

New strategic appointment to bolster Bata's regional expansion

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Prominent footwear manufacturer [Bata South Africa](#), has made a strategic appointment in the form of retail and merchandising professional, Suhail Rajah, who joined the organisation this year as the regional strategy and initiatives leader for Africa & the Middle East (AME). This pivotal, new role was created to support Bata's ambitious 2023 to 2027 plans for local business expansion and increased exports throughout the African market, emphasising the company's commitment to growth and market penetration in the region.



Passionate about digital transformation and possessing an entrepreneurial mindset, Rajah is dedicated to leveraging market research and driving innovation to ensure Bata Group's success. His responsibilities include driving the Bata Group AME Strategy, analysing market dynamics, product line performance, and monitoring the execution of business initiatives and competitive intelligence across the region.

He says, "I love that [Bata](#) is a global retailer with strong brands within its portfolio. My role allows me to work across the African continent which is one of the fastest growing continents in the world and gives me the opportunity to gain exposure into entering the Middle East. I am dedicated to leveraging market research, digital transformation, and innovative strategies to prioritise customer satisfaction and drive Bata's success."

Rajah brings a fresh perspective to the Bata team, with experience in the retail industry spanning six successful years at Mr Price Group, a leading fashion retailer with divisions across apparel and homeware. He started his career through the company's Professional Retail Programme (PRP) and occupied various roles throughout his tenure, including serving as a planner at the Mr Price Sport division.

Faisal Sabzwari, president of Bata Africa & Middle East, said, "Suhail's track record and passion for driving growth and innovation make him an invaluable asset to our team. We are confident that his strategic insights, market research acumen, and digital transformation expertise will greatly contribute to achieving our growth goals at Bata."

Rajah holds a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Marketing Management, a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management (PGDBM), and a 21st Century Skills Certificate. His strong attention to detail, effective communication skills, agility, and problem-solving abilities make him well-suited for his new role.

Bata – a household name globally with a reputation for affordable, reliable footwear – is presently pursuing vigorous expansion and distribution of some of its global sneaker, comfort and outdoor shoe labels to complement local manufacturing.

The company currently produces over five million shoes a year at its manufacturing facility in Loskop, Estcourt in KwaZulu-Natal, one of 21 Bata 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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