



### Accessorised, Fitted and Plugged: Eligo Pte Ltd

Eligo Pte Ltd, founded in 2006, is a distributor of high-quality industrial products. The products are used across many industries including oil & gas, petrochemical, marine & offshore, FPSO (floating production storage and offloading), semiconductor, power & energy, pharmaceutical, water treatment, food & beverage, reactor & heat exchanger. Valves, fittings, tubings and pressure regulators are just some of the items the company carries. Over time, the company has garnered a regular clientele and counts as satisfied customers industry powerhouses such as Shell, Hyflux and Keppel.

Eligo is currently the biggest Parker's distributor/stockist in Southeast Asia. It represents three of Parker's five product divisions, namely, Automation Division, Fluid Connectors Division, and Instrumentation Division. It also carries other complementary brands like Sandvik, Egmo, King Lai, ITI UK, Axxair and Ottoarc, among others.

As the economic landscape becomes increasingly complex, Eligo is exploring new ways to bring the business forward, underlined by the aim to provide an innovative, customised and unrivalled level of integrated service to its partners and clients. As described by Eligo Founder Wee Kok Seng, "Our expectation was to find out which areas within the organisation we could further improve on, in order to meet the ever-changing work environment to stay competitive."

Through the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (AEI)'s flagship SME Consulting Programme (SCP), a team of three student-consultants, supervised and supported by an industry veteran and Institute manager, carried out a strategic marketing review of Eligo.

#### All the Important Parts

The student-consultants used a scientific approach, which is synonymous with the SCP, to gather salient feedback in their primary and secondary research. Surveys of Eligo's staff, suppliers and buyers offered important insights into the company's human resources (HR) culture and operational systems; suppliers' perceptions of the company and its services, and buyers' purchasing decisions, respectively.

Secondary research involved an industry analysis using the Porter's 5 Forces model, which helped to identify and analyse the five competitive forces shaping the industry. This model also indicated the company's strengths and weaknesses, and relative standing among its competitors. To evaluate marketing-related issues affecting Eligo, the team carried out a brand audit, which also served to identify opportunities for improvement, and further determined which marketing channels would be optimal for the SME. Six main channels were covered in this audit viz search engine optimisation (SEO), website, brochure, social media, emails and brand elements. Eligo's competitiveness was also compared against its multiple rival brands.

#### A Complementary Fit

In undertaking the project, the student-consultants were cognisant that their recommendations must be tailored to a company that does not have the same expansive resources as a larger organisation. As such, the tactics were designed to be relatively straightforward, cost-efficient and appropriate for a resource-lean set-up.

Having analysed the qualitative and quantitative information, the team crafted its recommendations, which were presented in a detailed project report to Eligo. The recommendations were categorised under three "action" phases – HR considerations, which revolve around the SME's internal operations and staff issues; brand audit, which pertains to customer perceptions and must be improved to get

ahead of the competition, and, after addressing the first two phases, to increase customer loyalty, the SME needs to connect better with its customers.

For each phase, the team provided detailed plans on the steps that Eligo could take. For the HR phase, for example, a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) goals model was proposed to quantify staff achievement. Not only does having key performance indicators (KPIs) encourage staff members to take pride in their individual contributions to the company, KPIs and other quantifiable measures make it easier for the management to validate staff progress, and clarify the different departments' input towards the broader organisational goals. The student-consultants also prepared plans to help develop a more cohesive and supportive culture, improve internal communications and effectively utilise the Salesforce CRM software

To support Eligo's sustainable development, the student-consultants also structured a digital marketing strategy using a B2B (business-to-business) marketing framework as a guide. The guide was used to visually map out the process, framing the recommended goals and metrics, and the multi-pronged implementation action steps to achieve those set goals and metrics. The Eligo-tailored framework reflects a continuous process cycle and provides for the collection and analysis of data so that each aspect of the action steps can be optimised and updated, as the company progresses. Such a B2B framework can help the company to ensure brand consistency and maintain focus on its value drivers. Upon successful implementation of the strategy, the team believes Eligo will be on track to achieve a larger market share.

### Plugged and Ready

According to Eligo Founder Mr Wee, the company is "generally aware of where we are and what we need to do", but the "external endorsement and an impartial detailed assessment" is significant as it helps to convince everyone in the company that its strategic direction is "correct". He especially appreciates the methodological and scientific approach used in the SCP as it gives credence to, and validates, the management's "vibes".

Commending the SCP team on its "detailed observations on various issues", Mr Wee acknowledges its "valuable and constructive feedback". He adds that the strategic marketing review will help to get "the buy-in from all levels (of his staff)", thus accelerating the pace towards achieving Eligo's organisational goals.

Reiterating a common issue facing SMEs, Mr Wee informs that implementing the recommendations would likely be a "long process" as he needs to "balance urgency against available resources".

The student-consultants value the opportunity to apply their collective know-how on a real-life consulting project. Seeing first-hand the constraints that SMEs in general face, in terms of financial, manpower, time and skill sets, was an eye-opener, and prepares them for a time when they themselves enter the workforce. Of their Project Advisor Paul Teo, whom they described as "very knowledgeable", and who had given them "much-needed insights into the project", the student-consultants said he played a "pivotal role" in managing the client's expectations. In turn, Mr Teo found his young charges to be "eager learners" who had demonstrated "great initiative" and "teamwork".



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