



Cosmo Group celebrates 30 years

Founded in 1994, this year Cosmo Group is celebrating 30 years of growth and service to Sub-Saharan Africa and South African industry. Group CEO, Pierre van Nieuwenhuizen reflects on the journey.

ally expanded their offerings, supplying a wider range of welding machines and consumables, gas, and safety equipment. They secured their first agencies: with Lincoln Electric for welding equipment and consumables, and with Air Products for industrial gases – and 30 years later, they remain loyal to these two chosen brands.

Over the years, the range of products and services that Cosmo Group offers its clients, has grown significantly. New people, products, brands and relationships have been onboarded and developed every year. Cosmo Group now includes several companies: Cosmo Industrial; Cosmo Automation; Cosmo Railway; Cosmo Manufacturing; Cosmo Mining; Cosmo Construction; Cosmo Training Academy; Silverton Tool Centre; and Silverton Cycles.

The Cosmo Superstore in Silverton has become a beacon for the Pretoria community serving as a platform for supplying products across South Africa. Additionally, the Cosmo online shop provides easy access to all its products.

“One of the first breakthroughs occurred when Cosmo Group started supplying Lincoln Electric welding equipment to Ford’s assembly facility in Watloo, Pretoria. This achievement was followed by securing a significant contract with Transnet’s railway manufacturing division ‘down the road’ in

Koedoespoort, Pretoria. These milestones, achieved in the first year of operation (1994), paved the way for Cosmo Gas and Welding Equipment, as we were known then. We celebrated these two successes. They really made us feel we were on our way,” Pierre van Nieuwenhuizen tells *African Fusion*.

“And while welding activity at Koedoespoort has died down in recent times,” he says that over the subsequent 25-years, following the initial sale, Cosmo continued to make an impact at the facility, installing over 500 Lincoln and SAF welding machines. “During much of our 30-year history, Transnet remained one of our primary customers, and for the first two decades, it was our largest” he notes.

“We have always believed in loyalty, first to our clients, but also to the brands we represent. We have remained loyal to Lincoln Electric as our premium brand, and this is underlined by the personal relationships I have built with key individuals at Lincoln Electric in South Africa,” he says. “Although Lincoln Electric’s management has shifted to Dubai, regular visits maintain the relationship so that it is in as bright place as ever,” he says.

On the gas front, Cosmo Group’s loyalty still extends to Air Products, a trusted partner for the 30-year journey. and is proud



Cosmo’s 30th Anniversary celebration will take place during the annual Cosmo Run; a local community event held every year in May.

that we are now the largest single-site Air Products gas supplier in South Africa.

“I think what we have done very well over the years is to diversify,” he continues. “Recognising that welding industry needs extended beyond equipment, we expanded our range to include PPE and workwear; fasteners, abrasives, hand and power tools; lifting equipment, automation, and a host of industrial consumables and solutions, therefore setting out to supply a bigger basket of brands and products.

“We also quickly realised the need for training. We embarked on a journey to equip both our clients on how to best use the machines we were selling, but also, the upskilling of our workforce. Ten years ago, we established the Cosmo Training Academy. Today, the Academy proudly offers the IIW International Welder Diploma, and operates as an Authorised Training Body under the SAIW,” he says.

This strategic move completes the circle in terms of supplying fabricators with everything they need. “On one hand, we provide them with top-quality equipment, consumables, gas, and tools. On the other hand, we empower them with skilled personnel who can effectively utilize these resources.

“But our commitment doesn’t end there. We recognize the growing demand for on-the-job training directly at worksites. Therefore, we are in the process of adding the Procedure Qualification Record (PQR) to our offerings. Whether it’s coding a welder, meeting code requirements, or assisting with welding procedures, we thrive on providing comprehensive solutions for our valued customers.” van Nieuwenhuizen says.

“Cosmo Group also collaborates with many large companies are now helping to uplift the local communities. A good example is the partnership with Air Products, funding individuals from rural areas

studying the IIW International Welder Diploma. This partnership has been going for some time and the results are wonderful. Graduates have not only obtained new skills but have also established businesses within their communities. One such entrepreneur repairs wheel rims damaged by potholes—an achievement that fills us with pride.”

The Cosmo Training Academy is currently training its third group of Air Products sponsored students, with half of the candidates being women. “Witnessing their development over eight to twelve weeks, it is a success story you can never forget,” van Nieuwenhuizen points out.

Moving on to this year’s big diversification initiative, he says that Cosmo Group has completed the construction of their warehouse and is currently launching a new house brand called Metal Force. “While we have been distributors and business partners of various brands in our store. Metal Force represents a strategic shift toward becoming importers and wholesalers. Cosmo Group will be a customer of this brand, but Metal Force will primarily be channelled through resellers to end-users,” he says.

“Our initial focus lies on the solid MIG wire range for carbon steel, with plans to expand to stainless wire. Additionally, we’re introducing gas welding and cutting equipment, including regulators, flowmeters, and torches. Excitingly, we’ve secured a comprehensive welding machine range covering MMA, MIG, pulsed MIG, TIG, laser welding, and cutting machines. The first machines are set to arrive in the coming weeks,” he says.

“The journey to put the new Metal Force range together took us all over the world travelling searching for quality and reliable products,” he says. “South Africa and the welding industry holds a lot of potential.



This year’s big diversification initiative is the launch of Cosmo Group house brand, Metal Force.

We continually strive to improve, make informed choices, and add value for our customers.”

“To all those young entrepreneurs in South Africa right now contemplating opening a business, I think now is a good time to start. There are a lot of opportunities in a country like South Africa. We need to rebuild in so many areas and we need fresh ideas and enthusiasm, so don’t wait, start now!” advises Pierre van Nieuwenhuizen.

Cosmo Group’s 30th Anniversary coincides with the annual Cosmo Run; a local community event held on the 25th of May. The Cosmo Run highlights the community-oriented mission that the Group has always pursued. “On 30 and 31 May, we are also hosting a 30th-anniversary celebration in-store at Silverton, welcoming our suppliers, customers, and the public.

“We extend heartfelt gratitude to all our customers for their unwavering support over the past three decades. Here’s to many more years of growth, collaboration, and shared success,” he concludes.

<https://cosmogroups.co.za>

Back in 1994, the paths of Rossouw van der Merwe and Pierre van Nieuwenhuizen’s first crossed, leading to the establishment of Cosmo Group in Silverton. “We were so young and incredibly enthusiastic back then,” recalls Pierre van Nieuwenhuizen. We had big dreams, and nothing could stop us. Our journey began by selling welding rods door-to-door – and we weren’t afraid to take on the biggest welding suppliers. Our vision was clear: start on our doorstep and expand until we ourselves, became the largest welding equipment supplier in sub-Saharan Africa.”

“The initial phase involved understanding customer needs and solving their problems. It was an exciting time that laid the foundation for what Cosmo Group has become today,” he adds.



Air Products has partnered with the Cosmo Training Academy and is funding people out of rural areas on the IIW International Welder Diploma.