

Our factory in China





Background

Operate locally or move our production?

- Since we support the notion of local entrepreneurship, for a long time we resisted the prevailing global trend to move production to low-price countries.
- But as competition got increasingly tough from firms who had already moved their production, we had two alternatives – either close down our Adventure range (our portable single-pole Nordic tipis) or move as well.
- We chose to cross the Baltic Sea and subcontract the manufacture of our single-pole Nordic tipis to an Estonian textile company.

Next step — subcontract work in China

- In 2004, we started to look at China. We came in contact with a respected subcontractor and we put out the production of some of our Adventure models.
- **HOWEVER** — it proved to be very difficult to have control over the end result.



Help! Some of our European fabrics were no longer up to standard!

- We discovered that some of the European materials, which used to be first-class, no longer lived up to our high demands.
- Looking for materials for our top quality tents in Europe meant we had a relatively small number of manufacturers to choose from.

Our own production plant in China???



With our own factory in China, we could do things that we could only dream about here at home:

- work together with hightech, Asian fabric and material manufacturers
- conduct high-class quality assurance and product development with testing equipment and staff who understand the importance of having control over the entire production process —

all in order to be able to offer our customers world-class products!



**From thoughts
to action!**

Tentipi China

In the summer of 2007, we registered the company Qingdao Tentipi Outdoor Products Co., Ltd and

- rented some modest premises in the coastal town of Qingdao
- employed a managing director and some other key figures
- employed a number of skilled seamstresses, cutters and other production workers



One year later, we moved



- We needed bigger premises.
- We had established ourselves in the “wrong” part of the town; it was difficult to recruit seamstresses.

With new, good-sized premises, we ensured we had plenty of space for future expansion.

Good products require knowledge, skill and control

- Control over the entire production process is the central issue for us as manufacturers of top-quality products.
- By owning our own Chinese factory, we have been able to bring about quality control that was impossible to attain through subcontracting.



Our own factory — knowledge, commitment, quality awareness

With our own factory, we can:

- apply Tentipi's corporate culture with its quality awareness and other values that are important to us
- engage committed workers whom we know personally and who know our products inside out
- be in control of staff turnover —

factors that are crucial for quality and continuity



Testing institutes and our own tests — so we can be sure the materials live up to our demands



- Most tests are done when a new tent material is being developed.
- Materials that are already approved go through certain tests each time a new batch comes.
- Every single finished Nordic tipi is put up and inspected before it leaves the factory.

Some of the tests we do ourselves; others are done at various authorised testing institutes in Qingdao.



Problems that originate from subcontractors' varying quality of materials ...

... is something that all manufacturers must learn to handle – and cope with to a varying degree.

Unique rain test room

- One of the things we have done to minimise material problems as far as possible is to set up a rain test room – something we venture to say is unique!
- With our rain test, we radically reduce the problems that are linked to precipitation.

We are very proud of this test!



The rain test

- is a very important full-scale test
- exposes faults that are not revealed when only the material is tested
- is done in a specially designed room

Every fifth tent is showered with a cloudburst of 1000 litres of water to see if there are any problems. If there is a problem, the whole series is tested until the fault is fixed.

Tentipi's responsibilities in China

What about the staff's working conditions?



- We provide dormitories for our workers who cannot/do not want to spend money on their own accommodation (very common in China; many people move in to towns from distant villages).
- The workers who do not live in our dormitories are fetched in the morning and driven home in the evening.
- We have also employed a cook at the factory who ensures that the staff are served three meals a day.

