



Palate Pleasures: Golden Bridge Foods Manufacturing Pte Ltd

Established in 1993, [Golden Bridge Foods](#) (GBF) is a one-stop manufacturer and supplier of processed meats to retailers, wholesale food distributors and food service companies. Its products can be found in supermarkets, cafes and pubs, bakeries, restaurants, ship chandlers and airlines in Singapore and abroad. The small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) also works with other food manufacturers and caterers to offer food and menu solutions.

Innovation and quality delivery underline GBF's success. For example, it could be said to have spearheaded the move by SMEs in the local food manufacturing industry towards creativity and better ways of doing things, which in turn contributed to the raising of standards in the industry. The company itself has set several industry gold standards, and garnered recognition at home and overseas.



Since its inception, the SME had made decisions based on intuition and “gut feeling”, and pursued a sales-driven strategy. Given today's VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) environment, GBF decided to develop a more scientific basis for its business approach. Through UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (AEI)'s SME Consulting Programme (SCP), a team of student-consultants performed a brand audit, and recommended strategies for GBF to meet its objectives. The student team was supervised by an industry veteran as Project Advisor and supported by a manager from the Institute.

What's cookin'?

GBF wanted to get a better understanding of the positioning of its Golden Bridge (GB) and Kelly brands, and their products vis-à-vis the target market and competitors, with the aim to push the brands and products to the top of the consumers' minds and wallets.



Using scientific methods of research to obtain reliable data, the primary research involved an observational study, online survey and focus group discussions. The student-consultants visited two supermarkets at different times for traffic and behaviour observations. They noted the demographics and where the SME's products were placed in relation to their competitors', how much foot traffic there was along the canned meat aisles, and consumers' interaction with them.

The online survey and focus group discussions, which provided qualitative and quantitative feedback, gave the team deeper insights. For example, through direct interaction with respondents, the student-consultants discovered the product attributes – such as the packaging size, type of packaging, comparative pricing, flavours, shelf life, whether it is labelled “healthier choice”, etc – that were crucial in the consumer's decision-making process. A blind taste test was also carried out.

The secondary research was conducted as a means to form initial perceptions about the positioning of the SME in relation to its competitors, and also to acquire data for cross-validation of the primary research materials. This step would remove biases and assumptions, and lead to more robust conclusions. The student-consultants assessed GB and Kelly at three levels, namely, financial, brand and product.

Look good, taste good

Through their research analysis, the student-consultants determined the strengths and potential areas for improvement, for both GB and Kelly. For GB, a revitalisation of its packaging design to align with how its products are consumed would enhance the visual appeal, while more product trials can be performed to increase brand awareness among consumers. Another recommendation was to create reasons for price promotions, with strong taglines to help elevate the brand stature.



Kelly's strategic focus, according to the consulting team, could be to invest in the brand and grow it to be the SME's star product. Its two package sizes can be marketed for their versatility, convenience and unique flavours – the smaller one as a grab-and-go product, and the larger one as providing many different ways of preparation



to satiate diverse palates. To increase brand awareness, the team proposed a series of activities to create conversation about Kelly. A packaging design revitalisation was also suggested.

The final SCP report featured a list of comprehensive strategies for the SME to enhance awareness among its target market

segments, with the ultimate aim to increase sales. Going further, there was also a 12-week timeline to guide implementation of each phase of the recommendations.

Finetuning preferences

According to Ong Shiya, Assistant Marketing Manager of GBF, what they had expected was a report with “theoretical analysis based on the limited desktop research, internal SKU (stock keeping unit) sales data, time and budget”. However, the student-consultants “proved themselves to be more than capable of that – by producing a well-rounded report based on different qualitative and quantitative research methods across two different brands and three product categories”.

The consumer insights, findings and recommendations aligned with the “suspicions and hypotheses we had before the programme,” shared Ms Ong, and were useful in influencing the company’s decision-making process. Significantly, they “aided us to make better and more impactful business decisions”. She added that GBF would be incorporating some of the recommended improvements in the near term where possible, “mostly on packaging and product claims”.



With the SCP, the student-consultants gained valuable, real-life exposure to business consulting.

They appreciated the experience to work on an SME project where the “stakes are high”, as their recommendations had to be feasible; “we cannot simply come up with ideas off the top of our heads without supporting evidence”. They gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by SMEs, such as “the scale of their operations and limited resources”. They gave credit to Project Advisor Samuel Ang, who provided them with key industrial knowledge and insights as he guided them through the various phases of the project. When the team struggled with the analysis of a certain category of data, Mr Ang’s guidance was crucial in helping them overcome the hurdles.

Mr Ang believes that “people learn best when they enjoy what they are doing”. As such, he gave his young charges “broad ideas with ample room to be creative”. As an advisor, he leveraged on teachable moments and shared appropriate real-life experiences with them. He considered the project “positive and enjoyable”; in particular, “it was good to see how the students have benefitted and grown over the short project duration as a cohesive team”.

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