

UOB-SMU

Asian Enterprise Institute



Remaining True to the Skin: Pitta Patta

Pitta Patta was born out of 18 years of clinical naturopathic experience working with skin ailments and irritations in babies, young children and adults. Almost two decades on, the brand now has an established presence as an organic baby skincare

brand in several countries around the world including the UK, Australia and South Korea. In 2013, Organic New Lifestyle, a subsidiary of Singapore International Business Pte Ltd (SIB) brought the Pitta Patta brand into Singapore, distributing it in retail stores as well as on e-commerce platforms.

However, despite the brand's obvious strengths as an organic baby skincare range, it has not taken off as quickly as the SME had hoped – the brand faces limited success in terms of brand recognition in the local marketplace. Given the growing potential in the organic and natural baby care market, SIB had approached the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (AEI) for advice on getting a competitive advantage in this niche market.

Gently, gently catching on

The baby and child-specific products market in Singapore is dominated by a handful of established international manufacturers. These mass-market brands are backed by strong and big-budget campaigns that continually reinforce consumer awareness of their existing or new product lines. For Pitta Patta to successfully capture a share of the market, an extensive and long-term brand strategy is required to build its brand equity and increase its competitiveness. As an SME with limited resources, SIB cannot go head-on with the big players which have deeper pockets and an established presence.

A team of student-consultants and their advisor, supported by the Institute, undertook the challenge to bring Pitta Patta to the next stage. Its objectives were to establish a clear brand positioning strategy for Pitta Patta, and recommend appropriate strategies to build brand awareness among the target consumers.

Tapping on what they have learnt in class, the student-consultants conducted intensive qualitative and quantitative research. The quantitative survey revealed the current level of knowledge of the niche organic skincare product category, and consumer touchpoints. The qualitative survey offered insights into the motivations and behaviours of parents who purchase organic baby skincare products.

A Competitor Analysis discovered salient information about Pitta Patta's competitors, and what each brand stands for, while a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the brand streamlined its unique selling propositions vis-à-vis its competitors'.

Little feet, big strides

Based on the research and analyses, the student-consultants discovered that in Singapore, the brand lacks an engaging brand story to move its consumers. Brand stories are important to establish meaningful bonds with the audience, thus allowing the brand to stand out from its competition. Brand stories evoke deep-rooted consumer experiences and impressions, which in turn garner customer loyalty and the brand's sustainability. Leveraging Pitta Patta UK's brand story to bring authenticity to its products, the

UOB-SMU

Asian Enterprise Institute

student-consultants proposed the creation of unique brand imageries to build consistency across the overall brand identity. Such touchpoints will lay a good foundation and position for Pitta Patta in Singapore. The team also reviewed and proposed a new brand vision statement that highlights its unique value proposition to fill particular consumer needs in ways that its competitors cannot.

The team also saw opportunities to expand Pitta Patta's positioning to target the more naturopathic-oriented parents, so as to increase its market share. In this respect, the brand could position itself as more than an expert on skincare; nurturing babies and helping them grow up emotionally balanced could be its secondary positioning.

With the data collected and analysed using scientific methods – the hallmark of the SME Consulting Programme – the student-consultants crafted cost-efficient, effective and workable strategies to forward the brand's distinctive strength of being organic (versus natural), underlined by its certification by reputable agencies. The team proposed using innovative communication tools to skilfully and subtly bring attention to the superiority of the products across various platforms. These platforms span Point of sales (physical retail stores, e-commerce website, third-party merchants, etc); Social media (quintessential in today's digital/mobile age), and YouTube.

The final report from the student-consultants has full implementation details and schedules, so that it is easy for SIB to carry out the activities.

Organic goodness

Pitta Patta has a strong competitive edge in its naturopath heritage and product quality, and this was what the SME Consulting Programme proposed to leverage on in its brand awareness campaign. "We were looking to this programme to help SIB evaluate this competitive market, and provide suggestions on how to have the competitive advantage over others. Our expectations were definitely met – the research was well conducted and the suggestions were very useful," said Managing Director, Ms Zhang.

The student-consultants took on the project to "put our various skill sets and knowledge to meaningful application". While they faced initial roadblocks arising from their different perspectives and knowledge backgrounds (the team comprised a mix of economics and marketing students), they soon found a way to draw on their varied strengths and put them to good use. "Our skills complemented each other's, helping us to come up with innovative yet practical and research-backed solutions," they shared. With the Project Advisor Ms Tang Sing Eng taking on the role of "challenger" who constantly questioned their ideas, they were able to "broaden (their) horizons".

Ms Tang commended the student-consultants on being "committed, showing initiative, and able to cope with the pressures and deadlines despite their heavy workloads". As Advisor, she provided her input in the set-up of a proper project structure, and ensured that they made constant reference to the project brief to ensure successful delivery of the completed project. As it was the team's first hands-on exposure to a real-life consulting project, she guided them through a "major behavioural shift" in order for them to understand the SME's needs and be "more consumer-focused". To their credit, they were "mature in their approaches, willing to learn, and overcame their initial hesitation to produce a good piece of work," she said.

UOB-SMU
Asian Enterprise Institute

Project Advisor: **Ms Tang Sing Eng**
Student Consultants: **Kow Rui Qi**
Bachelor of Science (Economics), 2012
Loh Jia Jie
Bachelor of Science (Economics), 2012
Koh Shao Jun
Bachelor of Business Management, 2012
Koh Tat Huey
Bachelor of Business Management, 2013