

## In a Golden Age of Convenience Stores in China

# 飞驰在中国便利店的高速公路上

—— Interview with Joshua Zhang, Senior Vice President of Lawson Inc. and Director & Executive Vice President of Lawson (China) Holdings, Inc..

—— 访株式会社LAWSON执行役員、罗森（中国）投资有限公司董事副总裁张晟先生

日本罗森便利店在中国发展的前17年可谓一波三折，并不顺利。

近五年经过战略调整，驰入了中国便利店连锁的高速公路上。2017年8月31日，营业面积仅有108平米的江苏南京丹凤街店单日销售突破11.8万元，刷新了罗森进入中国22年来最高纪录，创造了中国便利店一个神话。其中的一位核心人物，株式会社LAWSON执行董事、罗森（中国）投资有限公司董事副总裁张晟先生——中国便利店连锁业的一位风云人物，带领罗森便利店书写了一段中国新传奇。张晟曾在日本留学，他自称属于知日派，充满激情和活力，身上具有日本人的严谨、细致、追求细节、注重品质的特质。同时他又是中国人，了解中国文化，有中国人效率至上、机动灵活的普遍属性。正是这样的特质让他迅速抓住机遇打破罗森在中国的困境。在庆祝中国改革开放40周年、中日缔结友好条约40周年之际，记者专程采访了张晟先生，倾听他讲罗森便利店的中國故事、解读罗森便利店在中国的成功奥秘。整个沟通过程非常愉快，令人难忘。

通过张晟先生的介绍，我们得知株式会社LAWSON最早起源于美国。1939年，美国俄亥俄州的J.J.Lawson经营了一家叫「Mr. Lawson's Milk Store」的鲜牛奶销售店。此后，J.J.Lawson成立了罗森牛奶公司，也同时销售日用品等生活必需品，并以美国东北部为中心开展了连锁店经营。1959年，罗森牛奶公司以



株式会社LAWSON执行役員、罗森（中国）投资有限公司董事副总裁张晟先生 Joshua Zhang, Senior Vice President of Lawson Inc. and Director & Executive Vice President of Lawson (China) Holdings, Inc..

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俄亥俄州为中心广泛发展店铺，并确立起了便利店的运营模式。1975年隶属于日本大龙集团的罗森拓展日本市场，作为一家专业的连锁便利店公司在日本全面开展业务。同年6月14日，罗森的第一家店铺“樱塚店”在日本诞生。随后，第一家加盟店“桃山店”于同年9月开业，揭开了正式开展加盟店连锁事业的序幕。如今，罗森成为日本三菱商事株式会社旗下的子公司，店铺主

要集中在亚太地区，除了日本店铺外，在中国、印度尼西亚、菲律宾、泰国、美国夏威夷也拥有多家店铺，成为日本排名前3的便利店品牌。在日本拥有14000多家店铺，海外拥有2千多家店铺。

据了解，上海罗森便利有限公司成立于1996年，7月在上海市开设了中国大陆第一家日系连锁便利店。目前罗森在华东地区的门店数已超过1000家，实现了江浙沪地区24小时便民服务的辐射效应。罗森致力于给顾客提供了优质、安全、放心的商品和服务，通过店铺新鲜并具特色的商品、规范的服务、整洁的环境以及先进的经营理念不断引导着上海市民消费观念的转变，深受广大青年学生、白领阶层、海归人士的青睐和欢迎。目前罗森的自产商品有盒饭、调理面、汤粥、寿司、饭团、面包、甜品、色拉、熬点、包子、咖啡、豆浆、冰淇淋等。品种繁多，新鲜美味，给顾客提供多种选择。罗森的米饭工厂引进日本先进的生产设备和管技术，生产各种不同品种的盒饭、饭团、寿司等产品。



左三 罗森（中国）投资有限公司董事总裁 三宅示修，左四 株式会社罗森社长 竹增贞信，右三 罗森（中国）投资有限公司董事副总裁 张晟

罗森的宗旨是“随时随地的美味与安心，快乐新奇购物在罗森”。上海罗森一直将消费者的购物体验和需求放在第一位。为了给顾客带来更新奇的购物体验，2014年8月推出了罗森线上会员软件——“罗森点点”APP，在提供会员优惠价、宣传促销活动的同时，以顾客来店次数为基准进行礼品兑换是“罗森点点”的一大特色，截止2018年6月，“罗森点点”已拥有会员数达到了280万。与此同时，罗森的网络影响力也在不断扩大，微信粉丝数量超过221万，微博粉丝数量超过111万。秉承着“我们让共同生活的城市变得更美好”的企业理念，时刻关注顾客的需求变化，为顾客提供了随时随地的美味与安心，让顾客能够快乐新奇购物在罗森。

