

Big Qingdao names set to get bigger

By Ju Chuanjiang
AND Guo Xin

From a modest beginning in the 1980s, Qingdao on the coast of east China's Shandong province is now among cities with most well-known brand names in the nation — and is setting the bar higher with plans to have three to five world-famous products by 2010.

"To build up well-known brands is of great significance for the city's competitiveness

in the international market, so there will be more products from Qingdao gaining worldwide popularity", said Xia Geng, mayor of Qingdao.

The local government has played significant role in the development of brands, with new names emerging in hi-tech, manufacturing and service industries, Xia said.

According to Qingdao's brand development strategy (2007-2010), by the end of the plan period the city will have up to five world-famous brands

as well as 80 companies widely recognized in China and 300 popular provincial level brands.

The blueprint calls for Qingdao to further consolidate its position as an industrial capital by fostering 30 of "China's Famous Trademarks" along with five local products with protection for national geographic status.

To date more than 10,000 products have been certified with ISO9000 international quality status, said Wang

Dianzhang, director of the Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Quality and Technological Supervision and also deputy director of Qingdao Promotion Committee of Brand Strategy.

By the end of last year 69 national-level famous brands were produced in Qingdao along with products from 21 famous trade names.

Five companies in Qingdao have won the national award for quality management.

In 2005 and 2006 the city was granted the title of Famous Brand City of China by China Brand Research Institute.

Famous names in electronics, home appliances and vehicles have become the city's pillar industries, together contributing more than 70 percent of Qingdao's economy.

According to Wang, Qingdao's new brand strategy emphasizes improvement of product quality.

By 2010, more than 90 percent of the city's major industries will meet international standards or employ advanced international production techniques.

The city's plan calls for 10 companies to qualify for exemption from export inspection due to their high quality.

"More and more famous brand names strengthen Qingdao's competitiveness and appeal," said Mayor Xia, who added that national and international companies like

Tsingtao, Haier, Hisense, Doublestar and Aucma have become trademarks for the city itself.

Along with national brands that are going global, 50 already famous international brands including Nescafe, Coca Cola, LG and Hyundai have moved to Qingdao in recent years.

The city's strategy since 2005 calls for a move from manufacturing to service industries like telecommunications, food, tourism, transportation and logistics to offer a comprehensive brand package reaching international levels.

"Advanced technology is the key to world-famous brand name products," Xia said.

He added city leaders are encouraged by local companies to widen cooperation with business giants from home and abroad, as well as with universities and science and technology institutions, all of which will help them further develop advanced technology and independent intellectual property rights.



Sailboats celebrate the 100-day countdown to the Beijing Olympic Games. Ju Chuanjiang



Yan Qijun (second from left), secretary of Qingdao Municipal Committee of the CPC, and Xia Geng (second from right), mayor of Qingdao and chairman of Sailing Committee (Qingdao) of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the 29 Olympiad, set out walking with 10,000 locals to mark the 100-day countdown celebration. Ju Chuanjiang



Olympic champion swimmer Qian Hong (left) and her husband with Wang Anxi (middle), chairman of the board of supervisors of Haier Group. Qian, who won a gold medal in the 100-m butterfly at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, and her family were the first selected as a "Haier Gold Medal Olympic Family". Ju Chuanjiang

Haier's hand reaches far overseas

By Du Shu

Refrigerators made by Chinese home appliance giant Haier are now used by 280 million consumers in more than 160 countries and regions far distant from its Qingdao headquarters.

The group now plans to increase its footprint through localization in foreign countries and expanded multinational networks.

"Haier aims to realize its localization in overseas markets and become a global brand," president of Haier Group Yang Mianmian told the media.

Haier Group is forming a global network in design, manufacturing and marketing through nine research and development centers, 30 manufacturing sites and over 5,000 marketing outlets in the United States, Europe, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region.

After starting its "internationalization strategy" in 1998, Haier is an increasingly global brand that sells 20 million refrigerators yearly, the most in the world.

