

0 Striving Towards a Modern Coastal Metropolis

# Beifa Group: Crafting Global Success One Pen at a Time

By Jin Lu

From January to May this year, Ningbo's renowned stationery producer Beifa Group Co., Ltd. saw a 40% year-on-year increase in sales and a 100% increase in profits. "Beifa Group has been dedicated to the educational and office supplies industry for 30 years, focusing on technological innovation, implementing innovative marketing models, and cultivating talent, steadily progressing on the path of high-quality development," said Qiu Zhiming, Chairman of Beifa Group.

Founded in 1994, Beifa Group began as a small pen-making workshop with only 30 employees in Beilun District, Ningbo. Today, the company boasts 1.5 billion users worldwide, over 100,000 retail partners, more than 1,000 major clients and distributors, and over 100 online and offline sales channels. Its products are sold in over 200 countries and regions. These achievements have led to Beifa being recognized as a national level "sector champion" in manufacturing.

## Intense R&D for Each Pen

Upon entering Beifa Group's product showroom, the gel pen with fast-drying ink technology takes center stage. Developed over five years, this pen stands out among the company's 1,500 products, driving sales growth. Despite its ordinary appearance, it delivers smooth writing, with ink that dries instantly upon contact with paper, effectively preventing smudging.

The production of a gel pen, though small in size, involves a series of intricate processes. These include advanced plastic technology, precision mold manufacturing, fine chemical processing, eco-



Beifa Group Co., Ltd. [Photo by Yin Cong]

friendly spraying techniques, and flexible production methods. "After extensive research, the company has succeeded in achieving the uniform fusion of water and oil," said Sun Yinghong, Beifa Group's technical director. The research team undertook nearly a thousand material tests to develop a chemical microcapsule that ensures stable and uniform blending of water and oil.

In addition to product innovation, Beifa Group is advancing the automation and digitalization of its production lines. "Previously, the cost of a single process in pen-making ranged from 0.008 to 0.015 yuan, and manual assembly cost over 0.1 yuan per pen," noted Sun. With extensive digital reforms, the company now utilizes automated equipment for molds, injection molding, packaging, and other processes, reducing labor costs from over 0.1 yuan to just over 0.01 yuan per pen.

In the pen-making workshop, only a few workers are needed to oversee dozens of high-

speed machines that continuously produce components for processing and assembly. As pen tubes enter the automatic assembly machine, processes like ink filling, nib fitting, and cap attaching are performed automatically, resulting in a completed pen at the end of the assembly line.

Last year, Beifa Group invested over 30 million yuan in R&D to drive technological advances, adjust product structures, and facilitate corporate transformation. The company currently employs 150 R&D personnel and holds 666 valid patents, launching nearly 150 new pen models annually.

## Empowering Sales with Hybrid Marketing

"We can't afford to sit still and wait!" declared Qiu upon returning from a market research trip to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and several other countries, where he visited companies pertinent to the stationery industry.

Starting this year, Beifa Group will concentrate on brand

development, leveraging its R&D and manufacturing prowess. "We aim to establish 30 supply chain centers and engage 3,000 designated suppliers overseas within three years. Our goal is to reach 30,000 B2B SME clients, supply 5 million retail locations, and impact 5 billion people," stated Qiu.

Beifa Group will also establish brand centers in eight Southeast Asian countries, extending its products and services to major clients and retailers in each nation.

Beifa Group acknowledges the ever-changing market dynamics and the importance of collaborative development. Harnessing digital technology, the company launched the "Wenqiku" hybrid retail platform, which transforms artists' innovative designs into attractive stationery products available both online and offline. This platform uses advanced digital marketing strategies to connect global customers with a wide array of products, providing its partners in the creative industry with diverse sales

solutions. So far, the "Wenqiku" platform has generated over 1 billion yuan in total sales, with more than 430,000 users, and has supported hundreds of SMEs in the culture and creative industry.

Earlier this year, Beifa Group launched the Beifa Global Supply Chain app to facilitate direct connections between small manufacturers of stationery, gifts, and merchandise with global SME clients. The app leverages Beifa's strong brand image, extensive distribution channels, broad customer base, efficient internal management, solid financial strength, and robust supply chain capabilities.