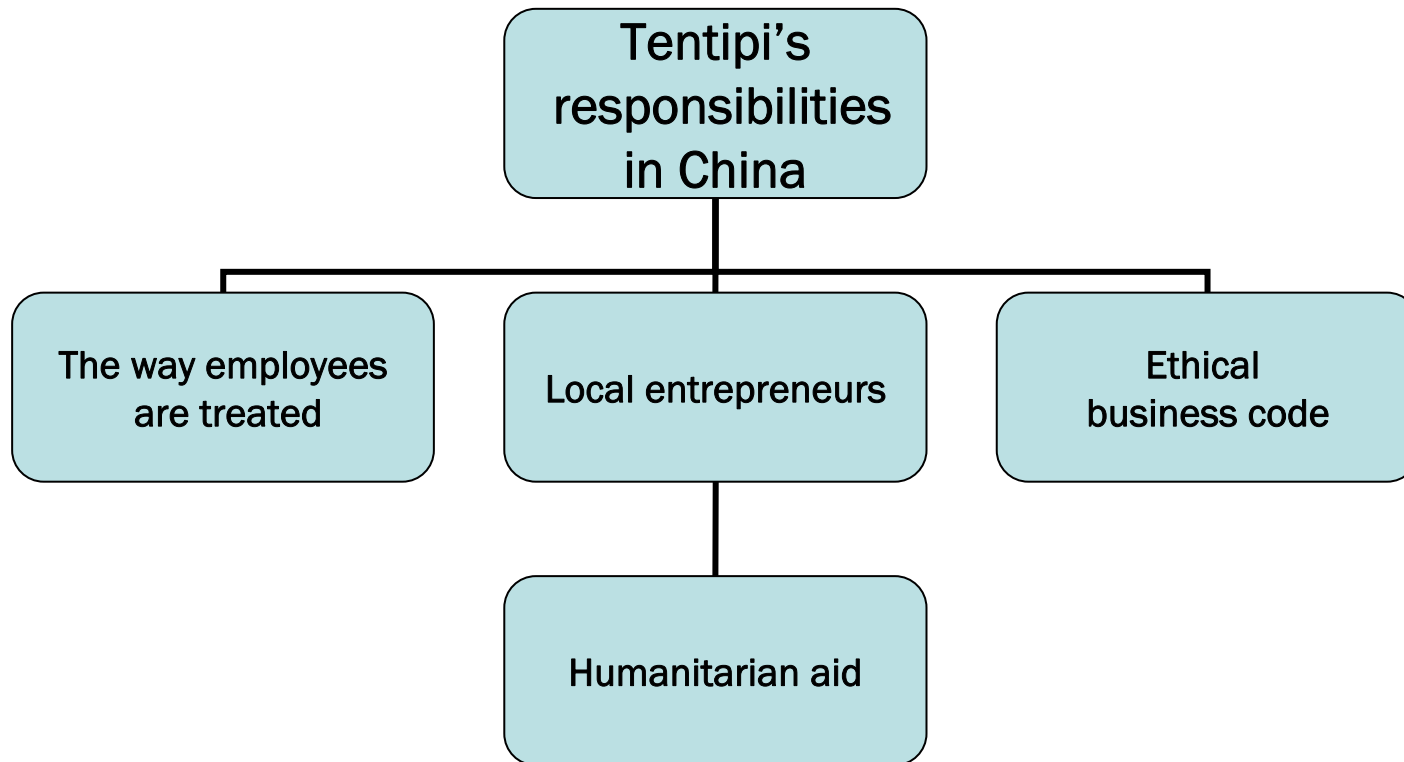
Working hours/salaries

- Normal working hours: eight hours a day, five days a week.

(Many people do not like this arrangement! Some workers have even left because they were not getting enough hours. How can we meet the seamstresses' wishes without crossing unethical or unlawful limits?)

- Salaries: on the front line compared with similar jobs in the district where the factory is located. Those workers who stay with us, who are skilful and have a good attitude are rewarded with an even better salary.

We have a strong desire to do good where we operate. In our operations in China, this is concretized in a number of different ways:



The way employees are treated

- We always view all people as being of equal worth. (This arouses both surprise and respect since the value of a person in China is often related to his/her level of salary or status.)
- We are continually trying to improve working conditions for our employees, using the possibilities and resources that are at hand.



Local entrepreneurs



As far as possible, we try to work together with small, local entrepreneurs rather than with large companies.

Ethical business code

We regard it as a point of honour to always keep our word, both in China and in Europe. (In China, it is very common that agreements that have been made are only adhered to as long as they are to the party's own advantage.)

Humanitarian aid



- Since we are conducting work operations in China, we also want to contribute in some way to the country's development.
- We have chosen to support SOS Children's Villages and we are helping a children's village in the town of Nanchang.

Photo: Alexander Gabriel

We are making a difference!

- Our approach fills our staff with enthusiasm and pride.
- Our employees point out these ethical values in their contacts with authorities and suppliers.

We can tell by the way our contacts react that our approach rubs off on others —
and that is exactly what we want to happen!

The factory premises



The production premises



The result of busy fingers



The surrounding area

