

ASSOCIATION OF
CONSULTING
ARCHITECTS
NIGERIA



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

INTERVIEW WITH WICHTECH INDUSTRIES LIMITED

QUESTION: CAN YOU GIVE US A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF?

CHAIRMAN: My name is Dr. Chidozie Wangbo. I am the Chairman of Wichtech. Wichtech is into specialized building products. We have been selling building products for about 26 years now. We happen to be the market leader in most of the products we sell because we go for best quality in the field. We believe that Nigerians deserve the best and we try as much as possible to give Nigerians the best. Most Nigerians are always thinking about how they can maximize their profit and minimize cost, knowing full well that most building products outlive the architects, the engineers and even the owners of the house. We think about the value of the house after 20-30years. Most people while building their houses think about retirement. It would be very unfortunate that after investing your life savings, you discover that the house is not giving you the desired result at the time when you retire.

QUESTION: You said you have been in the business for 26 years, what inspired you to start?

CHAIRMAN: I am from Anambra state. My father is a trader. When asked what he was going to be, one of my children said "I am going to be a business man like my father." My father was very successful in his own time. He was a transporter. Before the Biafran War, he used to be the No. 1 for Leventis. I looked at his success in business and I wanted to be like him. Every child wants to be better than the father. That is what inspired me. My Father told me "make sure you don't disappoint me." I told him that there was no way that I would. My Father is late but before he died he was able to see us succeed.

QUESTION: How has the response been so far since you started?

CHAIRMAN: To be very frank with you, we at Wichtech have never known that any other Company exists for one single reason. Even our competitors know we are Number 1. There is no competitor in the roofing and piping industry that will not say that our products are the best. They might tell lies that our products are expensive, which is not true. If you look at our billboards you will find that the prices are surprisingly affordable. That came to be when we commissioned a company called ReZmark . They are like a professional watchdog for professional companies. We asked them to go to the end users and find out their minds about the products they have used. At the end of the day, they came back to say that the customers that 99% of the customers interviewed had said one thing in common, that all the

products they bought from Wichtech, especially the roof, happened to be 5% more expensive than the fake ones. Whereas if you go to the marketplace today, if you want to buy granite, the granite made in China is about N5000/sqm, while the Italian granite is N15,00/sqm. There is 300% price difference. If you compare the Korean cars such as Kia, you can buy them for N2M, but the cheapest German cars such as the Mercedes Benz are like N12M, which is about 4 times more expensive. In our own products, you will find about a 5% price difference. The end users are very glad. In fact, there is a customer downstairs who bought a house in Nicon Estate. He is now doing the one in his village. He said that in his Estate, every roof that has not been done by Wichtech has faded away, but roofs done by Wichtech have remained the same. He is now building a new house and he cannot go elsewhere. Our strength is in the referrals and testimonies from our customers. It goes further than you can imagine. While discussing in Ikoyi Club, most people affirmed that Wichtech is the best. We are very proud of our products.

QUESTION: Seeing that Architects are the main specifiers of your product, give us an insight on your company's relationship with the Architects on a typical project.

CHAIRMAN: We can't do without Architects. The truth of the matter is Architects are not easy people to handle. No matter how close you are to an Architect, if he discovers your product is unstable, he won't come back to you. The Architect wants to retain his image and protect his clients. That is the most important thing to any Architect. They are not coming to us because they like our faces but they find out that we have the right products. Any day we deviate from what they know, they won't come back to us.

QUESTION: What's next for WICHTECH INDUSTRIES LIMITED?

CHAIRMAN: At this point in time, we are thinking of setting up a school to train Nigerians. We are trying to partner with a Ministry in the UK to set up a school to be able to upgrade our attendance. If you look at our built up environment, you find that most of our workforce is not trained, which is a big issue. And because we are growing, we have looked at Nigeria and discovered that we need the workforce to match this growth. We have employed a British plumber. We have been going around States. We have gone to Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Warri, Enugu and virtually all the state capitals. We have engaged our British plumber to train plumbers all over the states to make sure they understand the system of our pipes and make sure our standards are maintained. The school should be set up in the next 24 months. We are still at the planning stage. We have brought in Dr. Oyinagbo who has headed a school before to be our Operations Manager. He has been liaising with the Ministry of Education.