During 2008, China and Hong Kong imported kitchen furniture for USD 48 million and USD 22 million respectively. During the period 2003-2008, the average yearly growth rate was +23% for China and –4% for Hong Kong. Imports of kitchen furniture were practically non-existent in 1993 and they accounted for just a few million USD in 1997. A steady growth has been reported till 2007 (from USD 17 million to USD 46 million in five years) while just a 6% increase was registered in 2008. Imports almost exclusively come from Germany (75%) and Italy (9%). Some Japanese and Korean companies have outsourced in China small amounts of production. 2008 was a tough year for imported kitchen furniture: in some cities like Hangzhou, imported kitchen furniture usually priced RMB 50,000 (USD 6,700), had to be discounted by over 50% in order to be sold.

Some other examples of foreign companies present in the Chinese market are HTH (Denmark), Hanssem (Korea) and Aran (Italy). Alno, Allmilmö, Snaidero/Rational sell mostly in the contract segment, having very close relationship with real estate developers. Poggenpohl reaches 14% of its total turnover in Asia. Siematic is probably at the top end, with kitchens priced 500,000 RMB, while most of Italians sell at 200,000. The Italian integrated kitchens focus on the color matching and style creation. Trendy and unconventional design also makes the contribution for Italian brands to conquer market shares. The most representatives are regarded as Valcucine, Scavolini and Snaidero.

The kitchen furniture sector employs in China approximately 50,000 workers and the average turnover per employee is around RMB 340,000 (EUR 35,000). This ratio generally ranges between EUR 20,000 and EUR 40,000 per employee among the different companies. Our estimate of two years ago was 40% lower. There are a total of about 250 firms active in the kitchen furniture sector in China, with an average employment of around 200 people.

Major companies work on the entire country but mostly the market is regionalised: so Yadier sells mostly in Shanghai, Kinetic in Guangdong, Bononi in Beijing, etc. Some kitchen furniture players are also localised in Qingdao (also a relevant district for major appliances), Heilongjiang (for export products), Anhui.

Bright Perspectives for the Chinese Kitchen Furniture Market

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