

Technology-enabled Logistics Embarks for a Smooth Sailing

Founded in the early 19th century, Ben Line Agencies moves into the modern era of shipping with technology-enabled logistics.

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Philip Leung

**Assistant General Manager - Commercial
Ben Line Agencies - Hong Kong**



The world of shipping has changed dramatically since Ben Line Agencies was first established in Leith, Scotland with a single sailing ship. But in some ways it has remained the same: cargo ships transport goods from one port to another to sate demand for import products. In fact, the pandemic has accelerated the need for imports through online retailers and on-demand shipping.

When Ben Line first entered the Asian market in the 1950s, the focus was to build a run between Asia and Northern Europe on the strength of four container liners. It set up the Hong Kong office a few decades later to capture the demand from the region and leverage on the city's reputation as a free port. Today, Ben Line boasts more than 130 offices across 17 Asian countries. In 2017, it joined Sharaf Shipping Agencies to form Waterfront Maritime Service and tap into the global shipping market.

Enhance Efficiency Through Digitisation

Ben Line applied for government subsidies to upgrade their system to streamline logistics through digitisation. “With the

Hong Kong government's support of eCommerce throughout the city's various industries, we are able to jump on the opportunity to streamline logistics through digitisation,” said Philip Leung, Ben Line Agencies - Hong Kong's Assistant General Manager - Commercial. “By digitising our system, we can increase efficiency, effectiveness and accuracy, simplify our operations and provide conveniences to clients. We have improved sustainability by going paperless on eCargo manifest submission, eCargo declaration, eLicense application and submission along with other documents. This further saves costs.”

Competitive Rates Spur Growth

Leung is optimistic about Ben Line's growth potential in the region, as the city offers highly competitive port and terminal rates, low profit tax and free trade policy. On the personal front, the Macao native has lived in Hong Kong for many years and appreciates the city's robust infrastructure and transport system. He also cites the city's low personal income tax rates and accessible public medical care as good reasons to make Hong Kong home.

With its 40 staff, Leung supports hiring

locals. “The Vocational Training Council (VTC) offers courses in international logistics that provides a continuous supply of talent, and the city's multilingual talent is another strong point. As we oversee ports in Southern China, we require English and Mandarin language skills for easy communication internally and externally.”

Ben Line Agencies

- Originally established as The Ben Line in 1825, the Scottish shipping company is now headquartered in Singapore
- Its Hong Kong regional office established since the 1980s services the city's port as well as those in Southern China

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