

HWA-HSIA GLASS

Asia's new shining star

G LASS MACHINERY PLANTS & ACCESSORIES

(GMP&A): Richard Liao, as current CEO of Hwa-Hsia Glass, tell us something of your story and how you joined the group.

Richard Liao: I was born in the USA and raised in Taiwan. As for my studies, I completed an MBA in the States before going on to Wall Street and working there for 3 years. I then returned to Taiwan

to begin at Hwa-Hsia Glass, where the group is headquartered. So far, I've been here almost 10 years. More importantly, Hwa-Hsia Glass will be reaching a truly marvellous achievement just two years from now - marking the 100-year milestone that'll have it even more radiant as a shining star in Asia.

GMP&A: We understand the group has a very long history in glassmaking. In addition to your well-established presence on the market, your diversified approach and range of glass products all distinguishes you within the industry - also testifying to your mission to grow within the sector. Tell us more about the group's history and any challenges you've successfully overcome, as well as the growth you've experienced over the years?

RL: HHGG goes right back to 1925. Its first chairperson, Chi Min Liao, started by overseeing certain furnace operations - especially those associated with oil lamps used by the Japanese army

Having been around for more than 4,000 years, glass has clearly passed the test of time. Now, to understand how the industry is weathering the pandemic and what jobs it's needing to stay strong, GMP&A got its own professional 'booster' from HWA-HSIA GLASS - a 100-year-old glass manufacturing group based in Taiwan.





during its occupation of Taiwan during WW2. It was thanks to this initial collaboration with the Japanese government that he was able to access key resources and technical know-how from Japanese glass manufacturers which led, shortly afterwards, to the opening of Taiwan's first-ever glass manufacturing plant in Chinju in 1925.

Ever since its founding that year, HHGG has overcome numerous obstacles. It weathered the oil crisis, the Asian financial crisis - even the Wall Street crisis of 2008. Here the organizational DNA that saw HHGG not only surviving various rocky moments but also keeping its growth up while producing good quality products and services for its customers, all signalled -without a doubt- that it could stay results-driven and resilient notwithstanding the various demands of the time.

GMP&A: At the moment you're producing container glassware, electronic components and chemical compounds. In which geographical markets do you typically operate? Is there anything in the pipeline now in global terms, and respecting locations and products, whether to expand current markets or to scale up by exploring new markets?

RL: According to our present business model, we produce both glass containers as well as electronic components and chemical compounds - all in glass. Today our main manufacturing site operates in Taiwan, but we also have manufacturing plants in Fengyang, China, which is in Anhui Province. To this we add our subsidiary groups in Taiwan and China which handle moulding shops, equipment shops and raw material shops (limestone). However, our customer-base is all over the world - mostly in North America,

which is one of the largest markets we serve.

For its 100-year diamond jubilee, HHGG's vision is to further diversify its product sets. For example, we'll be investing in a new electronic furnace to produce sets that can be tied to the cosmetics and medical bottles fields - both high-end. Here our furnace affords us the possibility to produce fewer emissions, CO2 included - all in sync with current ESG trends as they've been characterising the industry for a while now.

“Having successfully overcome past hurdles, here's how the group is riding out existing, pandemic-related challenges:”



GMP&A: You mentioned earlier that HHGG has been investing in enlarging its footprint further, with the result that it operates now in multiple locations. Give us some idea of how far that extends, considering additional production sites.

RL: Respecting our consolidation interpretation plan, we're overseeing many lead players in Taiwan that we're already inviting to join us with a view to becoming a stronger group. Taiwan is actually a small country, so in order to become a more robust international player in glass manufacturing, we need to combine forces and work together. Here's how we can compete for international prominence within the competition arena, astride such titans as China.

GMP&A: Crucial to expansion is innovation, whether in terms of "product and service" or, above all, "technological" advancement. What's your vision here as Group CEO? Are you currently exploring fresh ideas to potentially open new investments and, if so, are we speaking of short or long-term plans? Your comment.

RL: Any CEO must necessarily have some vision for the future. One will commonly ask: "How will the group look in the next five, ten or twenty years?" We know glass has been around for circa 4 millennia just as we believe it'll always be out there – despite the many packaging challenges we're facing, which include PET bottles as well as plastic and paper packaging

material. I think the future is more about rendering glass packaging unique as a stronger, more global aspect of our business. We already know many current trends rotate around recyclable materials. Here glass can play a critical role. Over the past 10 years people have leant progressively more towards plastic packaging, which is all due to the notion that it's lighter in weight, cheaper and easier to carry. Today we're after more sustainable living. We want to reduce carbon emissions. That alone makes glass an optimum packaging alternative, given that it not only maintains the high quality of food and beverage items but its manufacture will also better conserve our environment for future generations.