On a list of the world's 200 most-respected enterprises published by Forbes magazine in 2006, Haier ranked 25th, the highest among Chinese brands.

In 2005, Britain's Financial Times ranked Haier in the Top 10 of Chinese world-class brands.

Nineteen Haier products have been awarded the status of famous Chinese brands.

"More and more consumers find the appeal of Haier, for its products meet their requirements," Yang said.

To meet the lifestyle in Pakistan, Haier designed a "wide-body" refrigerator able to store more food and make ice quickly. Such features have brought Haier over 35 percent of the high-end market in the country.

Twice, a US electronic newspaper, noted in January that demand for household appliances in the United States is declining due to the real estate market downturn and subprime mortgage crisis, yet Haier's sales have increased.

Outselling international brands from Japan, the US and South Korea, Haier's air conditioners top the US market with more than 18 percent of the total.

Comet, one of the biggest appliance retailers in Britain, promotes Haier high-end drum washing machines through prominent displays with placards "introducing a world leading brand".

Overseas sales of PL drum washing machines increased 40 percent in 2007 and accounted for more than 30 percent of the European market.

In April 2007, Haier's French Door refrigerator with 24 technological innovations enjoyed brisk sales after its debut in 65 countries.

In 2006 Haier purchased a Sanyo electric factory in Thailand with an annual capacity of 1 million units and last year acquired a facility in India that makes 350,000 refrigerators annually.

The acquisitions strengthened Haier's capabilities in overseas markets by lowering costs and shortened delivery time.

100 days and counting — 'Qingdao is ready'

By Zhao Ruixue

At the 100-day countdown to the opening of the Olympics, Qingdao Mayor Xia Geng sent a simple message to the world — "Qingdao is ready for the Olympics!"

The message resonated in the host city of 2008 Olympic sailing competition.

Ten thousand people then set out walking 7 km along the coastline, supported by cultural and sports activities at dozens of squares along the coast that encouraged the walk.

Enthusiasm is running high in the city.

"The Olympics is a dream for all 56 ethnic groups. It is our honor to participate in the 100-day countdown celebration ceremony on behalf of minorities. We welcome the Olympics with our enthusiasm," said Wang Fengji from the Islam Association in Qingdao.

The 10,000 walkers were followed by a chorus of

more than 10,000 people whose singing reverberated throughout the sailing center.

Young sailors staged a sailing performance to showcase characteristics of the sailing city.

"I like sailing very much. I want to be a professional sailor and get a medal for our country," Li Xiaofeng, a student from Shanghai Road Primary School, told reporters.

Qingdao-born celebrities from entertainment and sports circles, including Zhao Baole, Ni Ping and Ma Xiangjun attended a large evening celebration to cheer the coming Games.

Chinese Olympics champions Xu Haifeng (shooting), Lou Yun (gymnastics), Gu Jun (badminton), Ma Yanhong (gymnastics) and China's go chess mater Nie Weiping attended the celebration and gave their best wishes to Qingdao.

"I came to cheer on the 100-day countdown to the

Olympics," Xu Haifeng told the media.

"Every Chinese person feels happy the 2008 Olympics are being held in our country. We have prepared a lot for the games. I believe we will have a successful Olympics."

"I feel proud of our country hosting the 2008 Olympics. China is capable of holding a great Games," Lou Yun told China Daily.

In other developments, about 200 volunteers have been recruited and trained to serve the 2008 IFDS (International Association for Disabled Sailing) Qingdao International Regatta, which will be held from May 8 to May 15.

This special supplement is co-published by the Information Office of Qingdao municipal government and China Daily



Walkers on the 7 km course

Ju Chuanjiang



Volunteer team of elderly people will give considerate service during the Games.

Ju Chuanjiang



Chinese flags wave at the ceremony.

Ju Chuanjiang



Local performers at the 100-day countdown.

Ju Chuanjiang