

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF A ROMANIAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BUSINESS: THE CASE OF UNIMAT

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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this presentation is to provide a successful business paradigm in nowadays competitive construction market of Romania. The descriptive analysis addresses the business portrait of SC UNIMAT SRL, a company founded seventeen years ago, in central Romania (Șelimbăr, Sibiu), as part of CON-A Group. The particularity of this organisation resides not only from its notoriety, but from also its focused and specialised solutions designed to fulfil client's needs and wishes. Also, its singularity arises from its rich product portfolio, which is always up-to-date with the customer's requisite and with the current market demand, allowing thus the creation of a serious and long-lasting liaison with its partners. The diachronic history of the company along with its specific customer's solutions for clients is addressed.

**KEYWORDS:** client focused solutions, consultancy, construction industry, showroom.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Within this paper we aim to provide a descriptive analysis of a successful business case activating in the construction industry in central Romania. It goes beyond the aim of the study to provide a theoretic and methodological interpretation of the situation concerning construction industry market locally and globally, but we intend to dress a business portrait of a particular organisation, with entire Romanian capital, that succeeded during the years in providing high quality management solutions oriented to its clients' expectations. Therefore, the case study is based on a descriptive analysis run within UNIMAT organisation.

### 2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Who and what is UNIMAT business? [8]. The story of UNIMAT business started as a prerequisite to meet clients' need. There are plenty of studies in the field about how and under which circumstances construction industry evolved [2, 5, 7]. The majority of these studies insist on the imperatives of creating a construction partner organisation able to approach and answers to the problems and questions of the actual market. Initially, in the situation of our case study company, the selling of construction material was very rudimentary in most of the cases, and the point of sale was just from where the clients could pick-up their products. Thus, UNIMAT came as an obvious answer to this underdeveloped and poor service provider solution. Once UNIMAT focused on clientele's demands, it became the place where, besides providing construction materials, the client can also find out exactly what the product does, and which is the best solution for his issue. Gradually, the company developed and strengthened the position of one of the best-selling construction material companies in the area.



**Figure 1.** Figure representing UNIMAT Headquarters

Nowadays, the company is represented in two cities from central Romania, with showrooms and logistic warehouses (Sibiu and Alba) and only with a warehouse in Mureș, but it is also already underway to build an elegant and modern showroom also in this location. The experience has taught them, that a show-room is a mandatory element when talking about specialised and professional selling. In this way, the client can express his problems in a friendly environment, whereas specialised trained consultants can show him the best solutions for the problems.

Hence, one of the key moments in the company's development was marked by the year 2015, when one of the most modern and innovative showroom was launched. Lately, the showroom offers extensive solutions for the construction and interior finishing markets, where professionals in the field are offering high standard practical consultancy to the clients.

Concerning the human capital, the company now has a total of 187 employees, most of them hilly qualified young personnel (46 of them under 30 years old). The ownership of the company is held by Bulboacă Mircea Vasile – Romanian citizen (90%) and Balaban Ilie Mihai – Romanian citizen (10%).

When comes about the customer profile of UNIMAT organisation, 43% of them are in the 31-40 years range (74% - men, 26% - women), 24% are in the 41-50 years category and 19% of its customers are between 20-30 years. From their total number of its clientele, 26% are legal entities (construction companies) and the rest is represented by individuals or legal entities that do not activate in the construction field. .

When the topic of the bestselling products was called into question, it was revealed that this is represented by the products used in building the structure of a house (e.g. bricks, tiles, mortars), and also for the finishing details of a house (e.g. wood flooring, ceramic tiles, varnishes and coatings etc.). Beside this, in their product portfolio, the company provides a good variety of gardening tools, drapes and curtains, wallpaper, gas and water installations. Furthermore, the customer can also find inside the UNIMAT showrooms, Meister Hermann, which is an own brand of adhesives.

One of the main objectives of the UNIMAT business is to offer to its customers solutions that they cannot find anywhere. In this matter, they have established partnerships with the best-selling products in Europe. Thus, the company became the sole distributors for the number one fireplaces in Germany: HARK. The brand is well-known for its quality and it is one of their flagship brands. The fireplaces from HARK [9] turn to be exactly what they needed in this aspect, offering thus their customers the best solutions. In addition to this, the company also offers a complete system for the clients, from selling the best products and also offering installation possibilities. One of the most interesting websites from its portfolio is [www.harkseminee.ro](http://www.harkseminee.ro), where the visitors can see a large variety of fireplaces.



**Figure 2.** Hark headquarters from Germany

Also, because the philosophy behind this organisation has determined them to offer only the best and complete solutions for its clients, they are one of the best partners of ROTO [8], one of the top producers of solutions for roof-windows. The managers have created a separate department inside their sales department that deals only with the requests that are coming regarding this issue. They are offering to their clients a complete and wide range of products regarding dimensions or special products. Again, within this department it is offered the optimal solution for installation of the products, once customer purchases it. Therefore, a specialised sales idea in all aspects developed within UNIMAT organisation.



**Figure 3.** Roto roof-windows

Besides the specialised selling process to its customers, the company understood that a major component regarding this specialised way of selling is related, not only to purchasing and supply chain management, but also to a proper marketing process. Therefore, they designed PR products that would help informing the market about the smart choices people have to make when building a house. In this way, a new free printed newsletter available to the large public arises. Meister Hermann is a monthly newspaper that is printed in 76.000 copies and is delivered for the citizens of Sibiu, through mailboxes. In the newspaper it is shown to future clients what can be done when using their services and solutions. Every issue contains a reportage regarding a house that was built, providing useful tips and solution, by professionals in the field. Furthermore, the company does neglect the cultural part and heritage that a newspaper needs, providing useful information and pleasant lecture to its reader.



**Figure 4.** Meister Hermann newspaper

Also, along with one of the best suppliers in the international business (Ytong, Wienerberger, Hark, Bramac, Knauf, Tondach and many more) the organisation created three magazines that are wrapped around the main points when building a house – Structure // Heating Systems // Finishing details. The magazines are printed in over 30.000 copies for each number and are distributed in Sibiu, Mures, Alba, Brasov and Cluj country. The concept behind the magazines was mainly to offer to their customers the most updated available solutions in the field of construction. Another very important aspect regarding UNIMAT business is the corporate social responsibility aspect. For this company, it was very important from its very beginning to be an active part in the community. Hence, the top management staff had understood that through education and values we can succeed in our efforts of having a better society. So, it was very important to understand why and how they got involved in many educational and developmental events. Among wide variety of events of social responsibility they were actively involved, UNIMAT became trusted partner in events like Sibiu Sands (the first events from Romania that brought beach volleyball in the historical centre of Sibiu and promoted sports as a way of education), The Christmas Market from Sibiu (they have managed to build Santa Clause house, where children of all ages can participate at a wide variety of workshops), Sibiu Guitar Meeting (a festival aiming to educate children and show them how to express themselves through music) along with many other events with same message and purposes.



**Figure 5.** Sibiu Guitar Meeting

### 3. INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

In a nutshell, all hereby activities mentioned, makes UNIMAT business to be much more that selling construction materials company. As it was revealed, UNIMAT is a paradigm in its field, is the place where you can go when you are in need of a professional advice and product, and where you can receive all the information and solutions you need when you want to build something. Moreover, UNIMAT is the place where you know that the specialised consultants will solve your problems that may arise. Last but not least, UNIMAT is the place where you can find a partner that will treat you with respect no matter how you look, or how much money you have in the bank account. In this direction, even the company slogan is relevant: If you want to build strong, choose quality!

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