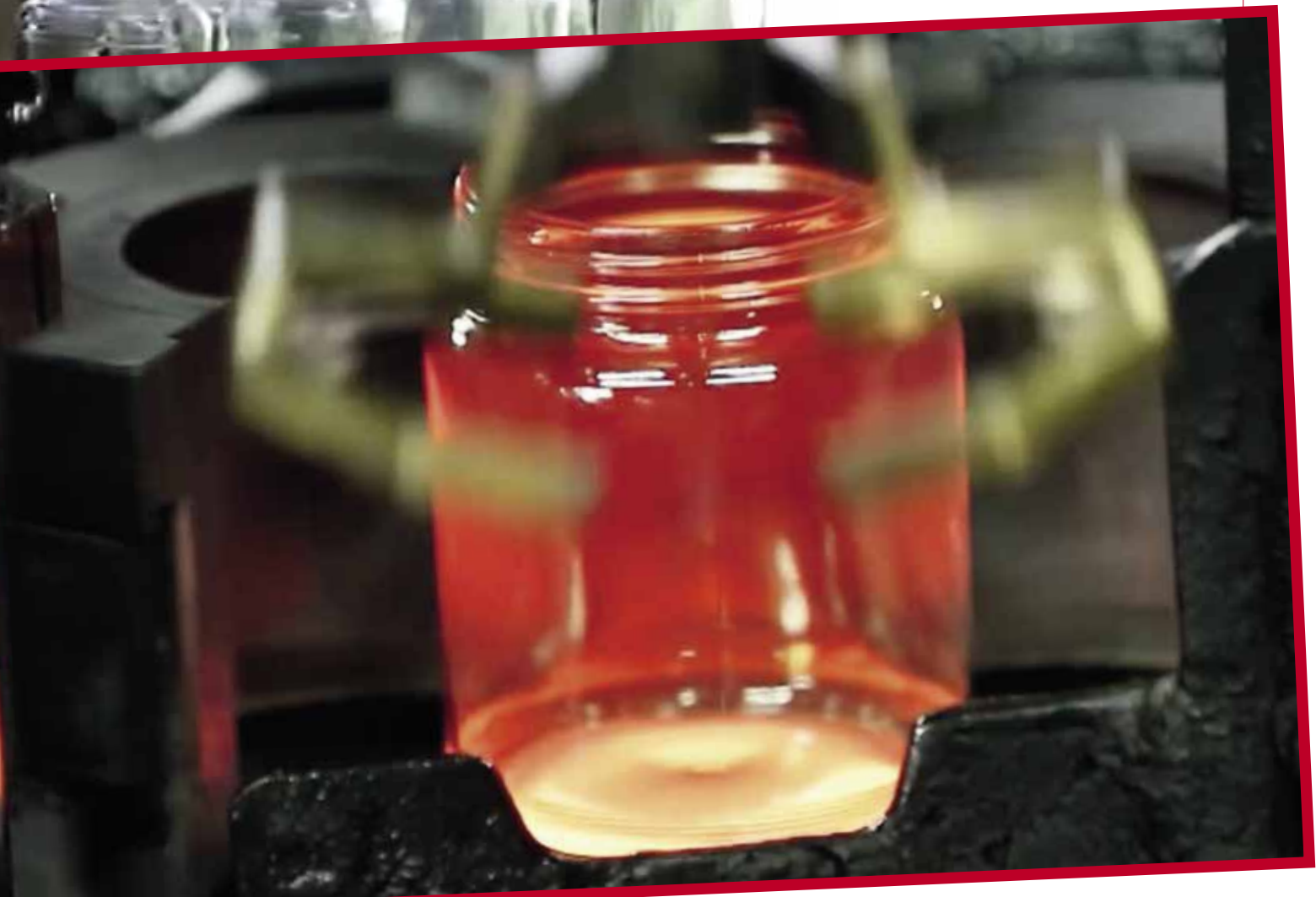


“

Proactiveness serves to prepare for, intervene in, or control an unexpected situation - especially one that's undesirable or negative. Reactiveness serves to respond, or react, to some stimulus. As explained here, perspective is key in all this - and Customer perspective more specifically.

”

GMP&A: Over the past two years, the pandemic has variously affected many sectors. We understand that you've approached this unique, historical period with great positivity and dynamism, so much so that you've suggested we remain primed now to identify each new





opportunity that opens to us – ever at the ready to react. Given that more quality input from successful CEOs translates into better preparedness going forward, can you elaborate further on this advice?

RL: The past two years have generally been hectic for global systems the world over. Firstly, cities have been locked down. Secondly, people have been unable to travel. Thirdly, logistics have been compromised - which all meant it could be hard for companies to get cargo or shipments. As a CEO and global citizen, I think we must take stock of the assets and capabilities at our

disposal - both in our company and within ourselves. Then we need to identify opportunities that will best fit those assets and capabilities. I would say for example that, where HHGG stands at the moment, we can already provide for our customers a total packaging solution strategy. They've been really hard to find, and keep, during the pandemic – and not only in the glass sector. What we did to troubleshoot the issue was open up by partnering with local suppliers - whether for the plastic screw-on bottles, the wrapping or the paper

and tray boxes. The result is that we can now present this entire packaging solution to our customers. Here it's all about making sure they understand what you can do and exactly how you can help them. An automatic outcome from this is that one's business is able to thus endure over the long-term, despite unpredictable turns or the instability of the pandemic. ■



HWA HSIA GLASS

No. 49, Puu Chien Road
30091 Hsin Chu - Taiwan
Tel.: +886-3-5385185
E-mail: richard.k.liao@hwahsiaglass.com.tw
www.hwahsiaglass.com