

Unconventional wisdom

For the first time, pharmaceutical company Hovione has appointed a senior member of its local staff to head its Taipa factory

Time and time again, Macau businessmen complain that there is a lack of human resources qualified to assume top roles in a company. International pharmaceutical group Hovione thinks otherwise.

In October, the firm appointed Macau resident Eddy Leong to head its operations in the city, where it has a factory in Taipa. He is the first Chinese to be appointed general manager of its operations.

He replaced Jorge Pastilha, who returned to Hovione headquarters in Portugal. Mr Pastilha is now the company's general manager of technical operations for Asia.

Mr Pastilha, who was Hovione Macau's general manager for three and a half years, told Portuguese news



Eddy Leong

agency Lusa that Mr Leong's appointment meant the company had achieved "maturity" in Macau, where it first arrived in 1984.

"After 25 years in Macau, Hovione has trained local staff that are perfectly able to assume any of the roles in the Macau factory, including that of general manager," he said.

"This is proof of the local workforce's maturity and that Hovione Macau can progress with local human resources. It also demonstrates that in Macau there are very high-quality professionals," Mr Pastilha said.

Mr Leong took his chemical engineering degree overseas and joined Hovione in 1997. Besides having worked in the company's factory in Taipa, he also spent some time at its mainland Chinese unit, in Zhejiang province.

Most of Hovione Macau's staff and managers are from Macau. In June, the company had 27 employees from abroad in a workforce of 131 people. Most of the company's staff are highly skilled, with production-line workers accounting for less

than 30 percent of the total.

Hovione Macau produces generic and custom-made pharmaceutical products. The United States is its main market, followed by Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Customers include leading generics companies, pharmaceutical multinationals and NASDAQ-listed biotech companies.

The Macau plant works three shifts a day, seven days per week. It shuts down only for maintenance, for three to four weeks in August. The facility was one of the first in greater China to be approved by United States health authorities, according to Hovione.

Hovione is an international group with more than 50 years of experience of developing active pharmaceutical ingredients and of compliant manufacturing, serving only the pharmaceutical industry. Besides China, it employs about 1,000 people in Portugal, Ireland and the US, and has a worldwide yearly revenue of about US\$144 million.

The mainland is the company's major supplier of raw materials. It is also becoming more and more of a market for Hovione. "China represents a big window of opportunity for Hovione and all the other companies that bet on quality products," said Mr Pastilha.

The company entered the mainland in 2008, when it bought 75 percent of Hisyn Pharmaceutical of Zhejiang. The acquisition included a 22,000 square metre plant and development labs in Shanghai. 🏢

