

**GRW** has quite rightfully become a household name in the transport industry in South Africa. First and foremost for their manufacturing of commercial tanker trailers. Over the last few years they have also expanded into a wider range of commercial trailers, no doubt to the ire of other manufacturers.

Without delving into the specific history, the basics of their history extending more than 20 years, being that of a small start-up company resulting where the need for high quality tankers could not be provided, paving the way for their own build, ultimately culminating in what is quite likely the market leader position.

Once again striving to keep up with developments, Accident Specialist arranged with GRW for a detailed session at their main factory in Worcester, attending at their premises was to say the least, an eye opener. From the outset, being provided the detailed and interactive tour by Tian Franken, their professional corporate image, however holding the personal interaction of each individual, was evident where through the session where top management and technical staff knew the factory working staff by first name or nickname basis.



With a particular interest in the tanker side of the manufacturing, we were guided through an initial session of the rules, regulations, specifications, principals and procedures, of local and international standards to which the products are manufactured to. GRW not only building, but designing from scratch and designing by review and improvement of existing designs. Of note, is the extent of the design, in respect of the state of the art design and testing software constantly used by the in-house designers and engineers.

Perhaps a feat one would not normally expect to be undertaken of the particular type of product of the manufacture themselves and in particular a local manufacturer; the various real life physical product test undertaken, not only on a general quality and specification testing scale, but comparative destructive testing is impressive.

Following through the production line build, from arrival of the raw materials, through to assembly of each individual item, is notably impressive where almost all of the products that can be built for the tanker that can be produced in-house, are. The scale of the production in respect of the sheer overall size of a tanker is impressive, with massive overhead gantries and gigantic rotisseries to allow ease of access and manoeuvrability of the tanks dominating every aspect of the factory.

Standing in front of and being dwarfed by the automated welding robots, being careful not to step too close and trigger the sensor safety boundaries, leaves you with absolutely no uncertainty as the scale of the operation and the extent of professionalism being employed.

Watching the process from raw product to final product, to the extent of standing inside the cavernous tank, closely inspecting the cutting, forming and welding. To the final water and pressure test, painting and every tiny component fitted from reflective tape to automated control telemetry and the wiring gives an appreciation of the headache incurred to the tanker owner, the insurer and even to the repairer, when a tanker is damaged or even decimated in a crash.

Perhaps not something always considered, the sheer volume and perhaps an even greater headache is the physical size of a large number of the items necessary to be held in stock. Items such as heavy commercial vehicle axles, braking drums, shoes, discs and callipers, and likewise wheels and tyres abound the holding yards and are once again a visible reminder of the scale of the operation.

Largely through lack of local availability and backup, over the years, GRW took the step forward to source, supply, fit, service and maintain a range of products to the tankers and trailer, perhaps most notably that of the loading system hardware and controlling and monitoring telemetry. Something their clients no doubt appreciate when on the rare occasion backup is needed, it is always provided.

Perhaps the biggest feather in GRW's cap and no greater attesting to the professionalism and quality, is that of the acceptance of their products to the strict European standards, with their products exported by demand abroad. Striving to meet these specifications is an achievement of note to the local manufacturer.

Having taken this opportunity and having a detailed appreciation of the "unseen" work, it is no wonder that even in tough economic times, that have also had an effect on their production volumes, GRW has managed not only to maintain its strength in the market, but has grown and maintained an international standard, with great possibilities foreseeable in the future.

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