

Bata South Africa taking strides towards expansion

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Leading footwear producer Bata South Africa is stepping forward with its sights set on expanding its local business and increasing exports across the African market in the next five years.



Bata is a household name globally with a reputation for affordable, reliable footwear. It currently produces over five million shoes a year at its manufacturing facility in Loskop, Estcourt in KwaZulu-Natal, mainly comprising Toughes school shoes, Bata Industrials safety footwear, Safari for the outdoor adventurer, and the Tomy Takkies line.



Michael Wyatt, Bata SA country manager

Country manager Michael Wyatt says the focus is now on vigorous expansion and distribution of some of Bata's global labels to existing local manufacturing.

"We're well underway in executing the first steps of our 2023 to 2027 strategy and are introducing new collections of select international sneaker, comfort and outdoor categories to the local market," he says.

These include top-selling, global children's footwear range Bubblegummers, North Star sneakers, Power athletic footwear,

the outdoor-inspired Weinbrenner range, and the comfort-focused Comfit line.

Harnessing the power of partnerships will be a key focus as Bata SA plugs into this global Bata strategy for growth. New retail negotiations are at an advanced stage.

"Having closed our own branded retail stores in South Africa several years ago, we currently retail through major chains including Ackermans, PEP, Jet, Edgars, Mr Price, and Shoe City, as well as select wholesale distributors and e-commerce platforms Zando, Superbalist and Takealot. The focus now is on adding shelf space within South Africa's leading retail chains," says Wyatt," says Wyatt.

"As a global retailer, we can provide African customers with products, brands, and insights from around the world that serve as unique selling points and opportunities for mutual growth. Our intention is not to simply sell our brand wholesale, but rather to establish long-term partnerships with retailers and offer them exclusive, distinctive products," he adds.

Bata is also investing in its back-end systems, logistics, marketing and human capital, launching a new enterprise resource planning system, an African warehouse management system and a direct-to-consumer e-commerce platform in support of its expansion model.

With 21 manufacturing sites worldwide, the Bata Group sells 150 million pairs of shoes each year, has a retail network of over 5,300 stores across more than 70 countries, and employs 32,000 people globally.

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