张晟先生说：“零售行业是非常接地气的行业，首先罗森在产品的品质和研发的思路上借鉴日本总部的经验并接受其指导管理的同时，罗森中国总部负责商品品质管理。在中国，不同城市拥有独立的商品体系，生产工艺、品质管理是我们做得最好的一块。产品研发上，我们还是尽可能接地气，了解当地人的需求，售卖具有当地特色的商品。例如，在北京我们有现制现售的盒饭、在重庆我们卖小面、在大连我们卖水饺等。之前上海及整个华东地区提供一模一样的商品，但今年罗森又建立了2个新生产基地，各地口味都将会发生变化。在产品的研发上，以盒饭为例，50%以日餐、韩餐、西餐为主，

50%以打造各地特色不同口感的中国食品。另外甜品和面包，也是我们最主要的产品，罗森有自己的技术和合作方，致力于开发出更健康的产品。过程中，各地的产品经我们选定的供应商加工，但品质统一掌控，包含生产过程抽检、物流过程中的抽检、门店抽检。我们每三个月会组织一次全国商品大会，将各地的商品集中起来，讨论借鉴各地畅销品的优势、再微调产品。每次会议都有个重要话题——品质管理，严把食品安全关，为供应商打分，若出现问题，将立即要求停产。”

张晟先生和我们分享了独特的自行车理论和平衡理论。张晟先生说：

“我认为，便利店就像一辆自行车。前轮代表公关能力、市场营销策划能力、商品采购谈判能力和门店开拓能力；后轮代表产品策划能力、运营指导能力、系统管理能力和内部精细化管理能力。2013年我上任不久，就发现当时罗森前轮过小，开店能力、公关能力和谈判能力都不高，做的第一件事是亲自上门拜访了大约罗森三分之一的供应商，并直接分管市场营销部门，同时每周至少两天和开发人员一起上街找铺子、开现场会。到了2016年，



罗森二十周年颁奖晚宴



罗森前轮已经变大，于是我的角色又从前轮转向后轮，注重产品研发、生产工艺、新品策划等。所以我的感悟是，经营一家企业，必须随时观察这辆自行车到底是前轮小还是后轮小，然后进行适时调整，只有平衡好前轮和后轮的关系，企业才会有长足的发展。经营企业，一切的关键在于平衡：自行车要平衡，数据和现场要平衡，商品结构的比例要平衡，判断的方法要平衡。把这些都平衡好了，你自然而然就会做得很好。随着职务的上升，对企业管理者专业化能力的要求也越来越高，这些要求中最重要的是概念化的能力。想依靠经验生存，最多只能吃三年老本。必须把经验总结成概念和原则后再去使用，才能受用一辈子。这世界上唯一不变的需求是人的能力，最重要的其实是情商。”张晟先生还将便利店比作为着了火的卡车，必须要保持匀速前进，如果踩刹车，意味着火势会进入驾驶室，像是去年很多新的无人便利店，只动



投资方的信赖”。

最后，张晟先生告诉记者，目前罗森全国门店数量已突破1600家，其中华东地区突破1000家，2018年底可以实现2000家店规模。按照年开店速度保持在500家店水平，2020年将达到3000家店。采访过程中，我们倾听张晟先生讲罗森便利店的“中国故事”、了解罗森便利店在中国的成功奥秘。听到了许多新的理论和实践经验，自行车理论、平衡理论、管理上的换位思考、特殊的加减乘除法、细节管理，让记者大开眼界。希望2020年能再回访到罗森，见证他们目标的实现，再次倾听张晟先生讲述新的罗森便利店的“中国故事”。



兵马未动粮草，大规模的开店但是供应链跟不上了，一定会出问题。

谈及特殊的部门管理加减乘除法。张晟先生说：“商品部门、运营部门、市场部，做加法，增加收入，降低成本，宣传厂家品牌。不同年份提出不同的主题商品：2012年提出了‘午餐罗森’、2013年‘甜品罗森’、2014年‘24小时烘焙店’、2015年‘24小时拉面馆’、2016年‘全天候串烧坊’。建设部门、物流部门、人事部门做减法。我们一家门店的装修费由70-80万降低至40万，在人工成本上升的前提下，装修质量还在提升。人事方面，连续三年加薪15%，工资翻三倍的都有。对部门长充分授权的同时，部门长对课长以下员工的加薪要求做到公平公正原则。总经理、副总经理、部门长做乘法，各司其职、身先士卒、做好表率，为未来的发展储备正能量、放大正能量。财务部门、经营战略部门、风险管控部门做除法，计算出每家店的效率、每位员工的效率。通过特殊的加减乘除法，我们赢回了消费者的信赖、赢回了供应商的信赖、赢回了加盟商的信赖、赢回了员工们的信赖、赢回了



