

SOLUTIONS

# **BIGGER THAN BIG: BIGBOXX.COM TURNS 15**

**Successful business building normally requires people to 'think out of the box'. bigboXX.com found another way. It built a box big enough to fit every possible customer need inside!**





**I**n 2000, the world was exploding with ill-conceived dotcom ideas. Pets.com anyone? One idea, however, was solid - the idea that a provider who could reduce the price of everyday office supplies and make them easier to order would make a killing. bigboXX.com was born.

Within a year of opening, the firm broke all the rules of wholesaling, by moving to purchase goods directly from the manufacturers of office supplies.

"By doing so, we maintain a high level of quality control with product certifications we obtain ourselves," says Ronnie Fung, Chief Executive Officer of bigboXX.com.

#### SILVER LININGS

Clear focus and initiative turned threats into opportunities. bigboXX expanded to hygiene products during the economically disastrous outbreak of SARS in 2003. Surgical masks became household items, and offices and institutions were handing them out to employees daily. Two medical institutions quickly entered bigboXX's list of top ten customers, joining banks, logistics firms and developers.

Another downturn provided another opportunity. bigboXX entered the business of outsourced record management when customers downsized their offices in response to the post-SARS economic downturn.

#### GO GREEN!

Following the financial crisis in 2008, bigboXX again looked for untapped opportunities. Falling sales of traditional office supplies products pushed the company to find a way to help customers cut their costs. It did so by capturing the 'save the planet' zeitgeist and created a line of

environmentally friendly products including green printing products and toilet paper.

Stealing the show is bigboXX's energy-saving lighting brand - LightboXX, which produces LED light bulbs accredited by world-leading manufacturers. The firm also offers solutions for office lighting plans to help customers reduce their lighting output - and thus their energy consumption and costs - without changing the original lighting effect. As the firm's fastest-growing business, LightboXX has broken out of bigboXX's traditional home market of Hong Kong and is exporting its products to Europe and Asia, where 4,000 sites will be illuminated by the end of 2015.

Saving the planet can be good business - definitely big business. "With a commitment to corporate social responsibility, bigboXX achieved business diversification," Mr Fung says. "Three years ago, our best-selling products were computer supplies and printing paper. Pantry supplies, including paper towels, tissues, snacks and beverages, and LED products, now hold the top spot."

#### FAMILY SUPPORT

It's always good to be part of a big family.

Working with the CK Hutchison Group gives bigboXX advantages in information sharing about the latest trends in office supplies and in securing bulk purchases in cooperation with the Group's retail arms. Savings negotiated directly from manufacturers are passed on to smaller customers, giving bigboXX a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Recently, bigboXX collaborated with Hutchison Global Communications Limited and Canon Hongkong Company Limited to launch the Cloud Document Management Service, offering cloud-based solutions including document collection, scanning,

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Chief Executive Officer of bigboXX.com

and indexing of records to make documents easy to find later. This service also helps firms cut back on paper consumption.

#### EVERYONE IN THE BOXX

As bigboXX.com turns 15, several plans are already underway to further the company's green initiatives and to strengthen its ties with customers. It is set to launch a new web page for its green furniture products which have flexible configurations for changing workplace needs. It also aims to create a loyalty programme in the form of a membership system for SMEs to provide them with rebates and market updates. And finally, its solutions service will extend into managed print services to help customers drive down operational costs and maximise corporate productivity.

"We approach our business with a 'total solution' logic to provide for every need a customer has, or might have. What we are shooting for is the moment when our customer thinks, 'Well, I will just get everything I need from bigboXX!'" Mr Fung concludes. □