

Canned air finds market in China: DaigouSales.com's Mathew McDougall

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Chinese consumers are developing an appetite for Australian goods that goes far beyond infant formula, according to DaigouSales.com founder Mathew McDougall.

“The *daigou* market has evolved dramatically and it continues to evolve very rapidly, so six months ago what they were buying is quite different to what they are buying now,” Dr McDougall told *The Australian*.

“Six months ago it was formula and manuka honey.

“We’re still seeing formula but we’re seeing very little manuka honey and now we’re seeing demand for Ugg boots, which didn’t happen six months ago.”

Next month DaigouSales, which markets products to personal shoppers who purchase on behalf of Chinese consumers, will begin selling Australian air for \$20 a canister.

“We get some weird and wacky ideas,” Dr McDougall said. “We’ve had brilliant and obscure ideas come to us, but that doesn’t mean we take them all because we are quite selective on who we represent to keep the integrity of the marketplace.

“If the *daigou* just see a whole lot of noise, they are going to quickly not want to come back.”

Dr McDougall said the mother-and-baby category was still seeing the biggest demand, but skincare and cosmetics, shoes and clothing were popular.

The DaigouSales platform, which was founded last year, is an incubator of Australian

products and brands, helping to market and sell products to Chinese via *daigou* intermediaries.

“Inside the marketplace we also support emerging brands, which are smaller SMEs that have a great brand idea, but just don’t have the budget to go directly into China and crack it,” Dr McDougall said.

“We incubate these companies and we do that by helping those companies get on the shelf in the Australian market.

“We have a slingshot program to get them on the shelf or we take them into the export market via the *daigou*, as a stepping stone into the Chinese export market.”

One such brand is Koala Eco, which is a company that produces Australian-made, natural cleaning products.

The company, which launched in February last year and has grown to boast 350 stockists around Australia, underwent the DaigouSales incubation process, then picked up a Chinese distributor and recently shipped its first container of products to China.

“We always thought our products would resonate with Chinese buyers,” founder Jessica Bragdon said. “Australian products in general have a strong reputation in China and I think we’d be missing out on a huge opportunity by not selling into China.”

Now, the company’s distributor to China is fitting anti-counterfeit systems to Koala Eco labels, which can be scanned to show the buyer that they are getting a genuine product.

“I imagine it’s something that people will start doing more and more of,” Ms Bragdon said.

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