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Lee Callaghan,
Co Director

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Essex County Council



Pepagon global sourcing to build better brands

Pepagon is a leading brand consultancy with a creative design and global sourcing business and a growing presence in the dynamic Chinese marketplace. The company, which currently has headquarters on Canvey Island, Essex and an office in Shanghai, is undertaking a further local venture that will strengthen Essex ties with China and help Chinese businesses to market themselves more effectively in Europe and the United States.

The company's business model is based on five integrated service elements - brand engagement, creative design, global product sourcing, bespoke solutions and digital marketing. As Managing



Director Lee Callaghan explains, the Pepagon approach is unusual as these services are rarely combined in one company. "Many companies buy creative content or promotional products with their name on them. What they don't think about is the message that those products are conveying. We start from the opposite perspective. Analysing the client's business and markets, we look at our customers brands through their customers' eyes, and only then can we propose our marketing solution to enhance our clients' brand values."

Fellow Co Director Paul Cunningham comments "Whether a client requires a new brand identity, a redesign or a viral trailer for an existing website, or maybe even promotional merchandise, connecting the brand to customers is paramount." For example, product sourcing is often treated as the 'Cinderella' of the marketing mix and simply handed over to a third party, but Paul Cunningham believes it must be handled professionally as an integral part of the branding process. "Product quality is critical because it directly reflects brand values. Ethical sourcing is important too because reputations can be easily damaged by association with unscrupulous working practices."

China has become an important ingredient for the company. "We have been dealing with Chinese companies for around 18 years," says Paul Cunningham.

“The county has excellent transport links by road, rail, sea and air for companies who relocate here, and it is very close to London which is an important and recognisable destination for overseas companies.”

Lee Callaghan, Co Director

“Recently, we have been involved with trade missions from Essex County Council, as well as setting up our own Shanghai Office. We visit the country around four times a year and it's clear from the relationships we have built that there are great opportunities for both parties.”

“Essex offers great potential to Chinese and other overseas companies as the gateway to UK and European markets,” according to Lee Callaghan. “The county has excellent transport links by road, rail, sea and air for companies who relocate here, and it is very close to London which is an important and recognisable destination for overseas companies. Part of our role is to help China gain a better understanding of our markets and to recognise that they cannot simply transplant their local identity and branding to new market locations.”

Essex has also been good for the growth of Pepagon's own business. “This is a very entrepreneurial county,” says Lee Callaghan. “So it's a very stimulating place to work with lots of business opportunities. It's convenient too. We had originally thought we would have to be based in London, but the fast rail connections mean we can visit clients easily, while we benefit from the lower overheads in Essex. We have also had some very valuable support and advice from Business Link and that has helped us to build a successful business in Essex.”

INVEST Essex provides confidential advice and practical support to companies wanting to establish a presence or expand in the UK. We promote Essex as an outstanding business destination and help existing and potential investors make the most of our strategic location, thriving business environment, and quality of life.

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