



Aspirational, Exquisite and Refined: Synergraphic Design Pte Ltd

Synergraphic Design Pte Ltd is a premier art+design studio that provides interior and architectural art glass solutions, bespoke lighting, installations, sculptures, features and murals for indoor and outdoor spaces. Striving to support ambitious architects, designers, brands and institutions globally to achieve breakthroughs in concept and design, the company seeks to use the fluidity of glass to create inviting features of all forms, functions, sizes and scales that are enduring and iconic, to align with the clients' personalities and brands.

Since 1986, the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) has created hundreds of features in glass and mixed media for projects in more than 15 countries. Today, many of these projects are taking pride of place in landmark locations such as St Regis Singapore, Partners Monument at Taipei 101, and Crystal Pyramid in Brunei.



Taipei 101



Changi Airport Terminal 1

Key projects by Synergraphic include decorative glass sculptures installed at the entrance of the Taipei 101 tower and at Changi Airport Terminal 1

Through collaborations with designers and architects, and a dedicated inhouse team of skilled glass experts, Synergraphic has remained at the forefront of cutting-edge design. While it currently caters to a largely commercial clientele, it is looking to establish a new brand to spearhead its business-to-consumer (B2C) foray. The new brand is envisioned to comprise a collection of functional and urbanised household fixtures and fittings that reflects the lifestyle and ambitions of home owners.



Synergraphic launches more bespoke decorative furnishings with glass i.e. handmade artsy mirrors

Working through the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute (UOB-SMU AEI)'s SME Consulting Programme (SCP), Synergraphic sought to determine the target customers for its new brand, and the strategies to bring home owners onboard as actual buyers. A team of three student-consultants, supervised by an industry veteran and supported by a manager from the Institute, undertook the project.

As brittle as glass? – Not so!

Through active discussion with Synergraphic, the SCP team established the four deliverables, namely, to determine the consumer profile, followed by communication, product and marketing strategies.

Leveraging scientific methodologies, the student-consultants carried out primary and secondary research to garner salient data for analysis. Primary research, comprising face-to-face interviews and an online survey, uncovered issues that might create bottlenecks in the consumer decision-making process. For example, if consumers were unaware of glass as a viable material for different categories and types of household furnishings or were unfamiliar with the Synergraphic brand; if they lacked interest in purchasing glass furnishings or were unwilling to pay a premium for such products, then the glass products would not feature in the purchase decision-making process.

Secondary research involving the online enquiry of credible resources helped the student-consultants gain a better understanding of the market trends and consumer decision-making process for similar products, as well as marketing strategies for luxury brands.



*Left picture: Synergraphic founder and creative director Florence Ng prepares the glass frits used in a colourful artwork entitled Harvest
Right picture: Florence on coldworking technique. Glass is her canvas.*



Synergraphic also serves ornate chandeliers and feature walls for private residences such as these pictures (above and below)

Realising home owners' aspirations

The high rates of home ownership in Singapore support a sustained demand for household-related goods and services, particularly among young, first-time home owners. As household furnishings tend to be close to people's hearts and are not frequently replaced, consumers are likely to gather more information before they make the final purchase decision. Having ascertained the target consumer profile that would be most receptive to Synergraphic's B2C brand of glass furnishings and fixtures, the student-consultants recommended a series of communication strategies aimed at moving the purchase decision towards glass products; this includes highlighting the differentiating elements of glass furnishings vis-à-vis conventional furnishings, namely, premium quality, originality, craftsmanship and perhaps eco-friendliness. Additionally, glass furnishings, with their perceived elevated status compared with typical mass-market products, may be better aligned with the aspirations of certain segments of home owners.



In terms of products, the student-consultants proposed the initial launch of just four product categories; the controlled number can then be primed as the signature products of the brand. The selected product categories mirrored the top four categories of household furnishings that survey respondents said they were most inclined to buy.

The student-consultants' multi-pronged marketing proposal spanned collaborations with interior designers to loyalty programmes and referral benefits, social media advertising and a gift card initiative. During the purchase process, such as when customers are scrolling through the brand's website, dynamic remarketing (where customers are shown what they saw earlier), and cross-selling (suggestions of what will go well with the product of interest) can be used. There should also be a relevant post-purchase experience in the form of an automated, personalised "thank you" message, or maybe an invitation to a customer-selected follow-up date.

In the final report, the student-consultants put forth a comprehensive nine-month strategy implementation timeline, with the various activities to be carried out at different junctures. They advocated the use of metrics to gauge the outcomes of the recommendations, and submitted a list featuring seven methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposals.

Refining business decisions

Synergraphic Director Sara Ang had expected to get findings that would enable her to make decisions regarding the new brand and in this regard, her expectations were met. The data collection and analysis provided "valuable insights, some of which were surprising and some of which confirmed our hypotheses. I now have data that supports my decisions in product development, branding and marketing".



Florence Ng, Founder, and Sara Ang, Director of Synergraphic

Ms Ang found the recommendations related to the product and communication strategies especially useful. Although some were "quite broad strokes", she was of the view that the "findings and rationale behind the strategies are more valuable" as her team can "expand on the preliminary recommendations provided". The findings also gave her "food for thought and material for further research".

By participating in the SCP, the student-consultants met their objective of "learning more about consulting" and "how a real-life project is done". They appreciated the opportunity to interact with the decision-makers of an SME and seeing first-hand the different challenges that small companies face. It was eye-opening to "see how Synergraphic constantly worked around problems, such as having a limited amount of resources, in their day-to-day business".

Project Advisor Lim Jia Hui shared her approach to ensure that the students benefited from the SCP. "It is about having trust that the students know and understand the goals and objectives of the project. Simplifying objectives, asking questions and challenging new ideas are the key guiding principles when working with the student team." Calling her charges "incredible – enthusiastic, dedicated and smart", she commended them on "knowing the right questions to ask the SME", and for having done a "great job" for the project.

Project Advisor

Lim Jia Hui

Student-consultants

Theophilus Phua Jian Shou

Bachelor of Science (Economics) / 2018

Loh Zhi Hao

Bachelor of Science (Economics) / 2018

Yamon Min Ye

Bachelor of Business Management and Bachelor of Science
(Economics) / 2018