

# SHAW Selling Australia to the world

The opening of a joint venture factory in China, a global marketing campaign and a presence at R+T Stuttgart make 2009 an ambitious year for Shaw of Australia. Dawn Adams reports.

Shaw of Australia is adopting a bold strategy on the cusp of a new year distinguished by a market which economists predict will be difficult. Rather than take a conservative stance and cut back on funding projects, the company is committed to significant investment 2009. Perhaps the most ambitious project is a 15,000-square-metre manufacturing complex in China, twice the size of its domestic production operation in the Sydney suburb of Marrickville, which will continue to operate. The first fabric from this facility will be shown at R+T Stuttgart in a strategy designed to build export trade in many markets, including those previously inaccessible due to pricepoints, such as South America, Russia and Eastern Europe.

### Ambitious plans

"Next year will be difficult with the world's economy. However, we still see opportunities," says CEO, Bradley Awerbuch. "We understand the economy will be pretty bad and the market will depreciate. Our aim is to get more market share from a smaller market."

The China facility has been designed to produce a wide range of fabrics across many different price categories.

"We've built a state-of-the-art factory from scratch, and we want to introduce world-class standards of quality in everything that we do, in the same way you have the likes of Mercedes and BMW manufacturing in third world countries but producing the same quality that comes out of Europe," he says.



**Sarah Harris, Brad Awerbuch, John Baguley: People driven by passion.**



**Inside Shaw's new joint venture factory in China.**

Awerbuch stresses that responsible employment and manufacturing processes have also been firmly established at the China premises, where a team of the company's technicians are stationed for quality assurance.

"Even in China, we want to continue our strategy of reducing our carbon footprint on the environment in terms of the way we operate," he says. "We are maintaining the same standards as we do in Australia, for emissions. And because we're a world class company, we want to produce in a world class way where our customers know that the highest standards of employment and production are being maintained."

### All about attitude

Awerbuch is convinced that success is about attitude.

"It's about the right attitude; we're on our mission and we will be successful," he says.

Yet another strategy for 2009 is for the firm to shed its Evershade brand name and for its products to be rebranded 'Shaw'.

John Baguley, general manager sales and marketing, says the Evershade brand has been operating for a number of years, but the company is best known as Shaw. "We'll fully concentrate on Shaw because we've become a worldwide brand now," he says.

In a global marketing campaign beginning this year, the firm will focus on the 'passion' within the business, adopting a tagline,

"driven by passion since 1948". That longevity was celebrated recently at the 60th anniversary celebrations, in a three-day program for staff from Australia and New Zealand that included sessions with Andrew May, the performance coach for the Australian Cricket Team, and creative thinking and performance specialist, Gary Bertwistle, who operates The Vault at Fox Studios.

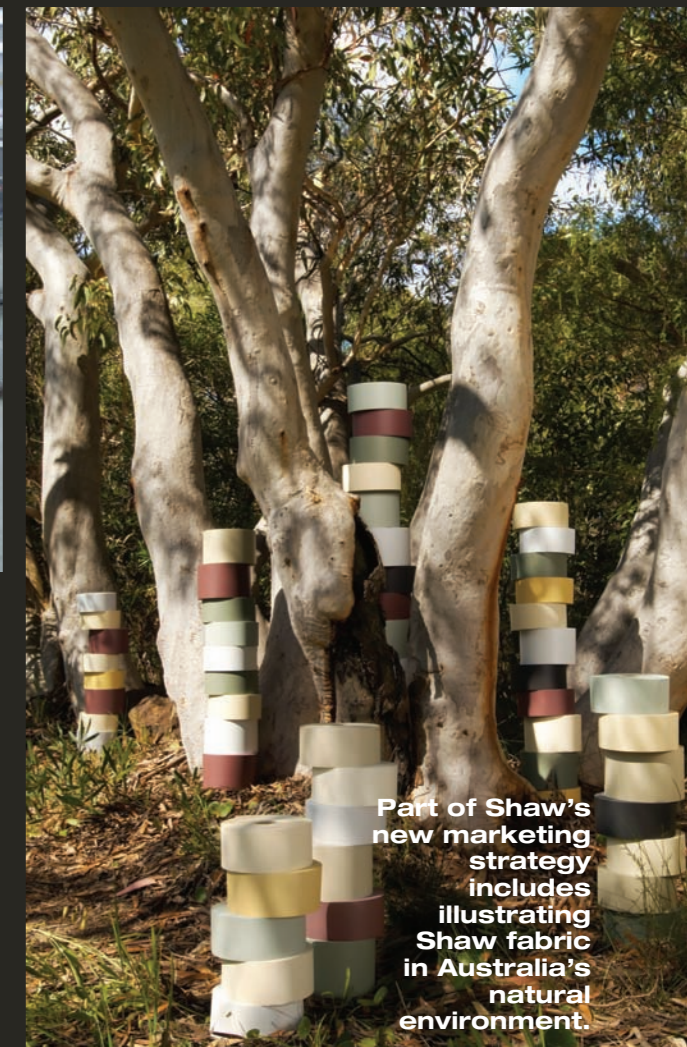
### Passion and people

"What we believe sets us apart from our competitors is our passion and the people who make up Shaw," Awerbuch says.

