfortable with when doing their paint and DIY purchases, so the franchisee is acquiring an already well known and trusted brand."

The company also supports and advises its franchisees about market prices and market trends, which include quality and pricing. According to Hinde, any person or business



Customers are treated like royalty in the Woodmead store's reception.

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A convenient display of stock is the Woodmead store's number one priority for customer convenience.



wanting to enter into the paint and hardware market should seriously consider the King's Paint & Hardware option. To obtain a franchise from King's Paint & Hardware, however, Hinde says that there are certain requirements that have to be met in order to qualify, as they are approached by people on a day-to-day basis who are interested.

Collectively, the King's

Paint & Hardware franchise employs approximately 140 people. The company's management believes that the training of people is an important aspect of the business, as training enables them to know their products and the systems required in order to run the business. From branch to branch, workers receive in-house training and are taught how to liaise with clients.

**GROWING THE BRAND**

King's Paint & Hardware's marketing strategy is simple and in essence involves the building of its brand and in finding suitable locations for its franchises. The aim is to move into all the major metropolitan areas and establish a King's Paint & Hardware that will cater for the residents' everyday needs.



Above: Managing director, Gary Hinde and company chartered accountant, Matthew Hinde.

Left: Workers in action. Lucy Songelwa, Isaac kgamedi, Hilda Mokoena and Matthew Masemola provide service and advice to customers.

To build the brand, the key message sent to potential customers is that they are experts in service and advice. A key element in the stores' advertising strategy is the bold King's Paint & Hardware signage outside each store. The company also promotes itself by taking care of the community through donations, by promoting themselves in schools, by giving out discounts and

through sponsorships. Each branch has a detailed strategy for service and advice, and each store has a personalised relationship with its customers. With the motto 'The customer is royalty at King's Paint & Hardware', there is little doubt that customers are welcomed with open arms into all branches by the owners.

King's Paint & Hardware is growing its franchises into successful paint and

DIY outlets in their various communities. "Our strategy is to grow the number of King's franchises and the presence of the King's brand, thereby becoming an even stronger independent player in the industry. We currently have a number of new stores that will be coming on line before June 2007," says Hinde.

For more information on the franchise, call 011-802-2552.

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