



The Tongtian River, source of the Yangtze River, is one of Intertek's inspection places. The company aims to provide innovative services and effective solutions to help clients lower costs.

Intertek grows with China's opening-up

Leading global testing company helps clients improve quality, safety

Editor's note: Intertek, a leading provider of quality and safety solutions for a wide range of industries around the world, opened its first joint venture in China in 1989. It now has over 9,000 employees and more than 100 labs and branches in 40 cities across the country. Over the years, it has endeavored to help local customers increase the value of their products, gain competitive advantages and develop trusted brands by providing services ranging from auditing and inspection to testing, quality assurance and certification. Bai Xueli, chief executive of Intertek China, spoke with China Daily reporters Hao Nan and Song Mengxing to share his views on the company's local practices and business strategies in the future.

A group of famous international testing and certification companies has been developing businesses in China after the country started its process of reform and opening-up in the late 1970s, including Intertek. Could you talk about the regional development in the past 20-plus years? How did you and your team overcome your most difficult time?

Intertek has done business in China for 26 years and it has witnessed the inception and growth of China's testing industry. Starting from a branch in Shenzhen, Intertek China now has many wholly-owned subsidiaries and joint ventures, as well as over 100 labs and branches in about 40 cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Qingdao. The number of its employees has also increased from 10 to over 9,000.

Intertek China's labs cover the fields of petrochemicals, electronic products, auto parts, food and agricultural products, minerals, energy-consumption, textiles and footwear, and toys and furniture.

They are trusted by worldwide clients and also acknowledged by both related Chinese and overseas institutes, such as the China National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment, United Kingdom Accreditation Service and Hong Kong Accreditation Service.

For example, Intertek provided quality standards and testing to the "gold inlaid with jade" medals of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and licensed products of the World Expo Shanghai 2010.

When the global financial crisis broke out in 2008, many of our clients suffered from a

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drop off in exports and even faced bankruptcy. Given the circumstances, we were fully prepared and confident to overcome the tough period, because declining exports required companies to pursue higher product quality to survive, which was an opportunity for us.

Also, we developed new services targeting China's emerging industries such as new energy, food safety, life sciences and medical appliances.

Back in 2008, we set up a dedicated department domestic market. We provide training to foreign brands to help them better enter China and offer distinctive and high value-added solutions.

Corporate management should be changed based on actual needs and opportunities to help both the company and the staff achieve better development. Could you share your management philosophies?

I always require our employees to be customer-oriented, to quickly respond to our commitments to our clients and to provide innovative services and effective solutions to help clients lower costs and reduce supply chain risks.

Export products we test are normally sold in developed areas such as Europe, the United States and Japan. In China, we also test and certify goods based on the standards of those developed countries.

We aim to provide comprehensive solutions to our clients and also safeguard China's reputation through safe and high-quality Chinese exports.

As part of the company's public welfare practices, Intertek launched a Yangtze River Project in April. Could you tell us more about that initiative?

We implemented the project with a focus on environmental protection and corporate social responsibility. The initiative was inspired by some environmentalists' behavior of blindly freeing animals.

They intend to improve ecological protection, but lead to bad results due to their ignorance of scientific rules of those species, such



Focusing on ecological protection, the company's Yangtze River Project is not only a public welfare activity, but also part of Intertek's commitment to social responsibility. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

as releasing migrant birds in winter in North China, when they would naturally stay in the warmer southern area.

Also, many consumers heard bad news about such things as "poisonous strawberries", "poisonous milk powder" and "toxic school uniforms".

Product quality and food safety that concern consumers most are closely related with our daily work. We think it is our duty to help promote scientific quality and safety awareness, as well as rational and responsible consumption.

The Yangtze River Project is not only a public welfare activity, but also part of Intertek's commitment to social responsibility. The project's ending ceremony was hosted in Wuhan, the capital city of Central China's Hubei province, on Dec 5. The ceremony was a conclusion and review of the project and also a stage on which more corporate social responsibility projects were showcased.

Guests at the event, including representatives from Hang Seng Bank and food company Danone's affiliate in China, talked about CRS cases and what they had gained from shouldering responsibilities as well as innovating.

Some of them had participated in Internet-based public services while some had long paid attention to

ecological diversity. They guided other participants at the event to view social responsibility from different and innovative perspectives.

We hoped the event would spur people to think about the significance of their responsibilities and innovative methods. From this perspective, I think, we achieved our goal.

What does Intertek, as a socially responsible multinational, plan to do in terms of public services?

The Yangtze River Project is only a start for Intertek and we will take Wuhan, capital city of Central China's Hubei province, as a pilot area to launch ITS Public Service Dreams Plus — a project to support college students' public services.

College student volunteers were the main force of water quality testing during the Yangtze River Project.

College students, as one of the most vibrant and innovative groups in the society, add new thinking and passion to public service projects and help realize new dreams for the public good.

The ITS Public Service Dreams Plus project will not only encourage young people to take their responsibilities and push college students to be a core group fulfilling social responsibility in the future; but also, we

hope through such projects to help develop a spirit of public service in as wide a scope as possible. We hope college students will view the world with a heart of public service no matter what industry or job they later choose.

We will also keep fulfilling our social responsibility in aspects such as business responsibility, personnel welfare and environmental responsibility.

In May, when Andre Lacroix was at the beginning of his office as Intertek CEO, he proposed the company's concept as "helping our customers to make the world a better and safer place". What will be Intertek's main service concepts and content in the future?

The concept that our new CEO put forward includes the idea to regard serving customers as our duty.

Excellent customer service is a competitive edge to win. Intertek will become the most reliable brand in the industry by listening to clients' opinions every day, knowing their demands and satisfying, and even surpassing, their expectations.

I'd like to share a case in the food industry. We can scan the codes on some products in the supermarket, such as vegetables and fruits, and find information including where they were

produced. Are products with such information definitely good? No. Consumers care more about what ways and means of quality control have been used in each procedure, such as an examination of the production environment.

We launched a leading traceability program with food company DaChan, which is used for DaChan's Sisters' Kitchen products, in 2014. The move has helped DaChan take an important step in terms of conveying information about quality guarantees to its customers.

Outstanding client service helps us develop good relationships with clients and attract more new clients.

What are your expectations or judgments about the future development of China's certification and testing market? What do you anticipate in Intertek's future? What can testing do for the future?

The testing industry is gradually being understood and supported by the public. We hope that consumers can judge the quality of products based on "theory and evidence".

Also, we hope enterprises that make efforts to improve quality and safety will gain more favorable impressions and rewards.

Nowadays, the world and China have too many hot issues, including the envi-



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Bai Xueli, chief executive of Intertek China

ronment, climate, Internet Plus, artificial intelligence and the Belt and Road Initiative. We need to adopt innovative thinking patterns to cope with changes and development.

Internal labor division at Intertek used to be based on industries and products, such as textiles, electronics and the petrochemicals sector. But things like new energy, energy efficiency, artificial intelligence, e-commerce and large projects will make labor division boundaries related to products and sectors vague.

In the past, we mainly focused on common quality and the safety of products, seldom being concerned with the environment and energy efficiency. In the future, environmental issues will not only become our business focus but also be closely related to our social responsibility.

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