

Speciality minerals in the 90s — changes in marketing and R & D

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After a production orientated period in the 1970s the suppliers of speciality minerals have improved their marketing and R & D. "Market orientation" is now the current slogan. The competition has widened to quite different products and raw material groups and technological understanding of consumer markets overlapping other areas of expertise is essential for successful development. Chemical surface treatment is one area that is gaining ground. The consuming industry invariably puts the onus of technical development on mineral suppliers. Hence, speciality minerals producers are faced with enormous efforts and costs to keep pace of the major mineral and chemical corporations. Where the minerals industry is not fast or flexible enough then the consuming industry takes the initiative.

This challenge is extended to the distributors and agents as well and the changing demand of support in regional markets demands a new role of sales partners. Direct communication between the producing and consuming industries is facilitated by the international flow of information and the processing, interpretation and implementation of decisions requires a new type of infrastructure.

Developments in a range of speciality minerals such as precipitated calcium carbonate, talc, zeolite, mica, and wollastonite are discussed and future trends are outlined.

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