

# Raising the Standard



Gerry Robinson

While working as a building contractor, Sealux founder Gerry Robinson was brought to

his knees by a leading product he believed promised much but delivered little.

The performance claims that helped make the product so prolific in the market appeared to defy on-site realities and recommendations of the British Standards. So, necessity being the mother of invention, Gerry used his building experience to create a formula which could stand up to, and exceed, his own requirements.

Tile UK asks Gerry Robinson to explain the principles behind Sealux and his passion for contending heavily-marketed, but sometimes inefficient, seal strip products.

## You come from a building background - what inspired you to start up Sealux?

My background is in engineering, but it was while working as a building contractor I became familiar with the causes and consequences of leaking seals. Soft-lip seal strips were prolific at the time, but because they relied on the soft lip remaining pressed firmly against the ledge, they leaked when the ledge settled down and when the soft lip deteriorated after exposure to the shower environment.

My on site problem with seal strips



Waterproofing now represents a real added value opportunity for tile retailers



Sealux Reg 20

inspired me to investigate what would result in Sealux. There was already a growing consensus in the tile market that seal strips were DIY products, and not the best option for sealing joints prone to expand. I believed that given the choice, a percentage of retailers, consumers and installers would trade up because Sealux offered real long-term advantages.

## What differentiates Sealux from a conventional seal strip?

Sealux seals are fit for purpose, their design accommodates BS5385 recommendations and when installed

in the shower environment they are more flexible and durable than seal strips. What differentiates Sealux as a company is that, as a responsible manufacturer, we can confidently promote our product benefits as they are backed up by independent test data.

When Sealux launched in the UK, the leading brand of seal strip was claimed to offer 'an effective long lasting watertight seal', this claim was being made contrary to the recommendations of the British Standards who only considered such products suitable 'where a watertight seal is not critical'.

## Manufacturer interview

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) states marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove all claims capable of objective substantiation.

As far as I'm aware - there is still no test data available to substantiate these claims. In my view, seal strips are not fit for purpose and product testing would prove so. False claims mislead consumers and I challenge suppliers to objectively substantiate their claims in accordance with ASA guidelines.

### Explain your principle - 'Differentiate, Challenge and Defend'

In a healthy and competitive market, retailers and their suppliers compete under the legal obligation that product descriptions are honest and truthful, and goods traded are fit for purpose and as described.

In such a market, specialist tile retailers with product expertise can

compete fairly and differentiate themselves through the quality of products and advice they can offer consumers.

Sealux differentiates itself through the unique benefits of their seals, but may also challenge false claims made on competing products to defend the right of Sealux retailers to compete on a level playing field, where consumers are not misled, but can judge product and supplier integrity on the basis of honest trade descriptions and objectively substantiated performance claims.

### How many products are there in your range, and where is your target market?

Our tile seal range includes Sealux, Trimlux and Easeal to accommodate different customer preferences. Our seals are available loose or in 'easy sell' kit format. Our target market remains clearly focussed on tile retailers offering



Trimlux Pro 25



Easeal Pro 25

quality products, good advice and value for money.

### What Sealux can do for tile retailers?

In a tile market increasingly encroached upon by non-specialist providers, differentiation is a valuable marketing tool for tile retailers defending the 'added value' attraction they hold for consumers as 'specialists' in their field.

Most tile retailers service a variety of customer preferences, from those focussed exclusively on price and ease of installation through to installers, specifiers and property owners focussed on product quality and long-term value for money.

Sealux offers tile retailers an opportunity to meet all consumer preferences through a superior range of fit for purpose seals.

Consumers know leaks can be disastrous and given the correct facts about sealing ledge/wall joints, most

will choose a Sealux seal over a seal strip and hopefully in the process, give Sealux retailers an opportunity to promote their tiles and adhesives too.

### What plans for the future does Sealux have?

Current research and development will strengthen our product range moving forward. We remain committed to tile sector retailers as a means of supplying end users. Our marketing efforts will focus on educating tile retailers, consumers, installers and specifiers about the benefits of Sealux products.

While we currently service our retailers direct, our long-term distribution strategy is to service tile retailers through strategic partners with complimentary product lines and similar business principles.

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