With precise market positioning, innovative product design, diverse marketing strategies, and a continuous customer feedback mechanism, Beifa Group's presence now spans Europe, Central Asia, South Africa, Southeast Asia, and more.

"We aim to foster greater cooperation among SMEs in manufacture and sales through digital transformation," Qiu said.

## Entrepreneur Aims High: Selling 100 Million Pieces of Waxberry Pastries

By Yan Yiran

"Let's start with a modest goal: selling 100 million pieces of waxberry pastry in a year," declared the entrepreneur Zeng Yizhan from Taiwan, China at the 2024 Zhejiang-Taiwan Cooperation Week special event in Ningbo.

Zeng, hailing from Nantou, Taiwan, formed a connection with waxberry pastries in the summer of 2019. He recounted his first visit to Yunnan 20 years ago, when flower cakes were unknown, yet now they are a must-buy item. Similarly, upon reaching Zhejiang, waxberries are the first fruit that comes to mind.

"We envisioned combining Taiwan's agricultural product processing technology with Ningbo's fresh waxberries to create a cross-strait fusion pastry," Zeng explained, marking his entry into the waxberry industry.

"Taiwan has the technology and product design expertise, while Ningbo can supply the waxberries and has sufficient market demand. Together, we can achieve mutual benefit," he added.

Today, Zeng's team has developed over 20 waxberry-based products, including pastries, cakes, glutinous rice balls, smoothies, and iced tea. They also offer workshops for regular consumers to craft their own waxberry-infused delicacies.

Zeng is one of many entrepreneurs from Taiwan in Ningbo. According to the Ningbo Municipal Taiwan Affairs Office, since the first Taiwan-funded company was established in 1989, over 3,000 such companies have been approved, with more than 1,000 currently in operation. Total investment has reached nearly \$30 billion, with \$10 billion in actual use. This represents about one-third of the province's total investment from Taiwan, making Ningbo the most concentrated area for Taiwan investment in Zhejiang.

Beyond investment, trade relations are equally robust. In 2023, Ningbo's total import and export volume with Taiwan reached 41.61 billion yuan, making Taiwan the sixth-largest source of imports for Ningbo and ranking eighth among the city's trading partners.

"Zhejiang and Ningbo have created a supportive business environment for young professionals to start businesses and find jobs. The area has attracted talent from various industries, including culture, services, and more," said Li Zhenghong, President of the Association of Taiwan Investment Enterprises on the Mainland.

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0 SPOTLIGHT

# Expanding Cooperation with Ningbo on All Fronts

By Zhang Wenyu

This year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Hungary, ushering in a new era of cooperation. Ningbo, home of the China-Central and Eastern European Countries Business Cooperation Demonstration Zone, plays a crucial role in this partnership. On this significant occasion, Ningbo Daily interviewed Szilard Bolla, Consul General of Hungary in Shanghai.

Reflecting on the past, Mr. Bolla stated the cooperation between Ningbo and Hungary has yielded fruitful results. "In recent years, the trade and investment volume between Ningbo, Zhejiang, and Hungary has been steadily increasing," said Mr.

Bolla. He noted that when Hungarians hear mention of Ningbo, China-CEEC cooperation immediately comes to mind.

The total trade volume between Ningbo and Hungary exceeded \$500 million last year, nearly double that of five years ago. China and Hungary have recently established an all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership for the new era. Looking ahead, Mr. Bolla believes that China and Hungary can further expand cooperation in various areas, including culture and education. "I hope to see more Ningbo companies showing interest in Hungary's investment environment. Additionally, the direct flights from Ningbo to Budapest serve as an excellent promotion for Hungary. Now, Hungarians know much more about Ningbo," he said.

In recent years, Hungary

has been focusing on developing its electric mobility industry, attracting the interest of Ningbo's automobile parts manufacturers looking to invest and expand overseas. "In today's world, having investment-friendly governments and policies is very important," said Mr. Bolla. He emphasized Hungary's stable political environment, favorable investment policies, and promising economic prospects, positioning it as a key economy in Central and Eastern Europe.

Hungary's central location in Europe, with its well-developed network of roads, railways, and airfreight, makes it an important transportation and logistics hub. Moreover, the Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency offers one-stop services to assist Chinese investors in establishing their presence in the Hungarian market.



Scenery of Hungary. [Photo by Ying Zhifeng]

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