

CASE STUDY

Changing perceptions of Chinese-branded construction equipment



THE CLIENT

Shandong Lingong Machinery Co., Ltd. (known as Lingong) – has been producing its SDLG-branded construction equipment in China for over 40 years. Despite manufacturing huge volumes of wheel loaders in its native land, the SDLG brand was relatively unknown outside China. However over the past decade, as demand in export markets grew, Lingong began to enjoy good sales success in countries such as Russia, Libya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Indonesia. The big challenge for the company was not only to raise and build awareness of its products internationally, but to emphasize the reliability, durability and excellent value its machines offer.

To make things more challenging, there is the continuing issue of overcoming negative perceptions towards Chinese manufacturers. It has long been believed that although products made in China are cheaper in price, they are inferior in quality and technology compared to foreign brands. With quality and reliability at the heart of Lingong's values, the company selected IDEA not only to promote its products and brand but to push out the message that it offers world-class manufacturing techniques, advanced technology and reliable products.



“There was a time when the perception was that Chinese manufacturers were good at making products inexpensive, but not particularly well. My recent visit to SDLG in Linyi certainly made it clear that it's time for perceptions to change.”

Mike Brezonick
Editor Diesel Progress

OUR SOLUTION

Five years ago, Lingong had no marketing or communications function whatsoever, until the current head of branding came on board in 2009. As sales of SDLG products picked up in China, so did the company's promotional efforts – with the sponsorship of the Chinese Football League and brand exposure on China's most popular TV stations. But when it came to PR in overseas markets there was nothing, so when IDEA started in 2013, it was from a completely clean slate. As is often the case, this meant lots of work, but also the opportunity to shape processes and messages for the long-term.

Thanks to ample experience with similar multinational brands, IDEA was able to work with Lingong to develop relevant and engaging corporate messages that could be communicated across the globe. Once defined, IDEA created fact sheets, corporate profiles, style guides and more, all aligned with the newly developed messaging. This gave a solid foundation to the subsequent PR plan that encompassed both online and print press. Since partnering with SDLG in June 2013, IDEA's team of writers have reported from job sites in China, Russia and Africa. The winning combination of well-written and engaging copy and professional photography has led to coverage in some of the world's leading business and trade titles.

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your brand's
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WHAT WE DID

IDEA's team of bilingual Chinese/English speakers have helped overcome the language and cultural barriers that often hinder partnerships between western and Chinese organizations. The dedicated PR specialists that work on this account regularly visit Lingong's headquarters in Linyi, Shandong province, building the client-agency relationship with the senior management team – as is customary in Chinese culture – and understanding more about the company's philosophy and culture.

From our offices in London, Chicago and Singapore we are able to support Lingong in every international market as the SDLG brand becomes more widely known. IDEA

has recently supported Lingong at some of the world's biggest industry trade shows including CTT Russia, bauma Africa, Mining Indonesia and Excon India with product press releases, speech writing and media relations. In addition, IDEA has supported more local events, including dealer inaugurations and regional product launches. With customer testimonials being the most powerful tool to promote an organization's products and services, IDEA's team of journalists has been out in the field to meet the people who use SDLG equipment every day. This multi-pronged approach has resulted in extensive media coverage in the most relevant international business press with consistent and aligned messaging to reflect Lingong's corporate values.



light the quality and professionalism of the company – to counter negative perceptions of Chinese equipment in the market. IDEA's multilingual staff handled the entire event from start to finish – coordinating visas, organizing international and domestic flights and transfers, booking hotels and following up after the event with additional materials. The trip was a resounding success and resulted in a number of positive articles including a cover story in Engineering News Record, one of North America's leading industrial magazines.

“The media tour was an overwhelming success and really helped to reinforce the image of SDLG that we wanted to demonstrate to this group of important media.”

Al Quinn

Director | SDLG North America

IDEA also organized a visit for 10 leading North American trade magazine editors to the Lingong factory in Linyi, partly to introduce the brand (in conjunction with its launch into the region) and partly to high-



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