

Jerry-T: Self-starter yields success

BY HAN TIANYANG

Many insiders in the fashion world in the United States will know of Jerry-T, as its arrival there caused a stir among the nation's women.

On Thanksgiving Day every year, Jerry-T's headquarters in Los Angeles receives many calls from across the US, thanking the company for making pretty clothes.

A dark horse in the international fashion world, Jerry-T took just two years to gain prestige in the US. The person behind this is a Chinese merchant and designer Tao Liang.

Inspiration

Tao, is a legendary figure in fashion circles. He always carries paper and pen with him so he can record any moment

of inspiration. His designs fit the tastes of western women well, so his factory in China always has orders.

"I know the aesthetic appreciation of American women and what clothes they want to make themselves more beautiful and confident," said Tao.

His designs are especially favored by ladies aged between 30 and 45 in the US.

Tao was born in Nantong city, east China's Jiangsu province in 1965.

After he graduated from the art school of Nanjing Jinling Institute of Technology in 1993, he opened his first design studio in his hometown of Nantong with his wife Wang Ju. Their clothes sold well because of their design and fine workmanship.

Later Tao began to realize

he could not meet the growing demand if he stayed in his small workshop so he bought a small factory that was near bankruptcy in a suburban farm in Nantong in 2000 and revamped it into a clothing plant.

One day when his factory was processing clothes for a bigger enterprise to export, Tao noticed that the Japanese material they had been asked to use was new in China. He had a feeling that it would be popular.

Since no domestic factories could develop that kind of cloth at that time, Tao devoted all his time into creating it.

Starting from scratch

This affected his own business and some partners left him — only his wife supported him. With almost



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TAO LIANG
FOUNDER AND DESIGNER OF NANTONG SHIRUI FASHION CO



one year's hard work Tao finally succeeded.

In September 2001, Tao set up a new clothes company, the Nantong Shirui Fashion Co. The only staff were Tao and his wife as he couldn't afford to employ anyone else.

In November that year, Tao took some sample garments south to Guangzhou to seek for partners. He lived in the cheapest hotel and talked to dealers one by one. Eventually a dealer from Shantou took a fancy to his clothes and trial sales were successful. Tao got the first orders after just one week.

With persistent effort, Tao's clothes appeared at all kinds of fashion exhibitions in China and gradually became highly desired. Orders swarmed to him from dealers across the country.

He made revenue of \$1 million in 2003 and by the end of 2007, this figure reached \$6 million. He built a modern clothing processing factory and expanded production capacity

with the money.

In 2008, he talked to his partner in the US and expressed his wish to set up a company there. His partner said that Tao would lose money since the US clothing market is shrinking.

But Tao disagreed. He saw that some international big brands were slower in introducing new clothes and he wanted to grab a share with his competitive design and fast processing.

He registered a company called General Apparel International Inc in Los Angeles and created the brand Jerry-T.

He attended major fashion shows in America with his designs and attracted many dealers.

Success in the US

In just a few months, his clothes could be seen in shopping malls, supermarkets and stores all over the US.

In September 2008, almost all Chinese companies that make clothes for export were



Jerry-T is a fashion brand tailored to US female consumers.

suffering due to the financial crisis. Yet Tao's business remained buoyant.

"My intuition told me that I had to do this," said Tao.

Tao's decisions proved to be a good one, instead of losing jobs, his dealers in America made even more money than they did before the crisis.

Now the Jerry-T brand

attends more than 30 fashion shows in the US every year, and ranks among the top 10 in terms of orders. Tao predicts that Jerry-T will obtain revenue of above \$5 million this year in the US market.

"Every time I see people wearing Jerry-T clothes on the street, I feel very proud," said Tao.



With increasing numbers of orders, the Nantong Shirui Fashion Co. staff are busy producing clothes for domestic and overseas markets.

Investors zone in on Nantong

BY LU WEI

As one of the first 14 national development zones, the Nantong Economic and Technological Development Zone in Nantong, Jiangsu province is among the top 10 development zones in China having the largest potential to invest for multinational corporations.

Under the approval of the State Council, the zone was founded in December 1984. At present, it has a total area of 146.98 sq km.

The main reasons for its great potential to invest is that the development zone has a unique geographic advantage, a good investment environment, a management mechanism in line with international standards, as well as a turnkey service which make all of the investors feel secure and convenient, said Chen Dexin, Party chief in the development zone.

Located in the central part

of China's coastline and on the northern bank of the Yangtze River, it is an important ocean-shipping hub in the Yangtze River Delta region.

The development zone was also granted as the National ISO14000 Demonstration Zone by the State Environmental Protection Administration. ISO14000 is an internationally practiced environment management standard for an enterprise or an administrative region.

The Nantong zone has to date attracted investors from nearly 40 countries and regions, which have invested in more than 700 enterprises with a total investment of more than \$10 billion. Among these, 50 enterprises were funded by the Fortune 500 companies.

Currently, based on its pillar industries including modern equipment manufacturing, new materials, new energy, biomedicine and modern textile fibers, the development



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CHEN DEXIN
PARTY CHIEF IN THE ZONE



zone has formed nine major industrial parks, which can meet the needs of various industries.

"We will promote the upgrading and transformation of these parks through a series of measures so that the investors could enjoy the services in Nantong which are even better than those in their

own countries," Chen said.

Another thing making the zone attractive to multinationals is that the local government offers more incentives for investors than other regions, said Chen.

In 2009, the zone's gross industrial output value reached 95.14 billion yuan,



The call center of C-Trip, China's leading on-line travel service company, is the largest in Asia.

up 31.9 percent year on year.

At the same time, its fixed-asset investment amounted to 15.7 billion yuan, increasing by 28.8 percent.

Also in last year, when the world economy was in the shadow of financial

crisis, the zone had seen the establishment of 22 new foreign-funded enterprises.

In addition, foreign investors had increased investment in 18 existing enterprises. As such the newly registered foreign capital amounted to \$439 million.

At present, the Nantong Economic and Technological Development Zone is home to 150 large projects each with an investment of more than 10 million yuan, including 71 projects each with over 100 million yuan.



A picturesque residential community shows the Nantong zone's excellence in both business and living environments.

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