

Ningbo Companies on the Global Stage

Building Global Bridges with Sincerity and Stories

By Jin Lu

As China continues to open its doors to the world, Ningbo foreign trade professionals are strengthening their global connections.

As a major foreign trade hub, Ningbo is home to more than 25,000 foreign trade enterprises and over 2 million people engaged in related work.

In the fiercely competitive global marketplace, how do these professionals tell compelling stories about China and help "Made in Ningbo" products thrive worldwide?

Building trust around the world

Narrated by: Chen Dehuan, Foreign Trade Manager of Ningbo Hidrotek

Our company is a high-tech enterprise specialising in smart home and business solutions, IoT devices, smart water purifiers and filter membranes, and core technologies for smart kitchen appliances. Its products are sold worldwide.

Since 2016, I've overseen foreign trade, interacting with international customers and building strong friendships through business exchanges and daily communication.

When I attend overseas trade shows, I always bring unique Chinese gifts, such as Chinese knots, to share a taste of Chinese culture and warmth with our clients during busy trade shows.

One German customer made a lasting impression on me. When I presented her with these gifts, she was pleasantly surprised - it was her first gift from China, and she hadn't expected it to be at a trade show.

When international customers visit Hidrotek, I often act as a tour guide, taking them to iconic Ningbo landmarks such as Tianyi Pavilion, Laowaitan (Old Bund) and Moon Lake, allowing them to experience the city's scenic beauty and cultural heritage.



Ningbo Hidrotek. [Photo by Tang Yan]

Once, a British client mentioned that his grandmother had recently taken an interest in Chinese Mahjong. I took him to the Tianyige Museum to see the Mahjong Origins Exhibition Hall. When he learned that Ningbo is the birthplace of Mahjong, he was thrilled and even posed for photos with Mahjong sculptures to show his grandmother back home.

With every customer, I approach interactions with sincerity and integrity, building trust and fostering an understanding of Chinese culture, which is embedded in our corporate philosophy.

Last year, a Middle Eastern distributor we'd worked with for years lost contact with us because of the war. We later learned that his business had been destroyed, and he had financial difficulty. I immediately reported the situation to the company and asked for special permission to ship goods without asking for guarantees. This was based purely on trust and

our shared values of mutual support.

In the end, the customer was able to make the payment and recover from the crisis, further strengthening our partnership.

Bridging Hearts Through Stories

Narrated by: Li Jinxia, Ningbo Hongyan Packaging Materials

As a foreign trade professional, I've spent over a decade working with international clients who enjoy chatting with me. Beyond discussing orders, I often share fascinating Chinese stories that spark interesting conversations and bring us closer.

Once, while hosting a German client, I served Ningbo's traditional rice cakes as the main dish. It was his first time trying rice cakes, and he was intrigued.

I explained that rice cakes are made from rice and shared their origins, cultural signifi-

cance, and preparation methods. He found it incredible that rice could be transformed into such a unique delicacy.

On his second visit, this client, who had previously been a listener, proudly introduced rice cakes to his colleagues. This left me with a sense of accomplishment—it's rewarding to promote our local specialties and culture in such a memorable way.

We also pay great attention to selecting gifts for our clients. These gifts must embody Chinese characteristics and cultural meaning.

For example, I've carefully chosen porcelain plates adorned with China's national flower, the peony, as gifts for important international clients. I explain that both "China" and "porcelain" share the same English name, highlighting the country's historical connection to ceramics. The blooming peony symbolizes prosperity and good fortune, which resonates deeply with our clients.

I've also gifted silk scarves,

a symbol of ancient China's role in international trade. While presenting them, I share the story of Zhenhai, Ningbo's ancient port on the Maritime Silk Road, leaving a lasting impression on the clients.

These thoughtful gifts and cultural exchanges have resulted in countless memorable moments. Whether arranging tours, accommodations, or gifts, I always strive to incorporate meaningful experiences that leave a profound impression on our clients.

As a result, our network continues to expand, and our market grows stronger.

I believe that foreign trade companies play an important role in bridging China with the rest of the world. Our interaction with international clients goes beyond business - it is an exchange of cultures and ideas.

