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A Drop above the Rest: Tami Systemtenik



Tami Systemtenik was established in 1996 to provide one-stop system solutions to drinking water contamination problems using a combination of filtration, purification and UV sterilisation processes. It is a specialist provider of point-of-use water purifiers that offer purified, bacteria-free water, with no constraints on water volume or temperature. Additionally, the dispensing features on the purifiers are customisable to the customers' requirements.

Over the years, Tami has built a commendable reputation in the commercial and industrial sectors as companies see the benefits offered by the company's reliable, cost-effective, practical and complete water treatment solutions.

Tami's success is underlined by innovation, efficacy and a genuine desire to add value to its customers. Its products help customers achieve huge cost savings in their provision of drinking water to their staff, and solve the numerous problems they may encounter when using other forms of water dispensing equipment. From the initial meetings through installation and after-sales service, well-trained Tami employees possessing specialised knowledge in water treatment technology are on hand and ready to offer any assistance the customers may require, 24/7.

Have a drink, on tap

The concept of water purification is not new to Singapore. Most people would have heard of the high-grade reclaimed water called NEWater – treated used water that is further purified using advanced membrane technology and pumped into Singapore's water ecosystem.

National water agency PUB has long been telling the public that tap water in Singapore is safe for drinking. On its website, it states that "Singapore's tap water is well within the World Health Organisation's drinking water guidelines, and is suitable for drinking without any further filtration". But despite the assurance, water dispensers are a common sight in many government, commercial and industrial offices and locations. These dispensers are powered by a wide variety of technologies, and are of differing sophistication, effectiveness, and the requisite physical structures.

Tami, which has a presence in the commercial and industrial spaces, hopes to leverage on the growing emphasis on a healthy lifestyle to bring its value propositions to the residential space. In a segment where the mass market brands have an early foothold, the SME wants to ascertain the standing of its brand, heighten brand awareness among its target customer base, and develop strategies to capture a larger market share. With these objectives in mind, it approached the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (AEI) for its flagship Consulting Programme on how best to move forward.

While there are many branding consultants, "we feel that they tend to talk about things that are not directly relevant, or they do not consider the budget of a small company like an SME," shared Desmond Kang, General Manager, Tami. "The programme with UOB-SMU AEI stood out as definitely the right choice as we would have a team with 'fresh eyes' to go over what we are doing, and spot things which we may have overlooked," he said.

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Who's drinking what?

PUB's "tap water is safe to drink" message appears to be resonating well with the public, according to a survey carried out by the team of student-consultants working on the Tami project. Some 87% of respondents do not own a water purifier at home, nor do they see the need for one. Despite this, there is a wide range of water dispensers available to the mass market. A quick review of online and brick-and-mortar stores such as Courts, Fairprice, Robinsons and Isetan, as well as specialist electronic and water purifier retailers, shows that customers are spoilt for choice when it comes to household water purifying gadgets of varying technologies.

For this consulting project, the team narrowed its focus on direct Tami competitors which offer similar technologies and products. Applying what they have learnt in the classroom, the student-consultants used scientific models and methodological approaches including the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, Porter's 5 analysis and a perception map to determine the company's standing vis-à-vis the industry, its current and potential competition, and the buyer profile. A value chain analysis provided a clear visual representation of Tami's internal processes to gauge its operational effectiveness.

Using primary and secondary research, the team obtained quantitative and qualitative data through an online survey and in-depth interviews. After analysing the information, they developed a set of practical recommendations with short-, medium- and long-term timeframes for the SME's consideration.

A toast to practical solutions

Tami, which had "tried multiple methods of marketing and promotions without seeing significant growth", was pleased with the "sensible suggestions that don't go over the top as SMEs do not have particularly large budgets," shared Mr Kang. He credited the team for its "sound and useful advice which can be practically applied", and which took into account the company's limited budget. As for rolling out the initiatives, the Tami staff have embraced the upcoming changes and are "stepping forward to take on various new challenges," he said.

For the student-consultants who wanted to "learn more about how consulting works", it was "very enriching and fulfilling to go into the field and get hands-on experience," said a team representative. They appreciated the "independence to address the project from our own perspective, yet with the guidance of someone with more experience, which would greatly enhance our learning". They had "specifically chose to work with Tami Systemtenik, an SME in the water purifying industry, as we were very eager to learn more about water – the basic source of life – and how we can market a lifestyle product that relates so closely with this essential aspect of our daily lives".

Although they had met with some initial challenges which ranged from a lack of consulting and industry knowledge to diverse backgrounds and courses of study, they managed to resolve the differences early. They focused on their shared goal to complete the project successfully, and brought with them the willingness to work hard, and have "an open, accepting yet constructive-critical mindset". The team's motivation showed. Project Adviser Paul Teo complimented them for being "very motivated to make a difference for the SME" and their "eagerness to learn".

Perhaps the final judge is the SME. "The consulting team is professional and diligent, and delivered far more than we expected," said Mr Kang, and this is something to drink to – a drink of purified bacteria-free water, of course.

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