



◀ Ms Cynthia Cheung of CYT Industrial Company

Most people would agree that establishing a business means facing different obstacles, but experience can definitely help achieve success.

Cynthia Cheung, director of 15-year-old fashion accessory supplier CYT Industrial Company, recently found a quick and effective way to overcome her hurdles and locate targeted manufacturers during a visit to the Hong Kong Gifts & Premium Fair.

Good-quality suppliers and buyers are the keys to success

Source quality suppliers faster

"Although our company does not participate in the fair, I come to visit regularly to find suitable packaging suppliers," she says, adding that the fair also provides the latest fashion jewellery trends for design inspiration.

In the past, she used to visit the fair booth by booth so as not to miss anything important. "However, due to the huge size of the fair in recent years, I felt totally exhausted afterwards!"

Help was at hand at the recent Hong Kong Gifts & Premium Fair, where Cheung discovered the innovative tdctrade.com sourcing service expressly designed by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC) to help her find targeted exhibitors speedily.

"The TDC's on-site staff asked me what kind of products I was looking for, and immediately searched for matching suppliers through the TDC's online database," she recalls.

"A list of related suppliers was printed out for me, including the suppliers' booth numbers and product photos – which made my work much easier!"

The information on the list was very useful, allowing Cheung to visit the right exhibitors at the fair and also provide a record for further use in the future.

The groundbreaking sourcing service reflects the TDC's acknowledgement that a comprehensive database is a user's major consideration when using an online platform to search for suppliers.

Therefore, TDC has placed the details of exhibitors at its 30 trade fairs and its 14 trade magazine advertisers on its tdctrade.com website to provide an exhaustive database of more than 100,000 suppliers.

Find overseas buyers without going abroad

The tdctrade.com sourcing service has clearly helped solve several problems for a businesswoman who has enlisted the TDC's help several times in the past 15 years.

Cheung admits she was a very "inexperienced but hard-working person" when she first started her own business, beginning with hand-made buttons and Chinese-style knot buttons.

She faced a lot of difficulties finding overseas customers until a friend advised her that there was a broad customer base for buttons in New York.

Armed with this piece of advice, Cheung flew to New York with a bag of buttons and knocked at each door of every commercial building to find customers.



◀ CYT Industrial Company has a diversified range of products from different kinds of buttons to a variety of belts



"When the bosses expressed satisfaction with my products, I thought I had already succeeded," she recalls. "However, they asked me to go back to Hong Kong to contact their Hong Kong offices."

The trip proved that "finding overseas buyers can be done without going abroad" and led to Cheung developing successful relations with a number of overseas customers.

In the meantime, she had also started using TDC's trade information services to gather data and statistics on overseas markets. "TDC is a long-and-well-established organisation in Hong Kong, so overseas buyers go there for help when they want to find good suppliers," Cheung reasons. "I therefore realised that I could publicise my products to potential customers and interested buyers would take the initiative and contact us."

Approximately two years ago, Cheung also started to advertise in the TDC's Hong Kong Fabrics & Accessories product magazine and is very satisfied with the results as the magazine has helped her win international customers.

"TDC distributes its product magazines at many important overseas trade fairs, which of course attract a lot of overseas buyers," Cheung explains. "Our company has successfully gained customers from new markets apart from the usual European and US markets."

However, while customers have contacted her from all parts of the world, their demands have also become more and more stringent. "This has urged us to diversify our products, which now include belts, cufflinks and other kinds of fashion accessories," Cheung says.

Hand in hand with this development, CYT Industrial Company is also increasing its competitive edge. "Recently, a Spanish buyer placed an order with us through the TDC magazine and was very satisfied with our product quality and production efficiency," Cheung claims. "Another new client from France requested a price quotation on our cufflinks and was also interested in other products."

Explore emerging market opportunities

Apart from advertising in TDC's product magazine, Cynthia also realises that promotional efforts can be reinforced and further enhanced in different channels.

Recently, the company started to advertise in TDC's tdctrade.com online platform because online sourcing is the "big trend" in today's fast-paced business world and one of the major sources of information for buyers and suppliers.

Many overseas buyers use TDC's online platform to help their sourcing activities, so TDC has integrated its product magazines with the online website to become a one-stop platform that caters to the diverse needs of buyers.

For example, suppliers' websites in tdctrade.com are published in TDC product magazines, combining two promotional efforts into one and attracting buyers to browse in search of more information.

TDC promotional channels such as these have already brought CYT Industrial Company several customers from new markets such as Portugal and Poland.

However, Cheung believes there is huge potential in new markets in Eastern Europe and is convinced that TDC's online platform can help her explore and maximise these opportunities.

"Online sourcing provides a 24-hour service, making contact with buyers much easier," she maintains. "For example, we have received enquiries from customers in Europe, the US, South Africa and Eastern Europe."

On average, Cheung says, CYT receives more than 10 enquiries every month, which helps broaden its clientele. "Although CYT has not advertised in TDC's promotional channels for long, half of our customers came from the TDC and we will continue to use the highly efficient and effective tdctrade.com sourcing service," Cheung concludes.



◀ Years of experience enable Cheung to produce buttons in a vast variety of styles, materials & designs, including the large blue-and-pink button that uses special nylon thread

Bringing together suppliers and buyers



The new tdctrade.com sourcing service helps 540,000 international visitors to local TDC trade fairs conduct precise product searches.

It provides buyers with a supplier list that contains such essential information as the booth number, product name and photo, which helps them maximise precious sourcing time at TDC exhibitions.

The innovative service has been enthusiastically received by buyers, who made more than 740,000 product enquiries in the first month tdctrade.com sourcing was in operation.

In addition, TDC's online sourcing platform and print advertisers receive a full list of relevant buyers who have enquired about their products.

These carefully-integrated initiatives bring together suppliers and buyers, resulting in mutually-beneficial business.

Further details can be obtained by telephoning (852) 1830668 or emailing sourcing@tdc.org.hk

TDC's online sourcing platform URL: www.tdctrade.com