Foreign trade professionals must not only excel in business but also serve as cultural ambassadors, building a bridge of friendship between China and the world.



SPOTLIGHT

UAE Trade Expo: Focus on Ningbo

By Yan Yiran

"Welcome to Ningbo!" At the 17th China (UAE) Trade Expo, a captivating promotional video of Ningbo caught the attention of many visitors.

From the sparkling Sanjiangkou to the historic Old Bund, the vibrant urban scene unfolded, from the ancient books in the libraries to the legendary tales of the merchant clans, the rich humanistic and historical charm was palpable.

Throughout the exhibition site, elements of Ningbo were omnipresent. In addition to the prominent "Ningbo Connects the World" logo, city posters featuring Ningbo Zhoushan Port and Moon Lake were displayed. These posters came with QR

codes that visitors could scan to access more fascinating information about the city.

The exhibition was a scene of overwhelming popularity. A steady stream of visitors gathered in front of the video or at the QR code scanning station to learn more about Ningbo.

"I have visited Ningbo before and I remember the delicious tangyuan (sticky rice balls). They were one of my favourites," said Ms Jisa Shaji, a buyer from Badri Electro Supply & Trading Co. "I'm planning another trip to China soon, and Ningbo is definitely on my itinerary. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone in Ningbo."

As she spoke, she scanned the QR code on the poster, and the screen instantly

displayed stunning images of Ningbo, including the historic Tianyige Museum and Ningbo Zhoushan Port, which ranks first in the world for cargo throughput, filling her with anticipation for Ningbo.

Nearby, two representatives from the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Ningbo Committee, served as "ambassadors" for the city. They enthusiastically guided the foreign traders through the video, introduced them to the city's natural and cultural landscapes, and explained Ningbo's efforts and initiatives to create a favourable business environment in recent years.

Like Ms Jisa Shaji, many foreign merchants took a "virtual tour" of Ningbo by scan-



The "Ningbo Connects the World" exhibition at the 17th China (UAE) Trade Expo. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

ning the QR codes on their introductions.

"We hope to use the exhibition as a concentrator to increase the promotional impact of Ningbo exponentially," said an official from the Ningbo

International Communication Center. Through the overseas exhibitions in the "Ningbo Connects the World" series, they actively shared the city's stories behind Ningbo as a major foreign trade hub.

Cultural Legacy on Stage: NBU Students Perform The Three-Character Classic

By Jin Yuhan & Wang Xinyu

A self-directed play inspired by the *Three-Character Classic* took centre stage at the Academic Symposium on Chinese Elementary Education, as students from Ningbo University (NBU) impressed an audience of nearly 100 scholars and experts with their creative storytelling and cultural insight.

Performed by the International Communication Team of Eastern Zhejiang Elementary Education and the Faculty of Foreign Languages, the play combined traditional Chinese educational philosophy with modern perspectives. Through humour and engaging storytelling, it brought the *Three-Character Classic* to life and received high praise for its innovation and depth.

"The play highlighted the timeless values of the *Three-Character Classic* in a contemporary setting, bridging traditional wisdom with today's realities," said Wang Xinyu, the director and screenwriter.

The production explored the philosophical and moral teachings of the Classics of Education and promoted cross-cultural dialogue between Chinese and international students. It demonstrated the enduring significance of the classics of elementary education, while highlighting the charm of traditional Chinese culture.

The performance received glowing reviews:

Xu Jun, Vice President of the Zhejiang Academy of Social Sciences, lauded the effort, saying, "This play exemplifies how traditional culture can inspire modern audiences."

Professor Zheng A'cai of Sichuan University remarked, "It's impressive how much cultural depth was conveyed in such a short performance."

Professor Ding Gang from East China Normal University praised the thoughtful design and unique approach, emphasizing how it captured the cultural and educational values of the *Three Character Classic*.

Led by Professor Xin Hongjuan, Vice Dean of the Academy of Eastern Zhejiang Culture, NBU's International Communication Team has been actively promoting the educational traditions of Eastern Zhejiang on the global stage.

The team's commitment to innovation and cultural exchange ensures that the richness of Chinese heritage will continue to resonate with audiences around the world.

Chief Adviser: Zhou Fangzhou
Proofreader: Yan Yiran