

UOB-SMU Entrepreneurship Alliance Centre

Domus Integration: Power at Your Fingertips



Lights that dim without the human touch. A home-theatre system with surround sound. A cinematic experience that puts you in the heart of the “action”. A security system that looks after the people and assets nearest and dearest to you. An intelligent lifestyle synonymous only with the rich and famous? Not true!

Since 1999, the Domus Group of Companies has been designing intelligent lifestyle solutions which bring unprecedented comfort, connectivity and security to private homes, and residential and commercial buildings. Harnessing the best of sophisticated lighting systems, audio-visual equipment, telecommunications, security systems and environmental control, the company conceptualises and builds intelligent systems that enhance today’s modern work and living spaces. Through strategic partnership with leading control and automation manufacturers globally, Domus seamlessly weaves elegance, intuitive operation and innovative technology into tailored solutions, thus enhancing every facet of life.

Pursuing its vision to be the leading systems consultant and integrator of building, residential and office automation in Asia Pacific, the company is leveraging its firm foundation in Singapore to actively extend its footprint to other regions such as China.

Wired for light, sound... and total relaxation

Domus offers a wide range of services that is much appreciated by its customers, especially retail customers, real estate developers (bulk sales) and hotels and offices which form its major client base. With a burgeoning middle class in Singapore, it makes good business sense to continue serving its existing affluent customer segment while simultaneously expanding its services to meet the growing expectations of the “tier 2” market. The latter is generally defined as having a lower monthly family income than the “tier 1” affluent customer segment.

Even though Singapore is ranked among the top three nations globally for internet penetration and mobile communications, which indicates an embrace of new technology and electronic gadgets, this acceptance has not translated into widespread adoption of intelligent home and office solutions. Statistically, sophisticated energy-saving lighting systems, audio-video distribution systems and integrated control systems are low on the awareness scale, according to an SMU survey. Home-theatre by design has the highest awareness among those surveyed; but generally, the respondents do not appear to have much knowledge or interest in intelligent home solutions.

When asked which brands they associate with smart technology, the respondents named companies that have diversified product lines, and which actively advertise across various media platforms. However, should they want to install such systems, they will not make a beeline for these named companies; instead, they will approach their friends and relatives for advice, while supplementing their knowledge with online resources.

Such findings show that Domus can do more to raise its top-of-mind awareness among its target market segment. Based on the respondents’ buying behaviour, the company can also tailor its marketing strategies to meet the needs and expectations of its potential clients.

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Mesmerise the senses

Domus tapped on the resources offered by the SME Consulting Programme, managed by the UOB-SMU Entrepreneurship Alliance. “We wanted to have a systematic evaluation of our brand and also our marketing strategies,” says company owner Mr Wong Cheng Ho. Leveraging on their knowledge of research methodology, three student-consultants designed and carried out market research to ascertain Domus’ brand visibility among the tier 2 segment as well as determine the potential buyers’ profiles and buying habits with a view to converting them into clients.

Collating and analysing the data was no mean feat as the consultants had to ensure respondent compliance with the numerous criteria they had set out, before they can review the isolated survey responses. But the hard work was worth it – the client called the reports “systematic and detailed, (and) the discussions with the project supervisor and students were illuminating and made us think “out of the box” even more,” says Cheng Ho. Additionally, the company found the suggested strategies “intuitive” and “viable practically and economically”. His only regret was that the 12-week period was insufficient for the implementation of the recommendations.

And there was light!

Being involved in the operations of a real company reinforced to the consultants the need for solutions that are “compatible with all constraints, including time and money” – something that is not as urgent in an academic project. A case in point was the scarcity of resources on the nascent intelligent systems industry in Singapore, which they circumvented by expanding the volume of their quantitative data, and doing more walk-in audits so that they could better understand the industry and client competitors’ best practices.

Project Adviser Dr Steven Chua was lauded for being “very proactive and involved in managing the project, and continuously helping us to brainstorm and come up with good ideas,” says the team. “Being experienced, he was able to provide relevant insights into industry practices. In our opinion, he did an excellent job in order to support us and keep us going.”

Dr Chua was also full of praise for his young charges, calling them “a remarkable lot” who are “resilient and resourceful”. Although the team comprised international students who are unfamiliar with the expectations of a local client, they “adapted quickly” and “went the extra mile to meet requirements and client requests”. Still, he feels that there is merit in a mixed group of local and international students as it will offer foreign perspectives as well as an understanding of local idiosyncrasies, thus providing a “win-win” situation for the client and consultants.

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