The first 17 years in China was an uphill road full of bumps and twists for LAWSON. Things just didn't go well. However, after five years' strategic restructuring, LAWSON is finally riding the wave of market expansion, embracing the golden age of convenience stores in China. On August 31, 2017, a LAWSON store on Danfeng Street, Nanjing, with a business area of only 108m<sup>2</sup>, realized a sales volume of 118,000 yuan on a single day, setting a legendary record since the company entered Chinese market 22 years ago. Behind such success, there is a person who plays a vital role—Joshua Zhang, Senior Vice President of Lawson Inc. and Director & Executive Vice President of Lawson (China) Holdings, Inc.. Joshua Zhang is an influential man in the chain-store market in China, who has been leading LAWSON on its way of creating a new legend in China. Having studied in Japan for several years, he described himself as knowing the country well. He is energetic and full of passion, and values details and quality as strictly as the Japanese. What's more, as a Chinese, he knows Chinese culture and is aware of the fact that efficiency and flexibility are the priorities that most Chinese people pursue, which helped him find the way for LAWSON to break through dilemma. As the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reform and opening up and the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship approach, we had a pleasant and unforgettable interview with Joshua Zhang, listening to him telling LAWSON's story and the secret of LAWSON's success in China.

Joshua Zhang told us the company name of LAWSON can be dated back to 1939 in the United States. At that time, J.J.LAWSON, who lives in Ohio, ran a dairy milk store named Mr. LAWSON's Milk Store. Then, he established LAWSON Milk Company, selling milk and daily necessities, and developed it into a chain of stores in the northeast of America. In 1959, with Ohio being the center of its business, LAWSON Milk Company expanded rapidly and started to run business in the form of convenience stores. In 1975, in an effort of expanding market, LAWSON, an affiliate of Daiei, began its business as a professional chain-store company in Japan. On June 14, the first LAWSON store was opened in Sakurazuka, Japan. In September, the first franchise store, the "Momoyama Store," was opened, which heralded the full-scale deployment of the franchise chain. Nowadays, LAWSON became a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Corporation, with most of its stores deployed in the Asia-Pacific area.



Except Japan, LAWSON has its stores opened in many other countries, including China, Indonesia, Philippine, Thailand and Hawaii, making it the top 3 convenience store brand in Japan. Up to now, LAWSON has over 14,000 stores in Japan and over 2000 stores in foreign countries.

As we know, Shanghai LAWSON was set up in 1996. In July, 1996, the first Japanese convenient store in Chinese mainland was

opened in Shanghai. Currently, LAWSON has over 1000 stores in east China, providing 24-hour service for consumers in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai. LAWSON is committed to provide safe, reliable and premium commodities and services. With fresh and distinctive goods, professional service, a clean and tidy environment and advanced operation philosophy, LAWSON is changing the consumption concept of Shanghai citizens, and enjoys tremendous popularity among young people, white-collar workers and overseas returnees. At present, LAWSON provides multiple choices for customers with a great variety of fresh and delicious original products, including packed meals, noodles, soup & porridge, Sushi, rice balls, breads, sweets, salads, Oden, steamed stuffed buns, coffee, soya-bean milk and ice cream etc. LAWSON's rice plants use advanced manufacturing facilities and management technologies from Japan to produce different kinds of packed meals, rice balls and Sushi. "Providing delicious food and reliable products at anytime and anywhere, ensuring we LAWSON a place of happiness and novelty" is the mission of LAWSON, and Shanghai LAWSON is always putting consumers' shopping experience and demands at the first place. In August,



出席维益 2018 烘焙糕峰会，与著名经济专栏作家吴晓波合影





2014, "LAWSON Diandian", an on-line membership application, was released to offer better shopping experience. Besides providing special discounts for members and advertising special offers, the application provides gift exchanging service based on the times consumers buy things in a LAWSON store. By June, 2018, LAWSON Diandian has accumulated a membership of 2,800,000. Meanwhile, with 2.21 million WeChat followers and 1.11 million Weibo followers, its influence on the internet is also on the rise. Under the guidance of the corporate philosophy of "Creating Happiness and Harmony in Our Communities", LAWSON pays close attention to the changes of consumers' demands and is practicing its mission in the true sense.

