

## Reusable Straw Crowdfunded HK\$600K Caught Eyes of the Global Brands 可重用2,000次飲管眾籌60萬 獲大品牌賞識



**Jason Li**  
Managing Director, ThinkThing Studio  
**李崇山**  
ThinkThing Studio 董事總經理

The Chinese proverb “The Circumstances Make a Man” is perhaps a good portrait describing the background of Jason Li, Managing Director of ‘ThinkThing Studio’. Began in an architect office more than 10 years ago, Jason resigned after a year to start his product design business. “The first product I created was a USB card reader. I made a luminous perimeter to signify connecting the two surfaces, where storage data can be expanded to infinity. Sadly, few people appreciated it at the time.” Jason hopes his works can convey meanings and establish connections between people and things, not a one-off object.

### Tenacity is the key to success

Despite different in scale, Jason believes architectural design and product design are somewhat similar. They both require the makers to be ultra-detail-minded and thoughtful, so the designer items can last. It took him two years to engineer and produce a reusable drinking straw, branded “Ztraw”, which can be folded into a card size.

“I have spent a whole year to devise a round nozzle on one end, to a triangular nozzle on the other, just to enhance its foldability. Another challenge is the material: The tube might leak or tear apart easily if we use thinner material, or difficult to fold and trap dirt if the material is too thick. At the production plant, we need to adjust 0.01mm each time to create the perfect thickness.”

As sustainability and reusability prevails in the city, the Ztraw project received more than 3,500 orders in online crowdfunding, exceeding Jason’s expectations. The drinking tube is made of certified food-grade recyclable materials sprinkled with patented antibacterial agent from Korea. It can be folded into a straw and

時勢造英雄，對於ThinkThing Studio董事總經理李崇山(Jason)而言，算是他十多年工作經歷的重要寫照。修讀建築的Jason在建築師樓做滿一年後便毅然轉行，開設計室為客戶做產品設計。「還記得第一件設計的產品是USB讀卡器，我在讀卡器邊特地加入燈光，象徵連結兩邊空間、儲存數據無邊界、擴充無限，但當時未有許多人能意會。」Jason希望他的作品都能傳達訊息、建立人與物的連繫，而非用完即棄。

### 兩年磨一劍

他認為建築與產品設計有些相似，只是大小之差，但同樣需要心思縝密、考慮周全，否則出來的作品不能長久受歡迎。一張卡片大小、可摺可拆的可重用飲管Ztraw，便花了他兩年時間去設計及製作。

「飲管一端設計由圓咀、變成另一端的三角咀、方便摺起，單是這設計便花了我一整年時間。飲管質料薄一點會漏水、易破或不耐用，但厚一點又會難摺、藏垢納污，所以在生產製作時，我們是每0.01mm的厚度去不斷調整，才做出現在的呎吋。」



unfolded into pocket-size, easy to carry and clean. Even though the design will be patented soon, Jason further used GS1 HK's "Real Barcode" to prevent copycats, because of some upsetting experience back in the days.

## One-stop Anti-counterfeiting Solution

"I created a LED table lamp with octagon-shape base about 9 years ago. It brought me acclaims but not much businesses. A few years later, the same product appeared in a large homeware store, using exactly the same mini USB port which was already outdated," Jason was a bit annoyed back then. "But now I see the product is sold in different museums and lifestyle boutiques, I realise it was all about the right place and right time: The lamp may look a bit peculiar for consumers in the past, now people finally appreciate its singularity, because character and individuality are celebrated."

The reusable drinking "Ztraw" received enthusiastic responses. "Real Barcode" was used to allow consumers to verify its authenticity to protect the brand, and more importantly, to connect with buyers, listen to their opinions, improve existing designs, and promote with word-of-mouth.

When the buyer scans the "Real Barcode" on the Ztraw package, a unique membership number will be automatically generated, equivalent to a Ztraw ID card. After filling in simple information, the buyer can interact with the company and receive discounts in future.

"GS1 HK's solution can combine the function of authentication and membership registration in one code, which is one-of-a-kind in the market. I tried working out a similar solution with some foreign software engineers, but it was hard, so I chose the one-stop solution provided by GS1 HK and its partners."

在環保、可重用的大趨勢下，Ztraw飲管在網上眾籌時獲得逾3,500個預訂，超越Jason期待的目標。飲管以可食用安全級別的再生物料製成，灑上韓國專利的抗菌劑，可拆開之餘更可摺起成一張卡片大小，方便攜帶、亦容易清洗。設計正申請專利，但Jason仍應用GS1 HK的「真的碼」以防「老翻」，全因當年的深刻經歷。

## 防偽方案一條龍

「約9年前，我曾經創作過一支可多角度擺放的枱燈，雖曾獲獎但未有帶來理想銷情。想不到幾年後，我卻在大型家品店中看到一模一樣的產品，還沿用著當年我設計的MiniUSB插口，當時感覺有點不忿。但現時見到在不同博物館及時尚店內，都有售我當年設計的產品，便看透『時勢造英雄』的道理：枱燈外型對於當年的消費者可能太獨特了，但現今市場追捧個人化、標奇立異，便終於受人欣賞。」

