



**Succession Needs Prior Training and All Tasks  
Must be Done in Person**

# Anne Cherng from Alex Screw

## Winning Customers' & Employees' Trust to Achieve Record-High Sales

by Tanya Shih, *Fastener World*

Taiwanese fastener industry has entered a stage of generation succession, no matter if it is done within the family or through hiring professional managers. In order to explore the issue of inheritance and share the concept of succession with the industry, *Fastener World* will irregularly invite some business successors from the fastener industry to join our interview. We've got sales manager Anne Cherng from Alex Screw joining us this time to share her growth over the past decade of fastener career and thoughts about business succession.

Founded in 1983, Alex Screw started the business as a trader and has been dedicated to production of construction screws for over 30 years. Combining the capacity of its headquarters in Gangshan (Taiwan) and the factory in Kunshan (China), Alex Screw can fulfil requirements of ISO 9001:2008 standards.



Its products have been CE, EN14566, and EN14592 certified and are manufactured with streamlined production. The monthly capacity of 1,500 tons makes it able to provide customers with self-tapping screws, machine screws, self-drilling screws, wood screws, and various custom-made fasteners for construction and industrial use.

### Anne Cherng: Succession is a Continuous Procedure of Learning

The year 2015 is the 10th anniversary of Cherng's joining the family business. "Ten years, but I've never stop learning," says Cherng. With her background of language learning, Cherng did not work in the family-owned business when she was just graduated from the university but started her career as an employee in a jewelry trading company. During the years working for the jewelry company, Cherng attended professional training programs for international trade, and what's most important, she had the experience of being an employee, which all became her most precious assets afterward. "I have no idea how other businesses train their own successors, but I do know that my brother's and my presence here today resulted from continuous learning day after day. When we were still young, our parents gave not much pressure to us and would never force us to learn how to manage the family-owned business. Instead, we made lots of efforts by ourselves in the company to successfully take over operation of the company. With the support of my father, I can now dominate the operation strategy of Alex Screw, while my brother takes responsibility for manufacturing technology," adds Cherng.

Main markets of Alex Screw are Europe, Japan, and the USA. In 2013, it also started to consider business expansion to emerging markets like Central & Eastern Europe and Russia. "Focusing on markets" reveals the most significant difference between the founder and successors of Alex Screw. "As I am a salesperson, I have a lot of time to meet customers face-to-face and could have a better understanding of customers' needs and advantages of our products. After years of operation, the company was seeking breakthroughs and became a manufacturer and



trader. The Taipei-based headquarters was also relocated to Gangshan, the fastener manufacturing heartland of Taiwan. With the stable growth of the company, we now would like to establish a more diversified market base in anticipation of creating a prospective future for the company,” says Cherng. Alex Screw, nowadays, has gained its own presence and customers with stable cooperation in emerging markets like E. Europe and Russia.

## Cherng’s Flexibility in Negotiation is Inherited from Her Wise Father

“Confidence” is Cherng’s charisma and her energy and perseverance can be easily felt through talks with her. Cherng thinks that this should be attributed to her wise father. She said, “He’s really a nice father and boss. President Cherng is good at encouraging others. If he makes a strict requirement, he also gives you enough time to do it. He never says no to any disagreement before he proposes his analyses and give advice.”

10 years can make a company grow a lot. Fastener World still remembers that Alex Screw joined our interview in 2013 to share the happiness for the inauguration of its new Taiwan headquarters. The company also made new achievements in 2015 including setting up a new +14,000 sq. m factory in Kunshan (China) with the total investment of RMB 25 million and adding 2 more factories in Taiwan to the current 3 factories. Factory relocation and expansion require a great amount of investment and can be risky for a company. However, this also attests to the leading role of a company. The continuous and stable growth of Alex Screw is the best proof of Cherng’s capability.

During the interview we saw the courage of Cherng. In terms of her leading characters, Cherng described herself as a “positive, optimistic, and strict” person. She said, “I was also an employee of a company. Employees can definitely feel it, should the company owner really cares about the company and employees. The company should offer employees a working environment that they can live on and offer training



programs to give them a sense of achievement from their own work. In addition, interactions among different divisions can be also utilized to achieve good communication. Interactions among people sometimes cause disputes. So, I’d like to thank senior employees for their tolerance to my childishness and aggressiveness before as well as their support to my proposals for quality and efficiency. I’ve changed a lot over the past decade and have been trying to cooperate with employees and grow with them.”

## “Inheritance” Shouldn’t be One-to-one and “Succession” Needs Prior Training

The hard-working Cherng has been learning succession since she started to work for the company. She said, “Succession needs prior training. I’m not saying I’m really well-experienced or I’m the one that is born to handle this. Succession is not about one taking over somebody else’ job, but is about a complete cultural transition to the entire team, which cannot be completed in the short term. If a company wants to be sustainable, it has to seriously take this issue into account and must see what a company lacks and make changes.”

Safely getting through the financial crisis in 2008 and the shutdowns of many Taiwanese electroplating plants in 2013, Alex Screw sees every incident as a key opportunity to adjust steps, set up strategies, and adapt to changes in the market. Setting up the Kunshan-based factory is just an example of Alex Screw’s going to increase its capacity for more efficient shipments. 2015 is also a year that its customers in

Europe started to change their ways of placing orders.

Alex Screw is now planning to purchase its own

testing instruments and acquire more certificates for enhancing quality and capacity. What will the future of Alex Screw be? Cherng, who is astute and active, is believed to have demonstrated many possibilities to lead the company going forward. ■

