



MARKET

The VIRO brand participates in a market that covers a wide variety of security solutions. While other brands prefer to concentrate heavily on one particular category of products within this field, VIRO has sought to provide the market with a wide range of products and solutions – it prides itself on attaching its name and quality standards to an array of products designed to satisfy a large spectrum of needs and desires.

VIRO currently holds about 30% of the padlocks market and about 50% of the door locks market (based on turnover). This information is based on detailed discussions held with major customers in the hardware supplies, wholesale and retail fields.

The main products covered under the world-renowned VIRO brand are:-

- Padlocks (Brass, Steel and Armoured)
- Mortice locks for steel, metal and wooden doors
- Rim locks (manual and electronic)
- Safes and safety cabinets
- Door closers
- Furniture locks (for cupboards, drawers and cabinets)

All these products come in different sizes and finishes, and incorporate a variety of features, thus catering for a broad range of market needs. The full range of products and specifications can be seen on the VIRO website, www.viro.it.

The Brand is mainly targeted at the middle and upper end of the market. But, as security is not a price-driven requirement, VIRO is considered a brand for every consumer seeking a quality solution to maintain a safe and secure environment. VIRO products are applicable to individuals (for personal or residential use), offices/businesses, furniture manufacturers, hotels and property developers or contractors.

There are different needs and levels of security concern to be addressed within each market segment. The Brand has sought to understand these needs and address them offering innovative

and quality solutions. Products come in different versions (by feature) and sizes to cater for the various segmental needs.

VIRO products have always met high quality standards, a feature that has enabled dealers and users of its products to become very easily



comfortable with them. In recent years, with a heavier concentration of competition, some changes made to the packaging – in terms of degree of gloss on the boxes and the brighter colours printed on the packaging – sales volumes have increased even further. These changes have made the products more noticeable, especially in supermarkets and retail outlets where there are competitors' products also on display.

VIRO has also sought to provide innovative security solutions to cater for the changing tastes and requirements of the market. For example the "Spranga" was introduced into the market to cater for those seeking innovative door / window locks without having a large lock or handles visible on the frame – the "Spranga" body is offered in different colours ensuring it can blend onto any door or window surface.

VIRO believe that there is still a significant potential for growth in the East African market as customer

preferences are becoming more sophisticated and more quality-driven. There is continuous investment in expanding the product range and providing solutions suitable to the different market segments. With the improved appearance of the products and consistency in quality, volumes and turnover are expected to increase. The brand's market share is expected to grow both in the Kenyan market and those of its neighbouring countries.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In 1992 the assembly line for VIRO brand

padlocks was opened in Kenya, using the same technology and techniques as Viro S.p.A. The local employees underwent training and close supervision by Viro engineers.

VIRO locks were first exported to the wider East African region in 1994.

In 2007 a brand representative was placed in Mombasa, Kenya to serve the Coastal region. In 2011 another brand representative was placed in Eldoret to cover the Rift Valley and Western Kenya regions.

In 2010 the brand achieved its first recognition as a Superbrand of East Africa.

VIRO has achieved the Kenya Bureau of Standards certification (consistently meeting the quality standards) and is approved to use the KEBS Diamond Mark.

VIRO has been awarded ISO 9001:2008 by Bureau Veritas Italia.

VIRO was one of the first high-quality brands for padlocks to be introduced in the Kenya market. While at the time there were other brands being imported into the country, none were of the same quality or recognised brand name as VIRO.

The VIRO padlocks were also the first to be assembled in Kenya, by a trained, skilled, assembling team.

The VIRO brand has registered patented key profiles which provide an additional layer of security as the keys cannot be easily copied, with the process being controlled by the parent company and its dealers.



HISTORY

The VIRO brand was established in 1942 in Italy. The brand was introduced in the East African market (starting with Kenya) in the 1980s. Viro Locks (K) Limited was registered in 1990 as a local trading company

with full support from Viro S.p.A. (Italy), and has always operated as a family-run concern. The company forms part of the Bobmil Group of Companies and is based within the Bobmil Complex along Mombasa Road, Nairobi.

Since the introduction of the VIRO brand, other related brands by the same manufacturer have also been introduced into the market – "FAI by VIRO", "MARINE" padlocks, "PANZER" armoured locks, "MONOLITH" locks and "CASASICURA" safes.