Ztraw可重用飲管大獲好評，Jason除了運用「真的碼」去讓消費者驗證真偽、保障品牌外，更重要的是與買家連繫，聆聽他們意見、改良現有設計，冀以口碑推廣。

當買家掃描Ztraw包裝上「真的碼」時，便會自動編配一個獨一無二的會員號，等同該Ztraw的身份證，而顧客填寫簡單資料後便可與公司互動，隨時收到優惠通知。

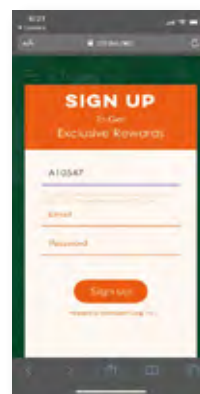
「GS1 HK能夠結合驗證真偽和登記會員兩種功能二合一，應在市場絕無僅有；有試過找外國的軟件工程師幫忙做同類方案，但雙方難以配合，最終還是使用GS1 HK與其夥伴提供的一條龍方案。」



- 1** Consumer scans the "REAL Barcode" on the Ztraw package. 消費者掃描Ztraw包裝上的「真的碼」防偽標籤。



- 2** Consumers can obtain immediate results from REAL Barcode app and verify product authenticity. 「真的碼」程式會彈出驗證畫面，讓消費者即時得知產品真偽。



- 3** A unique membership number will be automatically generated, consumers can simply fill in their information to interact with the company. 系統會自動編配一個獨一無二的會員號，消費者只需填寫簡單資料後便可與公司互動。

## Every cloud has a silver lining

Ztraw caught notice and received orders from all over the world, including Japan and the United States. International brands, local shopping malls and enterprises have been reaching out to Jason to discuss collaboration opportunity or “co-brand” prospect. He will see whether the parties involved share synergies in cooperation and avoid overdo.

Seeing the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19, Jason hopes to see Hong Kong “arises from its ashes”. “Hong Kong has been relying too much on the ‘old economies’: finance, tourism, real estate. Now that the virus has the market reshuffled, Hongkongers are striving for anything possible, and materialising different creative ideas. I believe a new force of change will rise.” He found that many buyers and suppliers, for example Ztraw’s customers, have drifted away from the old ways of going trade fair and are now going online to find new sources of products and supplies, all because of Hong Kong people’s “never-give-up” spirit and adaptability to change.

During the interview, Jason often emphasised that companies must contribute to society in order to maintain momentum. ThinkThing Studio hired St. James’ Settlement to help with the product packaging process, but not for cost-saving. Instead, the company received a better-than-market return - to help the underprivileged live like normal. He called for companies to integrate social responsibility into their operations, not because the company reaps a lot of profits but because they should.

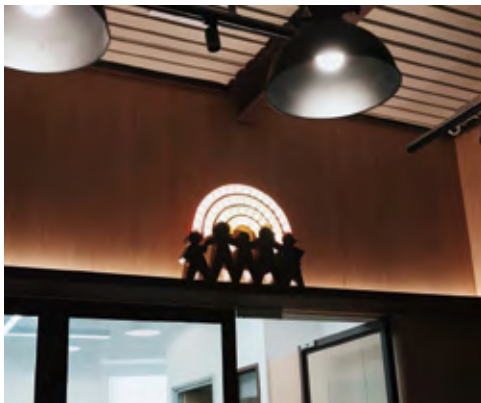


## 柳暗花明又一村

Ztraw客戶來自世界各地，日本、美國都有。國際品牌、本地商場及企業均聯絡磋商合作或「co-brand」計劃。「雖然我們是小企業，但也會看雙方是否有synergy才會推進合作，算是寧缺勿濫吧。」

對於近期因疫情致經濟低迷，Jason坦言期望香港能「置之死地而後生」。「香港過往太依賴固有行業，金融、旅遊、地產，現在疫情令市場洗牌，反而令大家發揮創意，更多了實事實幹的新一代，迸發一股新力量。」他相信香港人有打不死精神及靈活變通思維，所以他早已洞察到許多買家及供應商，都不會去展銷會尋新貨源，而是在網上訂貨，包括Ztraw的客戶。

訪問過程中，Jason不時會強調公司要可持續發展，便必須貢獻社會。其公司找來聖雅各福群會幫忙產品包裝工序，並非因為成本廉宜，相反會提供高一點回報，讓弱勢社群更有尊嚴。他號召將社會責任納入營運模式的一部份，而非有盈利才回饋社會。



ThinkThing Studio hired St. James’ Settlement to assist in product packaging process, aiming to help the underprivileged live like normal. 公司找來聖雅各福群會幫忙產品包裝工序，希望讓弱勢社群更有尊嚴。