

SAFINTRA RWANDA

A success story – Rwanda converts to Versatile roofing



Rwanda is known as 'the land of a thousand hills and a million smiles'. It is a landlocked country with a population of 11 million people and current GDP per capita of \$562 per annum. The economy is largely driven by agriculture, tourism and mining and the main node of economic activity is in Kigali City.

When Safintra Roofing opened in Rwanda in 2008, Kigali was the obvious geographic focal point for operations, with roll-formers for Versatile, Maxcover and Covermax.

Versatile was an immediate opportunity as clay tiles were already widely used on expensive homes. The aspirational appeal of tile was well established, so much so that there were four existing tile roll-forming operations producing unbranded tile-profiled sheets to capitalise on the opportunity.

Armed with the insight that the current product manufacturers offered undifferentiated, unbranded products with long lead times and poor service levels, a strategy was designed:

- **Branding:** Safintra had to offer a branded tile sheet that consumers could demand by name.
- **Investing in consumer awareness:** Through mass media, build rapid awareness of a brand which would offer guaranteed quality and excellent customer service.
- **Creating a competitive edge:** Seek high profile users of the Safintra Versatile brand who would act as brand ambassadors.
- **Service:** Do it better, faster and with more customer focus.

The main market for roofing is the individual homeowner. Roofing material is a substantial investment and quality assurance is therefore very important. Safintra Rwanda built a Versatile advertising campaign around this strategy – with the tag line: *Its Different. Demand the Difference.*

Success timeline

- *October 2008*
Safintra Roofing commences commercial production in

Kigali, Rwanda, with the production of the first roll-formed sheets. The company starts with three sales representatives, all of whom are new to the steel industry.

- *November 2008 – January 2009*
 - The Sales team began direct marketing by undertaking site visits and meeting contractors.
 - The company launched an advertising campaign – on a very limited budget – utilising newspaper strip ads and street-pole ads on city roundabouts.
 - The company had very close contact with customers to ensure they were happy with the product and the service, and used the feedback as referrals.

By mid-2009, in every area of the city there were at least two to three houses roofed with Versatile. The company also received a very encouraging response from the upcountry market. The popularity and acceptance of Versatile was zooming up!

Launch of Versatile Matt

In August 2009, Safintra Rwanda introduced Versatile in a matt finish to the Kigali Market. This was another resounding success. Matt Versatile was sold at a premium of 15% to normal (gloss) Versatile. It caught the fancy of the market and its popularity started increasing daily. In the few months to year end, the company had sold almost 26,000m².

To support the Matt Versatile introduction, advertising was slightly adapted to increase the Prestige appeal, with the strap line: *Every roof is unique like your Signature. Create your own.* By the end of 2010, Versatile Matt finish sales were 50% of total Versatile sales. And the trend continues into 2012.

Versatile goes from strength to strength

Versatile's popularity has also expanded beyond the individual house owner segment and now the roofs of churches, commercial buildings and hotels are also being adorned by Versatile! Well done to the team – a success story we should all seek to emulate.