

# Talk of the town

On Cheong Jewellery strives to keep up with new trends and the changing tastes of customers

by marlene michael

ON CHEONG Jewellery celebrated its 70th anniversary this year. And it added another jewel to its crown by winning the Singapore Prestige Brand Award (SPBA) in the Heritage Brands category for the second time.

The firm attributes its willingness to re-invent itself as a major reason why it has stood the test of time to emerge as one of Singapore's more reputable and respected jewellers.

Says Mr Ho Nai Chuen, On Cheong's managing director: "A strong brand is crucial to stay relevant in a changing business landscape and relevant even for established brands. Our vision was to keep up with current trends and be a trusted jeweller synonymous with distinctive value and excellent relationships with customers across the varied generations, so we embarked on a re-branding exercise in the middle of last year."

The company invested \$1 million in the exercise to help reposition it as an upmarket brand by focusing on design, creativity and customer relationships. A new company logo and packaging were revealed and retail outlets underwent a complete revamp.

To deliver on its brand promise of being a one-stop, personal and professional jeweller, On Cheong offers an extensive array of dazzling jewellery, specialising in gold, diamonds, jade, pearls and gem-set designs.

It scours the world for unique and fine jewellery designs to cater to different tastes and budgets and also welcomes its customers to bring along their old jewellery for re-designing.

The results of the firm's efforts were almost immediate. "There was a 10 per cent increase in revenue after the re-branding exercise," reveals Mr Ho.

On winning the award, Mr Ho says it is an important reminder for established brands like On Cheong to keep up with the current trends of business operations as well as the changing tastes of customers. "It encourages firms to re-invent themselves and motivates us to keep up with the challenges in a highly competitive business environment."

Plans for the future include hiring qualified design graduates to run the retail operations. Says Mr Ho: "The objective is to make On Cheong a designer brand where jewellery retailing enters a new era in which creativity, excellent craftsmanship

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A strong brand is crucial to staying relevant in a changing business landscape, says Mr Ho. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO