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WITH PASSIONATE AMBITION, CEO **COCO FENG** IS LEADING FENGSHI METAL TECHNOLOGY TO A BETTER FUTURE.

WORDS **JULIE COOPER** • IMAGES **KACHICK** / FENGSHI METAL TECHNOLOGY

Ambition is defined as a strong desire to do or achieve something. Yet, somewhere along the way, this seemingly benign word has ended up getting a bad rap. While it typically elicits a healthy, persistent balance of hunger and humility, experts say that this same drive can also sour, leading to achievement at the expense of others.

When it comes to effective leadership then, it takes not one, but the convergence of two paths of ambition to be successful – internal and collective. Internal ambition is striving for personal success, whereas collective ambition is striving for the overall success of the group – like helping others reach their goals or implementing wide-spread change within the organisation.

Fengshi Metal Technology CEO Coco Feng has ambition that runs deep. While her personal ambition sees her tackling challenges head on, she does so for the benefit of something bigger than herself. She does it for the good of her people and the organisation.

“Only the best will be successful. That is my ambition no matter what I do,” Coco says. “I run a company and am leading it to a better future. I see the development of ideas, ways to execute strategies and ensure that our customers’ expectations are met.

“Once you have a virtuous cycle, positive momentum grows. Seeing the team and the company mature while also being on a continuous learning journey together is the most rewarding thing for me as a leader.” »

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Coco took over as Fengshi's CEO five years ago, and as a woman in a predominantly male industry, she says that gender equality still has a long way to go. But even so, her journey to the top has been nothing short of positive.

“I'd go so far as to say that I've even had more positive treatment because I am a woman,” she shares. “With female leaders, it's more caring. You try to help others more. It's a little bit different from working with male leaders, and it brings a better balance to the leadership of the organisation.”

For example, Coco is a very hands-on leader. She continually reinvests in and engages her team, ensuring to feed a strong passion for the business.

“I'm always open to discussion and open to the challenges from my employees, as well. We are a company in which everyone can see the CEO walking in the offices and



shop every day,” she says. “I enjoy spending time with my employees and interacting with them to find out what's going on at every level and area. That way, I can motivate and push things into high gear wherever and whenever help is needed.”

As a company, Fengshi hosts regular, off-site team-building events that facilitate dialogue, allowing employees to share freely. And it lends its support to events like International

Women's Day and World Environment Day to make a positive impact. It's all part of the Fengshi culture. Comprised of five fundamental components, this cultural framework relies upon customer centricity, quality, integrity, Kaizen and ownership. Without them, Coco says, the company would be risking failure.

“We have more than 2,000 competitors in China alone, so we need to focus on these key points to stay ahead,” Coco

explains. “We believe in good communication to build trust with our customers. We work to better understand their needs from development concept to delivery. And we strive for continual improvement with Kaizen. It helps us deliver a level of excellence to our customers and also drive incremental cost improvements to optimise our cash.

“The capabilities of our people and how we execute our processes differentiate us in an industry as competitive and standardised as ours,” she continues. “We connect with our customers at every touchpoint along the way, which is essential to stay ahead. Basically, it's all about value creation, on which we place a tonne of focus.”

As for the future, Coco's ambitions are leading the way. She's already proven that she is capable of accomplishing what she sets out to achieve; for the past two years her vision of growing the company 25 per cent to 50 per cent per year has been realised.

“I want to upgrade Fengshi to the maturity and high level of excellence we find in large multinational leaders,” she says. “With COVID-19, we have the courage to take it on. And our long-term partnerships will allow us to get through these times together. So right now, my focus is on getting the company through this pandemic more robust than before and accelerating growth ambitions again.” ■