"We believe that's the key ingredient that will drive our success and set us apart from our competitors. The word 'passion' will become a theme in all our marketing and will filter down to every employee in the company from the shopfloor, starting at the top management."

Baguley echoes his thoughts:

"Our mission is to build long-term relationships built on trust, not just with our customers, but internally, with our staff. We'll implement our recruitment around our mission statement and our values, which are trustworthy, innovative, professional and dynamic. We'll ensure this is displayed around all company premises and in marketing literature."



**Part of Shaw's new marketing strategy includes illustrating Shaw fabric in Australia's natural environment.**

### Selling Australia

Yet another step taken to reinforce the concept will be a new website released in time for R+T Stuttgart.

"It's a people website, it's about relationships," Awerbuch says.

Recently appointed marketing manager, Sarah Harris, highlights the idea behind the website - to illustrate Shaw fabric in Australia's natural environment.

"We wanted to do something different," she says.

"We wanted to photograph these great products in the outdoors using elements like the water and the land to show Australia to the overseas market."

Also on the website are images of Shaw staff to offer a more personalised experience for customers, especially those from the export market.

"We've been exporting for the last



10 years and we've been building long-term relationships," Awerbuch says. "We have longstanding export customers. They're not one-off customers, these are repeat customers. Those relationships built up over the years have given us longevity."

While export will continue to be a strong focus, Baguley points out that Australian customers will benefit from the latest initiatives including the ability to manufacture in China.

"We believe the Australian market will benefit from our export growth," he says. "As we develop new products, they will be available in Australia."

Exploring markets in centres like Dubai, China, Germany, Russia and the US, Baguley has become convinced that Australian businesses are leaders in window furnishings. For example, he points to blockouts as a niche product not yet fully explored in export markets.

Awerbuch agrees: "Blockouts are a mainstream product in Australia but only a niche product elsewhere; we're trying to educate the rest of the world about the flock-coated blackout."

In a bid to improve and develop its customer service from all departments, the firm has enlisted the Servus company to secure customer feedback and train staff.

"We feel now is the time to push our brand to grow the business," Baguley says. "With major customers, it's almost like a partnership, as we're developing products they require."

And he again stresses the very personal nature of this business expressed through many areas, including its new website.

"We've made it very personal," Baguley says. "We don't want to be just a voice on the phone."

## Shaw to unveil new products in Stuttgart

Shaw of Australia intends to build brand awareness and grow its export market when it releases four new ranges from its stand at R+T Stuttgart.

The company will release the first fabric to be produced at its new joint venture manufacturing facility in China. Vibe is a direct-coated blackout fabric, available in 15 colours and 6 widths, 89mm, 100mm, 127mm as well as 2000mm, 2500mm, 3000mm.

"As the economic climate gets tough next year, people will want to hold less inventory," says John Baguley, general manager sales and marketing. "If they have ten windows and eight are a standard size and the others are a wide width, they have the flexibility to order a roll in a standard size and a cut length in the wider width, which is less inventory."

Also for release in Stuttgart is the Australian-made Avalon roller blind fabric, a light filtering 2.8-metre range available in 12 colours.

From New Zealand are two selections, the Kashmir and Yoko ranges. Kashmir took two years to develop and is designed to meet demand for a soft furnishings appearance as a roller blind.

"Kashmir has a silk appearance," Baguley says. "It's very elegant, has lustre and looks like a raw silk, flock coated for roller blinds in 10 colours, each in blackout and light filtering."

Yoko features 10 colours, each in blackout and light filtering options, a textured fabric also tapping into the soft furnishings trend for roller blinds.

Meanwhile, the 80-square-metre stand for the show was made in Sydney by the end of November in preparation for R+T Stuttgart. Plans are to display just the fabric to ensure attendees recognise the company as a manufacturer of fabric rather than blinds. New website photography illustrating the range in Australia's natural environment will be featured, while a new swatching program was completed for the event.

The firm currently exports around 40 percent of its total turnover, with predictions that will grow to 60 percent in the near future.

Also released will be the new Faber Benthin roller blind program one year after Shaw of Australia took on its distribution for Australia and New Zealand.

