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MAGAZINE
FOR ALL
PAINT
NEWS

**DAVID JIANG'S
TAKE ON
BUSINESS
SUCCESS**

**EXCLUSIVE
PPG/TAUBMANS
AUSTRALIA'S
NEW PAINT
POWERHOUSE**

MISSION CONTROL
DAVID JIANG TAKING HIS COMPANY AUSTRALIAN BRUSHWARE CORPORATION TO A WIDER MARKET WITH AN EXPANDED RANGE OF PAINT APPLICATION ACCESSORIES.

BRUSH WITH FAME

DAVID JIANG IS FIRING; ONE OF HIS COMPANIES AUSTRALIAN BRUSHWARE CORPORATION IS ON AN AGGRESSIVE GROWTH PATH WHILE CONCURRENTLY HE IS LAUNCHING A RADICAL, NEW ENTERPRISE INTO BUNNINGS. IT'S A BUZZY, BLITZING TIME.

David Jiang, the owner and managing director of Australian Brushware Corporation (ABC) has a golf handicap of only 15 and he skis and snowboards well enough to have been an instructor. It's a clue he aims to win. Young and modern, David is the contemporary, international businessman, for him jets are like buses, necessary to cover the world for meetings with customers and to check on his own factories in China.

ABC is now a truly global company, one of the world's largest manufacturers of quality hand made brushes. The company is managed from Australia with production in

China and distribution all over the world into leading retailers including the giant Home Depot in the United States and Bunnings here.

The world headquarters is in a glass and steel building near the Ford complex outside Melbourne. It's all minimalist, marble and black leather. David's office has a super-sized plasma and an espresso machine in the adjoining kitchen. It's a set-up that would have been unimaginable for his grandfather who started the ball rolling by manufacturing toothbrushes in China 70 years ago.

As we all know, the Chinese revolution put a stop to entrepreneurship; when the political situation allowed



DAVID JIANG IN ONE OF THE SLEEK KITCHENS HE IS IMPORTING THAT IS SET TO GIVE IKEA FLAT PACK VERSIONS A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY. EXCLUSIVE TO BUNNINGS, THE KITCHENS ARE BEING PROMOTED THROUGH BUNNINGS TELEVISION COMMERCIALS WITH PRICES STARTING AT \$1700. A NUMBER OF THE KITCHENS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN THE SPACIOUS FOYER OF ABC'S CONTEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS OUTSIDE MELBOURNE CREATING AN INTERESTING SHOWROOM ATMOSPHERE OF STYLE AND COLOURWAY CHOICES.

privately owned businesses to be re-established, David's father Longen opened a paint brush factory. History was leading him in the right direction, Longen turned synthetic filaments normally used for fishing nets and tennis racquets into new age paint brushes, just in time for the water based paint boom. Latest technology filament brushes are now ABC's specialty.

David had been living in Australia since the late 1980s, not working for the family company directly but helping out by sourcing BHP steel and sending it over to his father's factory. Twelve years ago, David's dad retired and David stepped into the top job on the proviso that he would continue to live in Australia.

"The USA was the company's major market, it would have been sensible for me to live in Atlanta, but Australia is the lucky country, my daughter Amanda was just born, I wanted to live here," David explains. Although it's ironic that his extraordinary travel schedule keeps him away from his Melbourne home for half the year.

ABC's catalogue shows brushes at various price points to meet the demands of different market segments and different channels. But, it's the high quality 100% handmade Monarch Advance range that is special, held in high regard here and overseas as the best handmade brushes in the world.

"I really know my brushes," David laughs and points out how complex the product really is. "Making high quality brushes is like rocket science compared to making paint, they are so labour intensive." There are 64 procedures in the manufacture including the tapering, each brush is individually shaped.

A stream of international buyers visit the ABC factory, located east of Shanghai, each year. David says they comment on how well managed the factory is, how many staff there are, how clean, tidy and organised. The volume is vast, the 1000 staff produce around 250,000 paint brushes every day, it's a huge operation.

It can't be easy living on planes so much of his life. David says he is motivated by doing business, especially making money for his customers and himself. Owning the factories is an important part of his philosophy. "Our major retailers internationally require very strict supply and quality assurance standards, which as manufacturers we guarantee to meet. If retailers don't buy direct from the manufacturer, they won't know where the brushes come from," David says.

Then there is the money angle. "If a retailer doesn't deal with the manufacturer direct, then someone else is taking a clip of the profits; that has to be passed on. Go direct to the factory is always my advice."

ABC offers the full range of accessories, brushes, rollers and all the bits and pieces that painting requires. Workfast is a range of pad applicators that are selling well. New releases will include the latest purpose driven application products and detailing brushes to make the painting process easier for consumers.

From his international perspective, David says the industry in Australia is in a good position. "Matching quality brushware to quality paint is keeping our paint accessory category in good shape. Overseas experience has shown that when retail price and quality are driven down to an unsustainable level, the result is an inferior product. It happened in the United States and it has taken a long time for them to claw back to a better value proposition and get a reasonable dollar through the whole supply chain for the product."

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Currently ABC is widening its distribution base across Australia and New Zealand with an aggressive expansion plan in place that will see the business double in the next year. "We aim to take a bigger and more profitable share of the market," David says. "We have recruited the best people, quite a few have been successful in the paint industry, they understand our business and our customers' needs. We are ready to move forward."

"We are fully committed to our ABC business; there is plenty of room to grow. There are always new challenges, new entrants into the marketplace, we need strong brands to keep the market stimulated. To stay in front, we are developing our brands, releasing new products and new packaging to stay ahead."

Even so, there is only so much you can do with paint accessories, so currently David's other business, DIY Resolutions is introducing Flatpax self-assemble kitchens into Australia exclusively through Bunnings. The sleek, glossy units look a million dollars but are surprisingly affordable with price tags around \$2000. The components are manufactured in David's sophisticated facility that is well on its way to becoming the largest single specialist manufacturer of self assemble bathrooms, laundries and wardrobes in China using state of the art Italian and German technology and components.

David has made a US\$25 million investment into the project. Currently they are fitting out the cash and carry kitchens into seven Bunnings stores a month, the aim is 150 Bunnings stores. "This is the biggest change you will see in the kitchen market in Australia since Ikea launched their kitchens. Ours meet and exceed the highest Australian standards with a fantastic range of products," he says.

It's a well balanced diversification, the low price point paint accessories and big price ticket kitchens, both with the family characteristic of quality that David insists on. ♦

JUST IN



THE MONARCH ONE COAT brushes were designed for the new one coat paint technology with an ergonomically designed handle to reduce user fatigue. The unpainted timber handles are a feature of Monarch Advance range, this Scandinavian style was not selected for its good looks but because the raw timber reduces slipping and cramping and is easier to hold for long periods, the timber grain rises naturally when in contact with water or perspiration, improving the grip even more.