



Drinking Your Way to Health: DrinkMi

DrinkMi is a beverage distributor focusing on the Singapore market. Established in 2013, its mission is to provide healthy dessert beverages to the mass market. Aligning with its emphasis on health, the SME is working towards achieving the “Singapore Healthier Choice” label for all its products.

Currently, DrinkMi has a steady client base including ShiLin Xiao Chi, Sin Hai Shan, Mellben Seafood, Geylang Lor 9 Frog Porridge, Fei Fei Wanton Mee, to name a few.

DrinkMi believes that a healthy, fruit-based drink shows promise as a viable business line. Especially in Singapore where people are becoming increasingly health-conscious and there exists a sizeable middle-class, there is a potential consumer market that is able and willing to spend beyond their basic needs to include health supplements and complements. The SME is now intending to produce a proprietary range of fruit juice with ai-yu jelly drinks.

The SME knew it was important to have viable strategies so it can achieve success in the fruit juice market. As explained by DrinkMi’s Operation Manager Joe Ow, “A proper business plan is necessary and important for DrinkMi, before we take the next step to invest in the new start-up. We came across the SME Consulting Programme and knew we had a solution.”

Through the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (AEI)’s flagship SME Consulting Programme, DrinkMi gained a “clear direction” of what was needed to establish a firm foothold in its desired market segment, and how to sustain the business for the longer term.

Who’s Drinking What

A team of three student-consultants, supervised by an industry veteran and supported by the Institute, took on the DrinkMi project to devise a market entry strategy for the SME’s new line of bottled fruit juices. Leveraging on their knowledge and experience, they conducted secondary and primary research to gain insights into the industry and market for such products.

Their research sought answers to critical questions that would define their recommendations. These questions pertained to the SME’s branding for the new product as compared to existing products, the newly-manufactured juice line’s own strengths and weaknesses, its potential distinct positioning, and specific requirements to ensure its continued reach and sustainability.

Secondary research entailed tapping into salient statistics from credible databases such as Euromonitor and Marketline. Such research provided the team with a better understanding of the industry, competitive landscape and prevalent trends in the Singapore fruit juice market.

For primary research, the team conducted an online survey and a street intercept survey to garner the views of people from across a broad profile range. The primary research gave them a deeper understanding of the respondents’ perceptions. In particular, the street intercept session enabled the student-consultants to obtain qualitative feedback as they could probe deeper into the responses and ask for further explanations during the face-to-face encounters.

The team employed scientific methods to collect and analyse the data, including a competitor analysis to determine the new product’s standing vis-à-vis existing products, and the SWOT (strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to determine how to optimise its strengths and opportunities, while mitigating its weaknesses and threats. The data also helped them to streamline the target audience for the new product.

Refreshingly Good

Having gained authentic feedback from people who have seen and tasted the new product, the team proposed enhancements to the product packaging, taste and variety as these will shape the quality of the product in the eyes of the consumers. Also from the insights gleaned, the team identified a market gap for which DrinkMi's new line of fruit juices could fill, thus creating its niche positioning.

Given the firm hold of the other players in the market, having strong product differentiation and competitive product pricing are particularly vital. With these considerations in mind, the team recommended a brand image, with an accompanying tagline, that reflects the overall market entry strategy. Based on the brand image, they formulated specific implementation steps based on the 4Ps of marketing – product, price, placement and promotion – to help the SME launch the new product line. These took the form of a series of comprehensive plans on the pricing strategy, product placement and distribution channels.

Marketing and promotions are crucial to build brand knowledge and ensure top-of-mind awareness, and the team crafted a range of activities and initiatives for DrinkMi's consideration.

Freshness Guaranteed

DrinkMi's Mr Ow acknowledged the "extremely useful" final report from the student-consultants. The research was "thorough" and scientific methods were used to "generate market statistics, competitor analysis and marketing positioning".

As testimony to the effectiveness of the SCP, DrinkMi has proceeded to modify its first product based on the recommendations. The benefits (of the SCP) were "beyond our expectations and really beneficial to the company's long-term well-being," Mr Ow shared.

The student-consultants wanted to "gain exposure to a real-life consulting project" where their input could add value to the client, rather than "for grades". With this DrinkMi project, their objectives were met as "the client was really pleased with our work". They found the whole experience "truly rewarding", notwithstanding the time crunch; the project had spanned across the school semester and their internship period, but with "good communication and working rapport", they overcame the challenge.

The student-consultants credited Project Advisor Victor Ng as being "pivotal in steering the direction of the entire project". "His clear thought process guided the team's thinking to develop strategies that would be useful for the SME in both the short and long run."

On his part, Mr Ng commented that it was "a joy being able to work with them to push their limits and to challenge their existing mindsets on knowledge and approaches that are habitually used in business". This was an experienced and "highly competent" team whose members have done similar work in their respective internships, he said, so the challenge for him was to ensure that the student-consultants did not rest on their laurels and become "too set in their ways". He constantly encouraged them to "try new ways of doing things", which they did. That "the client showed his amazement and appreciation for the work they had done" was testament that the hard work was worth it, as the team had fulfilled the objectives of the project.

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