

Reinventing Traditional Hong Kong Culinary Culture with **Smart Kitchens**

智能廚房 創出新一代 港式餐飲文化

Chan Wing On

Chairman and Executive Director
Tai Hing Group

陳永安

太興集團主席兼執行董事



Staying ahead of the curve in many aspects, Tai Hing Group is arguably the “Apple company” of the catering industry. Whether it is the chilled milk tea first invented by them, their iconic “My Hero” advertising campaign, or the automated wok that came in the spotlight recently - all of these creations are well-applauded by its industry peers. Founded in 1989 as a typical “Siu Mei”, or Cantonese roasted meat restaurant in Sai Wan Ho, the company has come all the way in the past 30 years to become a large-scale corporation owning several renowned brands. What are the ingredients of its recipe for success?

Lifelong Learning Builds the DNA of Innovation

“Lifelong learning is my motto. My pursuit for innovative breakthroughs drives me to dig deep to the root of a problem and makes me more sensitive to new ideas around.” said Chan Wing On, Chairman of Tai Hing Group. “That’s why our management team goes on a field trip every year to different parts of the world, scanning for the new technologies or practices that could possibly applied in our business.” Chan explained the source of inspiration that drove their continual innovation. Any sizable business operators in Europe, Japan, Thailand and mainland China can be knowledge acquisition sources of the company.

Tai Hing has obtained three patents for its automated food processing machines, including automated woks with synchronized voice prompt and smokeless ovens. Developed into their fourth generation, the automated woks not only can prepare fried rice and stir-fried noodles, but also can be programmed to prepare more than 300 Chinese stir-fry dishes. Beyond that, Tai Hing has also developed a handful of other automated kitchen equipment, including chicken poaching machines, programmed barbecue pork sauce mixers, air drying oven, as well as poultry roasting oven.

太興集團可說是餐飲業界的「蘋果公司」，於多個範疇上都走在最前。無論是當年自家首創的冰鎮奶茶、MyHero系列廣告、或是備受注目的自動炒鑊，均讓太興於飲食業界贏盡噱頭及口碑。由最初1989年在西灣河經營港式燒味快餐店，逐步發展成現今集多個品牌於一身的大型餐飲集團，30年來太興的增長「餐單」有什麼材料？

終身學習創新為本的DNA

「終身學習可說是我的座右銘，並以創新求變的精神不斷去考究原因以解決問題，亦特別留意新鮮事物。每年我們的管理團隊都會到世界各地考察學習，探索有否適合我們應用於業務的新科技或點子。」太興集團控股有限公司主席陳永安解釋集團創新的靈感之源。歐洲、日本、泰國、中國內地等當地具規模的營運商都是其取經對象。

太興現擁有3項自動食品加工機器的專利，當中包括同步語音提示的自動炒鑊及無煙焗爐。太興的自動炒鑊已發展至第四代，不但可以炒飯炒麵，還可配合預設程式，烹調超過300款中式小炒菜式。另外，太興已自行研發出更多自動化器材，包括雞肉烹調機、叉燒醬攪拌機、風乾爐、家禽燒烤爐等，難怪太興以類

Knowing the extent to which Tai Hing's R&D capability goes, you won't be surprised why the brand associates its innovative genes with the fictional superhero and inventor - Iron Man.

似Iron Man的發明家形象去媲美其品牌創新的DNA。

We modified the automation technology brought in from Switzerland and developed into the pork roasting ovens used in our siu mei department, as early as 20 years ago. Our production chains are now highly automated with standardised processes and standardisation is one of the elements that set us apart from the competition, ensuring consistency in food quality and adhering to stringent quality control.

太興早於20年前已從瑞士引入自動化設備並改良成燒豬爐，應用於燒味部，實現自動化。現時整個出品部營運既能達致生產標準化，確保菜式品質穩定一致，更能容易控制食物品質。這是我們能夠在市場獨當一面的原因之一。



He also added that automation has reduced common occupational diseases among kitchen staffs and become a secret sauce of success for Tai Hing to successfully develop into a large restaurant chain.

