

Riding the Waves of HK Business Metamorphosis: Reviving a Foreign Brand by Hong Konger Spirit

本地薑順勢而行乘風而起 以國際品牌打響名堂



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Kenny Wong, CEO of 95 International Co. Ltd., can be described as a typical Hongkonger – hardworking, diplomatic, quick-wit and bearing multiple roles. Over the years, he heeds firmly to the belief **“Be bold, cautious and thick-skinned”**, which opens up for him many doors of opportunities, taking advantage of the golden age of Hong Kong’s development.

Social Connection is King

Back in his youth, Kenny failed to get into a local university. Still, he worked his way to Canada as a part-time student major in manufacturing engineering in the 1980s. After graduation, he worked as production supervisor in a factory for a time, but he refused to be confined in such environment because his university lecturer once told him, “Success is not what you know, it’s who you know”, so he took a leap of faith and quitted his high-paying job to become a salesperson.

“As a computer printer salesperson back in the days, the income was meager with little commission. Yet my job provided me the opportunity to change my career and allowed me to expand my social connections a lot, which paved the way to my starting my own business in tele-communications, cell phone distribution and accessory manufacturing. Later I started my own vehicle parts and repair plant in Liaoning, all thanks to my connections in the past.”

He earned his first pot of gold from manufacturing charging devices for mobile phone. Later, it turned out that mobile phone manufacturers were starting to make their own charging devices. Sensing the change, Kenny decided to transform his business and set up a factory in Dalian for auto repair/ equipment parts trading. Riding the wave of China’s Economic Reform, the company joined in China’s pioneering exporter army and enjoyed some decades of prosperity from China’s status as the “world’s factory”.

95國際有限公司總裁黃耀明(Kenny)可算是典型的「香港仔」：拼搏勤奮、具交際手腕、轉數快、「多範數」等，而多年來他都能覷準及把握各種機會，全因他一直秉持「**膽大心細臉皮厚**」的格言。

人脈重於一切

因考不上本地大學而在加拿大半工讀的Kenny，在80年代唸生產工程等相關課程，本應在工廠擔當生產主任等職務，但他受大學導師啟發、明白「Success is not what you know, it’s who you know」(成功不重知識而重人脈)的道理，所以毅然放棄高薪厚職，投身銷售人員行列。

「當年作為電腦打印機公司的業務員時雖然只有低微底薪及佣金，但卻有機會拓闊許多人脈資源，亦在機緣巧合下投身通訊器材、手機批發及配件生產等生意，並由廣東省轉戰到遼寧省開汽車維修設備廠，都有賴人脈關係才能實現。」

他的第一桶金是從生產「大哥大」手機充電設備得來。其後因手機商開始生產自家充電配件，Kenny憑藉敏銳市場觸覺而轉型、在大連建工廠進行汽車維修/零件設備貿易，適逢當時國家正值改革開放，公司順理成章便成為中國出口先頭部隊，然後盡享往後數十年世界工廠樞紐的盛世。

覷準商機 華麗轉型

Kenny憑藉努力學習的態度、遠見，再加上市場機遇，造就他另一品牌La Raine在本地誕生。Kenny在10年前洞察到有機護膚品市場的發展潛力，在多年資料搜集及市場調查後，決定將外國成熟的有機護膚品引入香港，遂與源自加拿大的有機護膚品牌La Raine合作，貪其知名度不高但質素卓越，能夠在中產市場站穩陣腳。

Seizing Opportunities and Change for the Better

His hard-working attitude and vision, coinciding with market opportunities, gave birth to La Raine in Hong Kong – another brand owned by Kenny. The story started 10 years ago: Kenny identified much business potential in organic skincare market. After years of due diligence and market research, he decided to collaborate with La Raine, an organic skincare brand from Canada. Though it is a lesser-known brand, Kenny believes it can stand strong in the middle-class market for its exceptional quality.

“Canada has been widely known for its ginseng, maple leaves and salmon, yet organic skincare products are in fact the ‘hidden gem’. We can find lots of skincare product brands in Hong Kong, but only a few of them are organic. There is a huge demand for skincare products ranged from HKD900-1200 in Greater China market, so I truly believe the potential for La Raine rings loud in China and Hong Kong.”

La Raine now has 5 store counters and 11 sales locations. In order to collect market data and enhance consumer experience, the brand adopted GS1 HK’s Smart Kiosk solution to offer a seamless online and offline experience. When the sensors in Smart Kiosk detect the interaction between consumers and the products, the Kiosk will instantly display the product details on screen, pop up discount coupons, show recommended products, also allowing consumer to share on social media, facilitating a more interactive shopping experience and stimulating sales.

