



SML GROUP

Label of Distinction

SML is blazing the trail towards a one-stop technology solution for retailers worldwide.

Dr. Simon Suen Siu Man envisioned a global business upon founding SML Group in 1985. After thirty years, it offers its high-grade branding and packaging services to a prominent customer base in over 30 countries. Following the principles of providing what others cannot, having better delivery and innovating constantly, it is now the second largest brand-tagging service provider in the world.

After establishing a joint venture with the local Dongguan government in 1983, he independently founded Dong Ying (HK) Computer Label Limited to accelerate business development in Hong Kong and pave the way for future international expansion. In 1997, Dong Ying (HK) became SML as it is known today.

Dr. Suen traveled to America and Europe in 1985. He witnessed how manufacturers relied not on low benefit, labor-intensive production but on advanced technology to achieve a higher, uniform-quality output, which he adopted for SML's Dong Hing factory in Guangdong province. The facility surpassed others in the 1980's by using computerized management and advanced machinery to provide whole-set design services. It was the best in the region and in the field of tagging production.

Pioneer before others; Excel above others; Change ahead of others

In 1994, SML Group established a base of operations in Singapore. "We succeeded in laying a solid foundation there, which we later developed into our hub in Southeast Asia," says Dr. Suen. "After that, we set up in more locations including Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and India. During the 1997 Asian Finan-



cial Crisis, many companies drastically scaled their businesses down to survive. SML was different – we tried to find better ways out." SML instead opened three factories outside Asia.

"We decided to focus our energies and targeted the headquarters of big companies in the San Francisco garment industry. Becoming their provider meant affirmation of our quality. We set up office right in front of those companies. Although this raised operational costs, we could help clients and provide samples immediately. Not only did we save on transportation time, we also sped up endorsement processes. We built a new head office and factories in San Francisco, employing locals to take up management roles."

The visionary approach proved to be quite efficient. "We built a factory in Keighley, England, the origin of clothes tagging heavily vested in textile industries, further globalizing our business structure. The factory in Shanghai became the second largest production site for our Group, together with Dong Hing, providing support for business development in Greater China. During this expansion, we replaced our outdated, low added-value OEM mode and began an electronic data interchange for cooperation with large international brands."

New Age

2004 saw SML establishing procurement and outsourcing departments to provide customers with packaging

design besides clothes tagging. It further expanded throughout the next three years, increasing procurement activities in Europe and the US.

"Keeping up with global trends, we started to research and develop RFID business in 2011, aiming to provide RFID one-stop retail and launching our RFID IIS solutions while continuing procurement in the US. Our group began to adopt RFID technology as our main developmental direction, while venturing into operational logistics systems and professional supply chain management," says Mr. Ronny Ho, Vice Chairman of SML Group.

SML procured more US companies in 2012 to enhance RFID production and research. After years of development, it has come very close to fulfilling its dream of 'a globalized network with local management', successfully transitioning from a traditional brand-tagging outfit to an international one-stop technical service provider. "SML now manages manufacturers spread over 30 countries, with a staff of over 5,000. The locals best understand culture and how to deal with clients. A successful company relies not on individual achievement but the cooperation of the whole crew."

In 2013, its HK headquarters officially moved to the new SML Tower in Kwun Tong, symbolizing a new era for the company. Even for all its accolades there is still more room to grow. "We always look beyond short-term." ■

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