

# Looking good

**W**inning accolades for investor relations brings certain responsibilities, as Guy Look, CFO of Sa Sa International Holdings Ltd., is all too aware. Sa Sa recently won “Grand Prix for Best Overall Investor Relations” in *IR Magazine* while Look was named one of the two “Highly Commended” for “Best Investor Relations Officer”. He thinks the awards confirm Sa Sa’s status as a popular and closely-watched stock. “Cosmetics retailing is an area that can be quite cyclical, so investors see us as a barometer for the economy,” Look explains. “The media like to follow us because we are a market leader, and also because we are very open about our performance and share our expectations of the market.”

Raised in Hong Kong, Look qualified as a chartered accountant in England after taking a degree in commerce. He returned to Hong Kong with PricewaterhouseCoopers and quickly moved into business. He considers his time as executive director and CFO of Tom.com as one of the eye-opening times in his career. “The birth of the dot com era was exciting. We were exploring new ideas and taking business in new directions. I was aware that the pace of change was accelerating – the whole experience left me well prepared for the retail industry.”

Look joined Sa Sa in 2002 and immediately saw opportunities. “I joined a company with a brand, a business model, and a strong will to succeed,” he says. “But I knew we could do even better. We have come from undervaluation to a position where the company attracts a lot of attention from analysts and investors.”

Admitting the two recent awards were “a pleasant surprise”, Look feels that the recognition reflects positively on the efforts and culture of the entire company, from the very top down.

An example of this is Sa Sa’s management structure, which gives Look the latitude to coordinate finance and IT functions simultaneously. The dual role has allowed him to create a powerful business intelligence programme that can drill down to detailed operational data, monitor product life cycles and study market patterns such as price elasticity. “It has been a vital part of our open business culture,” he says. “Our chairman, Simon Kwok, is analytically minded. He sets the tone that enables us to excel. Lots of companies and their chairmen are now buying into the importance of good corporate governance, but maybe we are a little ahead of the curve.” **A**

▶ Guy Look, CFO and executive director, Sa Sa International Holdings Ltd.