In addition, La Raine also joined HKCTS Bus WeChat Store via GS1 HK, reaching out to 4 million active users in Mainland China. The platform provides one-stop services to members including product listing, marketing, customer service, cross-border logistics and customs clearance, aiding the brand to effectively gain exposure in China.

“As Hong Kong consumers prefer to try the product before purchase, they are more keen to trust brands with brick-and-mortar stores. So we use new technology to provide consumers a more personalised and interactive experience. Since China covers a lot of cities and grounds, I think the best way to penetrate into the market is through online platform.”

「加拿大的花旗參、楓葉、三文魚出名，但有機護膚品其實是『禾稈中珍珠』。香港市場護膚品牌眾多，但有機的卻寥寥可數，再加上中國內地對港幣900-1200元的護膚品有需求，所以La Raine在中港絕對有市場。」

La Raine現有5個分店櫃位、11個銷售點。為提升顧客體驗及收集市場數據，品牌曾利用GS1 HK的Smart Kiosk廣告機支援線上線下服務深度融合。Smart Kiosk能感應La Raine顧客與產品的互動，自動播放產品資訊，更具備彈出優惠券、展示推薦產品、社交平台分享等功能，增加銷售機會及豐富購物體驗。



La Raine同時透過GS1 HK加盟了中旅巴士微信商城，開拓包括大灣區在內的、共400萬活躍用戶國內市場。該平台為La Raine提供一站式服務如開店上架、市場營銷、客戶服務、國內清關及跨境物流服務，讓品牌迅速在國內建立知名度。

「香港顧客始終較相信有實體店的新品牌，他們要試用產品才購買，所以我們特別使用新科技，強化顧客的個人化互動體驗。而國內因地大物博，以網上渠道去滲入國內市場是最佳選擇。」



Consumer Care is the Key

Kenny emphasised on consumer experience, and he believes employee training is fundamental to consumer care. Qualified as an assessor at Hong Kong Mediation Centre, Kenny integrates his mediation skills into employee trainings. Therefore, their staff are not only acquired with product knowledge, but also with consultative selling skills, ability to manage expectations, as well as dealing with customer complaints and feedbacks. That is why La Raine was awarded “Consumer Caring Company” for two consecutive years, recognising the brand’s high-quality products and services provided to consumers, which are essential for brands to navigate through retail slump.

“No experience is required for our new-join staff, as we offer comprehensive trainings to help them quickly grasp the key points after trying the products. I also coach our staff to observe customers’ closely and sense what they are interested in, matching them with the right product.”

Currently sold in ASEAN countries like Vietnam and Cambodia, Kenny will put extra focus on Middle East and Africa in future, capitalising on the China’s Belt & Road Initiative development. As a Canadian brand, the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service also promotes the product on its website keenly.

貼心服務是關鍵

Kenny強調顧客體驗，認為員工培訓是其根本。他現時是香港和解中心調解員的評審，喜歡將其所學應用在培訓上，同事除了產品知識外，亦要學習顧問式銷售技巧、推測顧客期望、處理投訴/意見等多元化技巧，難怪La Raine連續兩年成為「貼心企業嘉許計劃」。該計劃表揚La Raine為消費者提供安全高質產品及一流服務，在現今零售業放緩的情況下更顯重要。



「我聘請銷售員可以不需有經驗，因公司有完善的培訓安排，讓不懂護膚品的同事試用後也可迅速掌握重點。我教導同事要鑒別辨色、留意客人對哪一項有興趣，再順勢進行銷售。」

La Raine現時在越南、柬埔寨等東盟國家有售，Kenny表示未來正注視中東及非洲等市場，與國家一帶一路的發展步伐一致。而由於加拿大品牌，所以加拿大貿易處的官網也積極推介其產品。

A Message to SMEs: Be Bold, Cautious and Thick-skinned

As the Vice Chairman of GS1 HK SMEs Advisory Board, Kenny believes SMEs should be “bold, cautious and thick-skinned” to stand out from competition, especially during economic downturn. A living example: Triggered by a “bold” decision, Kenny decided to invest into skincare industry, and “cautiously” examine the “why, what, when” in the market to identify business opportunities and come up with hero products. The thoughtful service to consumers, underpinned by all-round employee training is what make La Raine’s story today.

中小企格言：「膽大心細臉皮厚」

作為GS1 HK中小企諮詢委員會的副主席，Kenny認為中小企在現時疲弱零售市道下，必須保持「膽大心細臉皮厚」才能脫穎而出。當年一個「膽大」的決定，讓Kenny毅然投身有機護膚品行列，並「心細」地審視市場上的「Why(為何)，What(甚麼)，When(何時)」，瞄準各項商機、定出皇牌產品，再以誠懇的待客之道，培訓員工貼心服務，成就了今天的La Raine。

