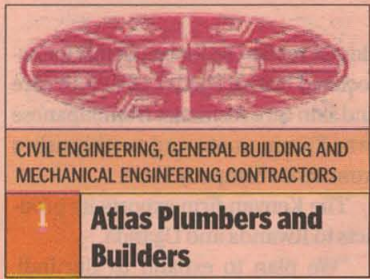


First-time entrant who won the crown jewel



BY MOSES MICHIRA

For a first-time entrant into the annual competition, winning the 2012 edition of the Top 100 SMEs survey did come as a huge surprise for Atlas Plumbers and Builders.

The company also walked away with the construction industry champion's award for outstanding corporate governance and financial reporting standards.

Founded in 1971 as a plumbing and installations firm along Nairobi's Kirinyaga Road, Atlas Plumbers has since grown to become a leading construction company providing the full range of building solutions.

After 41 years of operation, the firm has enjoyed rare longevity amongst family-owned businesses and is now led by Paresh Bhanderi, after the exit of his grandfather, the founder, and later



Atlas Plumbers and Builders Kenya Limited officials Shamji Varsani (left), Harish Bhanderi and Preetika Bhanderi after the company was declared overall winner of the 2012 Kenya Top 100 Mid-Sized Companies Awards Gala on October 12. SALATON NJAU

his father. From the initial yard along the dusty road where Atlas operated for over four decades, the company has since spread its operations to at least a dozen towns in the Kenya, with a footprint that spreads as far as Kwale

and Yala in Nyanza. Among its initial clients were homes and commercial buildings along Kirinyaga Road where it operated as the neighbourhood contractor before diversifying into mechanical engineering and fire-

fighting. Based on the early approach to business and physical coverage, Atlas relied on referrals from existing clients, a factor which ensured slow but consistent growth in turnover and profitability.

"Our growth over the years has been driven by referrals and this recognition (in the Top 100 SMEs competition) in our efforts is a major boost for the management and staff," said Mr Bhanderi, whose firm now employs nearly 300 building professionals.

Professionalism

The staff includes architects, quantity surveyors and engineers.

Atlas is involved in the construction of homes and office blocks, sewer lines and road works with KCB, Egerton University and Thika Greens Estate in the list of top clients.

Mr Bhanderi attributes the success of his company to the employment of professionals to play specific roles and ensuring that the right skills are deployed to match job requirements.

"We have embraced high levels of professionalism, which ensures that we have the right persons for the job," he said.

Competition in the local construc-

tion sector is very tight, according to Mr Bhanderi, a factor that has raised the bar for service delivery and the quality of works. Mr Bhanderi says that the business has enjoyed the fastest growth in the past five years, gaining from the fresh opportunities in the construction sector.

But it is also the rapid growth that presented the biggest challenge to the company in 2010.

Atlas' operations were at the time fragmented prompting the need for consolidation of the entire business and investment in management systems.

The firm is now looking at moving the bulk of its operations from the Kirinyaga Road yard to a much bigger premise in Nairobi's industrial area.

The plan is to retain the company's original base in the city centre offices as one of the branches.

Pillars for success for the construction firm have been consistently exceeding clients' needs through investing in staff, systems and technology, says Mr Bhanderi.

"We can say we have been lucky but our success has been mostly due to past investments."



KENYA
TOP 100
MID-SIZED COMPANIES
BUSINESS DAILY

Kilele planet

We are proud to be associated with our customers recognized at the Kenya Top 100 Mid - Sized Companies.

We welcome all SMEs to join Kenya's first SME networking portal, www.chasekileleplanet.co.ke

Network, Learn and Interact.



@chasebankkenya | ChaseBankKenya | 2774277, 0732 174 277, 0703 074 277.