陳永安同時強調，自動化可減低廚房員工患上職業病的機會，亦是太興發展成大型連鎖飲食集團的秘訣之一。

Millions of Machines in Operation to Reduce Occupational Disorders

Hugely popular among Hong Kongers, a cup of silky smooth Hong Kong style milk-tea heavily depends on the "force pouring" technique - the process of pouring the tea from a greater distance repeatedly. Such process can bring out the fragrance of the tea, but can also cause repetitive strain injury to staff performing the task every day. Tai Hing resolved the problem by developing and implementing an automated milk tea machine. Their staff can now produce the beverage with the same taste and scent in an easier way. Though tens of pots of milk tea are tediously produced daily, there are no complaints.

Automation has indeed brought a new ambient to Tai Hing's "siu mei" production unit. Chan explains, "By adopting the programmed poultry roasting ovens in our central kitchen, staff can just focus on quality and quantity control to produce perfectly roasted meat. Workplace safety has been improved, as the job became less

日理萬「機」減職業勞損

港人喜歡喝港式奶茶，而一杯香濃順滑的奶茶往往講究「撞茶」功夫，在倒茶時要盡量將壺與壺之間的距離拉開。然而，員工若每天以人手做同一拉奶茶動作，會很容易患上職業勞損。因此，太興研發了自動沖奶茶機解決這問題，讓員工更容易上手，輕易「拉」出茶香滑溜的奶茶，即使每天製作數十壺也不會有員工投訴。

自動化機器亦為太興的燒味部注入了新景象，陳永安稱：「太興的中央廚房採用了電腦控制的電子燒烤爐後，員工只需監控燒味的份量及質素就可製作出香濃的燒味，女師傅也能成為燒味大廚。此外，這亦有助減少員工職業勞損或發生意外，提升職安健水平。」



heavy lifting, reducing the chances of chronic injuries or accidents at work. What's more is that, you can now see female 'siu mei' chefs in the kitchen."

"Beyond improving operational efficiency and food quality, these automated kitchen equipment in our restaurants have made our kitchen staff more engaged at work, as they now work in a genuinely safe and healthy, clean and tidy environment. This is also a reason why Tai Hing's staff turnover rate has always remained at a low single digit percentage level." Chan said proudly. Indeed, automation in the kitchen has led to many other advantages – it makes the company less dependent on highly skilled and experienced staff, helps control cost more effectively, and attracts new talent to the industry.

The Group is now actively optimising management efforts in other areas. While enhancing supplier management and supply chain efficiency, they are also looking to further automate the Group's operational system for future growth.

Whoever Has Talent Can Get Promoted

Employees are a company's greatest asset, and Tai Hing puts this into practice. The Group took reference from the best practices of other large corporations, and has launched various programmes which provide opportunities for employee promotions, including internal qualifications framework, staff referral programme, elite training, and management bonus scheme. As of today, close to 500 employees have received training. Employees can apply for tests for different grades at certain times of the year. If they pass the test, they will get promoted, setting out a clear career path for staff. Outstanding staff can even be promoted from waiter to territory manager, or from junior chef to head chef, which is a strong motivation for employees.

Value-for-money Turns the Local "Cha Chaan Teng" Into a Multinational Corporation

When the Group conducts field trip in foreign countries, they not only bring new brands or ideas to Hong Kong, but also explore opportunities to expand its business to foreign market. Apart from traditional "Cha Chaan Teng" business, the Group is also expanding into different types of restaurants. Tai Hing ranked top in revenue in Hong Kong's self-operated casual dining restaurant market in 2017.

Newly opened in Hong Kong early this year, "Hot Pot Couple" is the first overseas branch of the 30-year-old Taipei restaurant. At the same time, Tai Hing also started promoting Hong Kong Cha Chaan Teng culture in Taipei by opening their first Tai Hing restaurant in the city in May this year. Its signature dishes – "Five-star Roast Pork", "Rice Noodles with Beef in Swiss Sauce", and "Chilled Milk Tea" are highly rated. The second Tai Hing restaurant in Taiwan is expected to open in the second half of the year.