"The retail industry is rooted in people's daily life. While LAWSON stores in China mainly draw on the experiences of the headquarters in Japan in terms of product quality and R&D, LAWSON (China) is responsible of product quality management. In China, each city has its own commodity system. The best part of our work is productive technology and quality management. As for product research and development, we try to understand the demands of local consumers and thereby develop products with local characteristics. To name just a few, we sell freshly-made packed meals in Beijing, spicy noodles in Chongqing and dumplings in Dalian. Previously, we provide the same products in Shanghai and even the entire East China. This year, we have two new manufacturing base to help us change the variety of foods according to local realities. In terms of the research and development of new products, taking packed meals as an example, Japanese food, Korean food and western food would account for 50% together, while the other 50% is reserved for Chinese food with local characteristics. Besides, sweets and breads are also key products. We have our own technology and partners and is committed to develop products that are more conducive to health. Products for different cities are processed by selected suppliers, and the quality is guaranteed under the same standard via sampling inspection for the manufacturing

process and logistic process as well as on-site inspection. We would organize a national commodity meeting every three months, collecting commodities from different cities, discussing the advantages of best-sellers and then adjusting our product structure. Quality management would be an important topic every time. Determined to ensure food safety, we would score suppliers and ask for suspending production activities once any problem is found," Joshua Zhang said.

He shared with us his unique bicycle theory and balancing theory. "I think convenience store is like a bicycle. The front wheel represents the capability of public relations, marketing planning, procurement negotiation and store expansion, while the rear wheel represents the ability of product planning, operation management, system management and internal fine management. In 2013, soon after I took office, I found that the front wheel of LAWSON is too small, that is, the company is quite weak in expanding the market, handling with public relations and negotiation. The first thing I did is to visit about a third of LAWSON's suppliers in person and took charge of the marketing department, spending at least two days in a week to find sites for new stores and holding on-the-spot meetings with developers. By 2016, when LAWSON's front



华东地区第 1000 家店

wheel became stronger, I turned to the rear wheel, focusing on R&D, productive technology and new product planning. Given all these experiences, I found that to run a business, one should observe the wheels and make adjustment in time to reach the balance between the front wheel and the rear wheel. Only in this way could the business make great strides, because balance is the key to success. Bicycle needs balance. Data and on-site situation needs to be balanced, so do commodity structure and judgment methods. Balancing all these things, you could achieve something. As my position in the company gets higher, my requirements for the professional competence of the management gets higher, especially for the capability of conceptualization. Depending on previous experience, one could only survive for 3 years at most. Therefore, we need to summarize, turn our experiences into concepts and principles

and use them, which would help us for the rest of our life. The only thing that is always demanded in the world is human capability, while the most importance is emotional intelligence." Joshua Zhang also compared convenience store to a truck on fire, and the truck needs to advance at a constant speed. If the driver press on the brake, the fire would run into the driver's cab, which is exactly what unmanned convenience stores experienced last year—the number of stores increasing rapidly while the supply remaining unchanged, which shows that if the supply chain fails to catch up the expansion speed of the business, problems would emerge.

When talking about multiplication and division method he used in department management, Joshua Zhang said, "Addition should be applied for the commodity department, operation department and marketing department to increase income, reduce costs and advertise the brand of the manufacturers. Themed commodities should be released each year, including 'LAWSON Lunch in 2012', 'LAWSON Sweets in 2013', '24-hour Bake Shop in 2014', '24-hour Noodle Shop in 2014' and '24-hour Yakitori Shop in 2016". As for the construction department, logistic department and human resource department, subtraction should be applied. We reduced the renovation budget of one of our outlets from 700,000-80,000 to 400,000 yuan, and managed to improve the renovation quality despite the increasing labor costs. When it comes to human resource issues, we increased salary by 15% for three consecutive years, with some employees even enjoying an increase of 3 times. We give full authorization to department



罗森主题 IP 店

managers, and require them to follow the principle of equality and fairness when increasing salary for employees whose position is lower than section supervisors. As for general manager, deputy general manager and department manager, multiplication should be applied, requiring them to perform their own duties and take the lead to reserve and produce positive energy for the development of the company in the future. Last but not the least, subtraction should be applied for the financial department, operating strategy department and risk management department, evaluating the efficiency of each store and each employee. It was with such methods that we won the trust of consumers, suppliers, franchisee employees and investors."

At the end of the interview, Joshua Zhang told us that the number of LAWSON stores in China has exceeded 1600, with over 1000 stores in east China. It is estimated that the number of LAWSON stores in China would reach 2000 by the end of 2018 and 3000 by 2020 if the company keeps its current pace of opening 500 stores nationwide every year. During the interview, Joshua Zhang told us LAWSON's story in China, its secret to success, and shared with us many new theories and practical experiences (the bicycle theory, balancing theory, the thought of perspective taking in management, the special multiplication and division method and detail management), which truly broadened our view. We hope that we could have an interview with Joshua Zhang again in 2020, to track the development of LAWSON and to hear a new story about LAWSON.

