

Young at HEART

TIMOTHY TAM IS ENCOURAGING YOUNG CHINESE TO STAY HEALTHY WITH LING NAM MEDICINE, JUST THE WAY THEIR GRANDPARENTS DID.

WORDS WENDY KAY • IMAGES KACHICK

It's a huge ask to sell a product that hasn't really changed much in 100 years. But Timothy Tam, COO of Ling Nam Medicine Factory, is convinced traditional Chinese medicine still has an important role to play in today's world, particularly among young people. A delicious irony considering his own younger days, when the slightest whiff of any Chinese medicinal balm or oil meant one thing: old people.

"After spending a day in the factory, people would ask why I was wearing elderly perfume," he says. "After all, these medicines were something my grandparents would use. Not something any young person would want to smell of. But, as a scientist, having worked in the traditional Chinese medicine field for nearly two decades, I really want to prove to the younger market that our products can be just as effective. And with our patches, they don't have the smell!"

Ling Nam manufactures ointments, balms, creams and patches, mostly from herbal ingredients, to offer relief from pain for ailments including inflammation, bruises, burns, insect bites and fatigue.

While some specifically target problem areas, there are other more generic uses found in 'one bottle, many functions'. To optimise traditional formulas, many are developed in cooperation with the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Institute of Chinese Medicine, giving Timothy, a chemistry major, an excellent opportunity to bridge the gap between the science happening in the laboratory and the commercial potential a client seeks.

"I'm quite talkative," he says, laughing. "So when I'm lobbying with clients, I cannot only present the product, but also explain how it is made, how it works and why it's better than the others. Then I can get down to the business and sales side. On top of this is Ling Nam's »