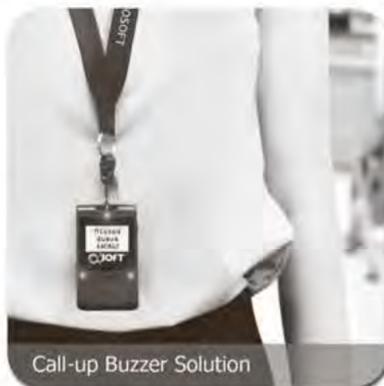




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Combglow Lighting aspires to grow its business in Asia by offering high quality and yet affordable products through its flagship brand LUZ

by suki lor

DISTRIBUTOR of lighting fixtures Combglow Lighting aims to expand its business in Asia through its flagship brand, LUZ, which it created in 2010 for the bulk of its LED (light-emitting diode) lighting products.

Combglow has come a long way from having just one retail shop in Marsiling when it started out in 1996, thanks to branding which has helped it to grow and stand out from its competitors, says founder and managing director Raymond Low (above).

While Combglow now has two retail outlets in Singapore and one in Johor Bahru, it has evolved into mainly a wholesale business with distributors in Indonesia and Brunei.

LUZ, which means light in Portuguese, hopes to be at the forefront of the LED revolution by offering the latest technology and design in LED lighting. Combglow is in the midst of engaging a designer from Europe to develop new designs to help it break into more markets in the region.

"Since branding has been inducted into the business, it is apparent that employees have seen the need to be good brand ambassadors and walk the talk accordingly. Customers would have noticed that our approach has been more consistent, more professional," Mr Low says.

"As with any brand starting out, getting the buy-in and commitment from the stakeholders will always be a challenge. Good communication will ease the transformation."

Combglow has so successfully navigated the challenges that LUZ has clinched the Singapore Prestige Brand Award (SPBA) in the SPBA - Promising Brands category this year, the second consecutive year that it has won the accolade.

"Branding is about creating a positive impression on the product or service in the minds of consumers. Good branding certainly inspires confidence as the positive attributes are clearly communicated to all stakeholders. This sets us apart from the other players in the industry," says Mr Low.

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— Mr Raymond Low, founder and managing director, Combglow Lighting

Young and growing

He says the LUZ brand is synonymous with classic European design, quality and durable products priced at levels within the reach of many.

Consistent branding has elevated its brand presence which ensures that consumers, though spoiled for choice, remember the company's unique selling propositions, Mr Low says. "That has helped us gain a bigger market share," he adds.

"LUZ has managed to hold its own against competitors, foreign and local, simply by offering high quality lighting complemented with affordable pricing."

Mr Low believes that branding should be inculcated from day one of starting the business, and subsequently stepped up progressively. "The approach is practical and makes easier implementation for all stakeholders," he says.

Combglow sets aside 10 per cent of its annual budget to grow its brand presence in the markets that it is in.

Mr Low attributes the company's success in branding to its belief in and commitment to continuing to invest time, money and effort to grow the brand. Another factor is its ability to get the buy-in from all stakeholders, including management, staff, business associates and partners.

"Participating in SPBA annually is testament to this," he notes.

"We are a young and growing brand. Our brand application gets better with each passing year. Through SPBA, we get to learn useful tips from the more established brands," Mr Low says.

It has set its sights on clinching more SPBA awards. "When we are ready, we will compete with the bigger brands in the Established category. Attaining Hall of Fame status would be the pinnacle of our success," he says.

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