



UKTI's support 'spot-on' for BAGNODESIGN

Fast facts

Company: BAGNODESIGN

Industry: Construction

Target Market: Macao, Hong Kong

UKTI Service: Trade Mission

www.bagnodesign.co.uk



Joining a UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) High Value Opportunity (HVO) Trade Mission to Macao gave BAGNODESIGN the chance to meet with casino and resort developers, laying the foundations for relationships that could result in hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of business.

BAGNODESIGN supplies premier, high-end bathroom fixtures and fittings, and plumbing materials both to customers in retail and wholesale and direct to construction projects. The company is a subsidiary of the SANIPEX GROUP which is run by a group of British businessmen in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Group was established in 1994, a time when the Middle East was shaping up to be a hotbed of construction.

Having created a strong brand presence there, SANIPEX began to export its BAGNODESIGN products into the UK in 2011. The Group bought premises in Clerkenwell, London and set up logistics operations in Leeds, establishing its British market presence.

BAGNODESIGN has also recently opened its first fully-franchised retail showroom in Glasgow, Scotland, with the company's European headquarters and Architectural and Design (A&D) Centre due to open in Leeds in April.

Today, the SANIPEX Group employs over 250 staff and exports to more than 25 countries. In addition to its Clerkenwell and Leeds premises, the company has design centres in Doha, Qatar and in Wan Chai, Hong Kong where it has partnered with Van Shung Chong Holdings Ltd (VSC), a company listed on the Hang Seng Exchange.

"Using our showrooms as Architectural and Design Centres is a key part of our business model," says Simon Davis, BAGNODESIGN's Sales Director, Asia Pacific. "We invite design and construction professionals to use the social space in the showroom to touch, feel and select materials in a relaxed environment. We provide all professional facilities, including workspaces, private meeting areas with video-conferencing facilities, refreshments and free Wi-Fi access. Clients are also welcome in the

showroom either with their consultants or by appointment for personal service."

Mission to Macao

Over the past three years, sales of BAGNODESIGN products have tripled and further growth is planned both through its existing networks and in new markets. The company actively follows the projects sector, looking for opportunities to work on resorts and hotels, as well as residential and commercial developments.

Having officially launched its 4000 square foot dedicated showroom in Hong Kong in January 2014,

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Sales Director, Asia Pacific

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BAGNODESIGN got in touch with the local UKTI team to find out what support was available for its expansion plans. As it turned out, a trade mission to Hong Kong and Macao was planned for the following month. Simon, who is based in Hong Kong, was delighted to take the short ferry trip across to Macao to join the group of design-led British companies in meeting developers, presenting their products and finding out more about opportunities in the market.

“Our number one target is the hospitality and leisure industry and Macao has over 18 high value projects going on at the moment,” says Simon. “The UKTI Trade Mission was 100 per cent relevant to us and I got a lot out of it. The developers need luxurious designer bathrooms for their VIP suites, restaurants, front of house and spas, so the potential for our business there is huge. I made a tailored pitch to each of the ‘big six’ major resort developers, including MGM, Wynn and Sands. Through UKTI, I was able to access people that I otherwise would not have had the chance to meet, and expand our networks considerably in a very short space of time.”

Establishing relationships

BAGNODESIGN is now pursuing specific leads arising from the trade mission. The company has found a local partner in Macao who will offer after sales service to clients. Simon has also invited project design and procurement teams to use the BAGNODESIGN Hong Kong showroom space for their meetings, recently hosting a team from Wynn Resorts.

UKTI is also supporting BAGNODESIGN in getting involved with three mega projects in Hong Kong, each worth over US\$1 billion. An International Trade Adviser (ITA) has been on hand to give the company advice and guidance along with market information and introductions. With this positive start to its business in the Far East, the company already has plans to open five further architectural and design showrooms in China this year and one in Singapore in 2015.

“UKTI’s support in connecting us with senior level personnel has been absolutely invaluable,” says Simon. “Our ITA has given us crucial advice about who to deal with in Hong Kong and what leads to follow. VSC has been hugely impressed by the market information we have received. Some companies will only buy locally, so having a showroom in Hong Kong gives us a definite advantage. These projects are set to run for the next ten years, so the trade mission and other introductions by UKTI are laying the foundation for long-term relationships which we hope will lead to long-term business opportunities. Contacting UKTI is critical for British companies looking to establish themselves in the Far East. Their experienced experts will give you tailored advice and save you time and resources you might otherwise waste trying to connect with people who can’t actually help to advance your business.”

The UK and Macao

Macao has a small, open economy that relies mainly on the services industry - dominated by gaming and tourism - this sector accounts for almost 90 per cent of the GDP and over 70 per cent of employment. It is one of world’s leading tourism destinations, attracting over 29 million visitors in 2013, mainly from Mainland China.

In 2013, UK exports to Macao were valued at £60 million, making the UK Macao’s third biggest EU trade partner after France and Germany. Many more exports come via Hong Kong.

The local market has an appreciation for quality and is willing to pay for the best. There are several multi-billion projects already underway and planned over the next ten years. Business opportunities are available in leisure, tourism, construction, high end luxury retail, food and beverage, education and training and environmental technology.

For further information about business opportunities in Macao, please go to www.gov.uk/ukti

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UKTI was delighted to support BAGNODESIGN in its business overseas.



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