The Group has strategically entered the Mainland China market back in 2004. With over 14 years of experience, it is now operating over 60 restaurants in more than 10 cities, and has become the second largest self-operated casual

「餐廳廚房採用了各種自動化設備後，不僅提升了營運效率和確保菜式品質，亦為廚房員工營造更安全健康及整潔舒適的工作環境，自然提升了他們的工作投入感。這亦是太興的員工流失率一直維持在低單位數的原因。」陳永安對此非常自豪。他續稱，自動化廚房同時能減低對熟手廚師的依賴，有效控制成本，又可吸引新人入行，可謂一舉數得。

此外，集團亦積極優化各管理範疇，除了致力改善供應商管理及提升供應鏈效率外，還希望將集團營運變得更自動化，帶來更大增長。

唯才是用 侍應仔隨時上位

員工是公司最重要的資產，太興集團亦深明此理。集團參考其他大企業的做法，推出有公司內部特色的資歷架構、員工推薦計劃、拔尖計劃、管理人責任分紅制等，為員工提供更多晉升機會。現時已有逾500名員工接受培訓，而每層級都會有考試，每年定時便會開放讓員工自行報名，只要考到就更上一層樓，資歷階梯清清楚楚。有些表現突出的員工甚至由侍應或初級廚師，升級至分區經理以至總廚，所以員工工作動力非常強。

高性價比 港式茶記變跨國企業

集團在外地考察時，不但會在尋找新品牌或新構思帶來香港，同時會物色開拓海外市場的機會。除了傳統茶餐廳業務外，還會拓展不同種類的餐廳，現時太興於香港自營休閒餐飲餐廳市場份額排名第一。

此外，今年初本港開幕的夫妻沸片，亦是於台北逾30年歷史的首間海外分店。相對地，太興亦在台灣推廣港式茶餐廳文化，首間太興今年5月進軍台北，招牌菜式





「五星級燒肉」、「牛柳絲瑞士汁濕炒河」和「冰鎮奶茶」等都大獲好評，並計劃於今年下半年在台灣開設第二間新店。

至於中國內地市場，集團早於2004年已開始進駐，獨具慧眼紮根市場超過14年，在十多個城市擁有超過60間餐廳，為中國內地第二大自營休閒餐飲集團。現時除香港、中國內地、澳門、台灣，以至大灣區，集團亦在積極探索東南亞等地市場的商機。

「現時能夠以每年約30間店舖的速度急速增長，全因我們旗下九個品牌的菜式性價比極高，價錢大眾化又配合本地口味。」陳永安剖析原因及展望未來。「我們正積極發展一系列副線產品，如太興罐裝奶茶、罐裝咖喱牛腩等，希望推廣至全世界各地有華人的地方，將港式飲食文化發揚光大。」

dining restaurant group in Mainland China. Apart from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Macau, Taiwan and the Greater Bay Area, the Group is actively exploring more business opportunities in the Southeast Asia region.

Chan explains, "The reason why we are able to expand at a rate of 30 new restaurants per year, is because all our nine restaurant brands are value-for-money, the food comes at an affordable pricing and with a taste that is suitable for local market. We are actively developing a series of canned products, including canned Hong Kong-style milk tea and canned curry beef brisket, with the hope of promoting Hong Kong's food culture to all Chinese communities around the world."



Strengthening Hong Kong's Food Paradise Reputation With Stringent Quality and Safety Control

Hong Kong is renowned as a food paradise, besides the high quality and diversity of cuisines offered in the city, Chan believes world-class food safety standards also have a role to play. The food and beverage industry in Hong Kong strictly adheres to a number of international standards, including HACCP, ISO, and food traceability systems.

In order to further enhance Hong Kong's overall food safety level and supply chain efficiency, the Group appointed Group Advisor Mr. Frederick Sin to be a member of Hong Kong Food and Beverage Industry Advisory Board of GS1 HK. In addition, Chan also observes that the Quality Food Traceability Scheme organised by GS1 HK can help enhance the effectiveness of industry measures on food traceability, improve food companies' capability to deal with incidents, which in turn strengthen consumers' confidence towards their brands.

品質安全嚴控 成就香港美食天堂

陳永安續稱香港是美食天堂，不單靠多元化及高質素的美食，安全水平亦屬世界前列，全因本港嚴格執行多項全球標準，如HACCP、ISO、食物追蹤追溯等。為協力提升本港食品安全、改善業界的供應鏈效率，集團亦委派了集團顧問冼偉洪擔任GS1 Hong Kong的香港食品及飲品行業諮詢委員會成員，推動行業發展。陳永安同時表示本會的優質食品源頭計劃可以提升業界於食品追蹤措施的效能，有助提高企業應變效率，鞏固消費者對品牌的信心。