Concept And Creation

The construction industry has always been one of the most inventive business sectors in Sri Lanka, with no shortage of potential and creativity. Rohan Peris, Managing Director of Alumex, gives his thoughts on the company’s venture into the residential and homeowner market and how its concept showroom Lumin Concepts is paving the way for functional home design.

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As Lumin is a flagship brand of Alumex, could you start by giving a brief description of the latter?

Alumex was incorporated in 1986, and we started manufacturing in 1988. The business we are in is aluminium extrusions, the target market being the construction industry, where aluminium extrusions for windows and doors are most commonly used. Apart from that, we also make aluminium hardware, which means tubes and rectangular sections, which you can use for almost anything you want. Alumex, from that time, has steadily grown in the market and we now command over 50 per cent of market share. In 2010, the company became part of the Hayleys Group and from that time till now, we've grown it further by coming up with newer and better products that since last year have also included the Lumin range of products.

We Came Up With This New Brand Called Lumin, Which Is Specifically Targeted Towards Residential Markets, Or Homeowners, To Be Exact.

Why Create the Lumin products?
All this time that we have been in business, we have been targeting the commercial sector, because the residential sector was dominated by wood. In the last five years, however, we have seen a gradual move towards aluminium windows and doors, mainly because wood is becoming more expensive and carpenters are more difficult to find. So we thought now is a good time for us to get into the market and to do something creative, so we came up with this new brand called Lumin, which is specifically targeted towards residential markets, or homeowners, to be exact.

How were you able to market Lumin?
Once we started with Lumin, we realised we were going to run into several problems, one being, how do we get people who are potential homeowners convinced on aluminium as opposed to wood? So we came up with an advertising campaign. It featured brochures that showed what your house would look like if you chose to add aluminium windows and doors and then finally we came up with the concept centre, where you can visit and actually get a feel of what the doors and windows look like and how they work.

How does the concept store help showcase Lumin's range of products?
It displays the various designs and design combinations, the range of colours, functionality and security options available. But most importantly the standard of quality we maintain with the Lumin range. Once customers come into the concept

centre and get a touch and feel of what we have to offer, we believe it will give them the confidence to go for the aluminium option instead of wood.

Can you explain the concept behind freedom to design using minimum space and ergonomic benefits?
The Lumin range has a solution for every situation. The various designs we have can be used to optimise space in the home. For instance, if you have a traditional window, which opens out onto the balcony, you can't use that balcony anymore – the window blocks it. We have several options for these types of situations. We have top-hung or bottom-hung window systems, which allow ventilation but do not restrict space on the balcony. Another option would be a sliding window. The ergonomically-designed windows and door systems allow greater functionality and open and close with the minimum of effort. The options on handles and locks allow easy access and ease of operation with a turn of a handle, allowing not only the opening and closing but also multiple locking in up to seven points.

We Also Provide Various Colour Options And Paint Textures – Most Notably, Our Powder-Coated Window Models Which Come In An Almost Infinite Amount Of Colours, So You Can Get Your Windows In Red Or Green, Or Any Other Colour You So Choose.

Can you give a brief description of the products offered by Lumin?
We provide a wide range of options for aluminium doors and windows with many combinations i.e. casement, awning, top hung, tilt and turn, sliding windows, swing, sliding/folding doors with louvers, single or double glazing etc. We also provide various colour options and paint textures – most notably, our powder-coated window/door models come in an almost infinite range of colours so you can match them to the colour of your walls. All you have to do is let us know your preference and we will manufacture and coat your selection to any colour you want.

We also have some very interesting window and door profiles, which look just like wood. Our wood effect range is very popular amongst people who prefer a more traditional look for their doors and windows. This option is fast becoming extremely popular in Sri Lanka as people still have a fondness for wood, and that is why we offer it – so that people can have the best of both worlds. There are also several aluminium colour options for people who like the look of anodised aluminium, which

come in a separate range of colours: natural aluminium colour, brown, beige and black.

Can you give a brief description of the services offered by Lumin Concepts?
The main service provided for Lumin customers is that we give them advice on which window and door is suitable for which area in their house. In addition, we will recommend fabricators to you. Alumex has a fabricator training school so most of the fabricators are trained on our systems and our profiles. Therefore, when we recommend somebody, we make sure that the person has the right qualifications and skill to come and do the work in your house. We are also able to create drawings for you, with details of the profiles and accessories required. You can take the drawings to our dealers and you'll get the exact same product to what you see at the showroom. The services are all offered free so architects together with their customers can visit and get ideas as to what is most suitable for the home that you want to build.

Since its launch, how has Lumin Concepts been received?
Very well! We have had quite a few people coming in here and having a look. During the day, we get on average five or six potential customers coming in and on the weekend, it tends to get pretty heavy with about 10 to 15 individuals or families coming in. Quite a number of the customer inquiries have turned into orders, so we are quite happy at this point in time. The responses from customers have also been very positive.

Why would you say I should choose Lumin products?
Several reasons. One is that we maintain our quality to international standards. All our windows and doors are tested to UKAS guidelines for water, wind and sound infiltration. The tests were carried out in Dubai and with the certification we received: we can guarantee that no water or wind will come through and sound will be minimised once you install our products. Also, the manufacturing specifications are very strict. We manufacture to international standards and ensure that you get a quality certificate upon request.

Can you comment on any future plans of expansion regarding Lumin

Concepts?
Expansion – we will be adding new products such as a wardrobe range, which we would like to introduce for both apartments and houses. In apartments, the area is small, so sliding doored wardrobes fit in beautifully rather than doors that open out and take a lot of room.

We have also introduced a mosquito and insect mesh that is designed for both aluminium or wooden windows or doors. There are many other products that will be coming in, like shower cubicles. As time goes on, more and more products will be added and of course, the existing products will be upgraded with more and more features.

Could you describe your position and time with Alumex?
The greater part of my career was at Haycarb PLC. I was in charge of manufacturing there for 29 years. When Hayleys took over Alumex, they were looking for someone with manufacturing experience and I was asked by the Chairman to take over as its Managing Director and so I joined Alumex in 2012. My whole idea was to improve the quality of the product to a level where it is accepted not just locally but internationally as well. Our intention with this strategy is to capture not only the Sri Lankan market but also the Southeast Asian regional markets and I am sure we can do that with the skill and knowledge that we Sri Lankans have.