The VIRO brand was introduced in the Kenya market with the aim to supply the growing market with high quality security solutions for day-to-day life.

The first obstacle was the general public who



had not heard of the brand name and hence were reluctant to accept its claim to high quality products. By persistently educating the hardware dealers in the market and offering extensive trading terms, they were encouraged to trade in the products and simultaneously educate the consumers.

With a price-conscious market, introducing higher quality products would expectedly be met with some resistance and uncertainty. So initially sales were slow, but as the brand name became recognised locally and further throughout the East African region sales grew and consumers gained confidence in the quality of the products.

The VIRO brand name was introduced into a market that had traditionally been more price-conscious than quality-conscious. Over time, however, confidence in the brand grew through consistent delivery of high-quality products and the introduction of new security solutions. Initially the focus of the brand in East Africa was mainly with padlocks, with other products such as door locks and safes being introduced later on.

Customer surveys are informally carried out each year but a formal seminar was held in 2006 through which the main dealers at the time learnt more about the product and were also introduced to the Viro Italy team, enhancing the brand confidence.

Now being a recognised brand name, there are numerous counterfeit products entering the market. However, the genuine VIRO brand is protected by educating the consumers on how to identify counterfeit products and also encouraging them to report the sale of counterfeits for their own protection and that of their fellow citizens.

PRODUCT

Overall,VIRO products are designed to provide a high level of security for the home or commercial environment.

Being a consumer product, packaging is always important as it enhances the appeal of a product.To this end,VIRO has introduced bright

colours, making the products more visible on supermarket and shop shelves. Some of the product boxes have a clear window allowing the customers to see the product inside.VIRO

products are also available in clear blister packs, which also allow the product to be seen from a distance.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

VIRO have recently introduced the 2-lever Mortice Locks.These are very appropriate for this market as they provide a good balance between price and quality.

There are also marketing the “Spranga” and new electronic gate locks that have been introduced. These provide a high level of security as well as achieving aesthetic goals. With space becoming more and more valuable, VIRO have noted the

increased use of sliding gates.While these are a practical solution these days, the locking systems and products used must also match. For this VIRO have introduced a heavy duty sliding door lock which secures the gate into the locked position using a strong rotating arm.

All of their assembly and sales operations are conducted from their premises at the Bobmil Complex on Mombasa Road, Nairobi.They have added brand representatives in the Coastal and Western Kenya markets to enhance the brand awareness.

Although they have not opened any new branches recently,the coverage of the brand increases as their customer base grows and existing customers open new branches. VIRO have recently renewed their Distribution Agreement with Viro S.p.A.

PROMOTION

Promotion of the products to each category is done through relevant media, exhibitions and an educative approach applied through the retailers, encouraging consumers to purchase quality solutions for their security needs.

- VIRO have used the following media to advertise and promote the brand:-
- Newspapers (The Daily Nation and The Standard)
- Magazines (ie community or supermarket magazines)

- Trade journals
- Banners and display shelves/cabinets
- Stalls and trade exhibitions

BRAND VALUES

VIRO brand values can be summarised as: Quality, Security and Value.

VIRO promise their customers that the products provide security in personal or commercial applications and value for money. **Quality** –with significant competition in the market for security products, they are committed to providing high quality products. During the assembly of the locks, each piece is tested to ensure that quality is consistently delivered. **Value** – they operate in an economy where their products are considered luxuries. Hence, they must ensure that their products are priced fairly for the quality they represent.

Service – they cater for individual requirements and circumstances by providing a wide range of products.

Many of their customers (hardware dealers and supermarkets) have commented that they feel happy selling VIRO products as they know they are providing the end users with quality products. End users have also commented that they have used the same locks for a very long time and are committed to buying the VIRO brand whenever required.

The brand logo is kept simple but with bright colours.

www.viro.it



Things you didn't know about Viro

VIRO padlocks distributed within East Africa are assembled in Kenya by a team fully trained on VIRO's technology and well-experienced with the process.

The VIRO brand name is an acronym of the founder, Vincenzo Rossetti.

VIRO padlocks from the early 1970s are still being used today in Kenya.

Superbrands

