



Deeply, Delectably Satisfying: Seagift Food Pte Ltd

Seagift Food Pte Ltd (Seagift) began operations in 2000 as a distributor of frozen seafood. It identifies and sources quality products to supply to various market segments through a business-to-business (B2B) model. To enable more customers to enjoy a wide range of seafood types year-round, the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) expanded its frozen raw seafood range to include ready-to-cook seafood products. Through iterative innovations in its business processes in areas such as labour and land, and efficiencies in production, Seagift has achieved higher cost savings that can be passed on to customers.

The SME's efforts to consistently deliver high quality and safe food products have not gone unnoticed – it has been awarded the top “A” grade by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (now Singapore Food Agency) since 2012, and also received the Bronze medal for excellence in food hygiene, sanitation and processing in 2016.



Seagift staff celebrating the receipt of the coveted “A” Award at the AVA Food Safety Awards event

Recent years have seen dramatic shifts in the business environment as businesses undergo digital transformation. With more customers shopping online and COVID-19 disrupting businesses and life as we know it, Seagift decided to explore the potential in the business-to-consumer (B2C) arena to strengthen its market reach and, by extension, its revenue stream.

A team of three student-consultants, supervised by an industry veteran and supported by an Institute manager, undertook the project under the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute's extended SME Consulting Programme (SCP+), where the consulting team would proceed to implement selected strategies on behalf of the SME.

Fresh from the sea

To better understand the tastes and preferences of Seagift's current and prospective customers, the student-consultants used a combination of primary and secondary research methodologies to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The primary information – obtained from a focus group discussion and an online survey – were analysed to ascertain customers' deliberations when shopping for food.

To elicit more insights, the student-consultants carried out a competitor analysis and 4Ps (price, product packaging, place, promotion) framework analysis. Having determined what the customers considered most important in their purchase decisions and also what they steered away from, the team crafted a unique value proposition for Seagift. This was accompanied by an online marketing strategy with feasible action plans to kickstart the SME's online branding and outreach efforts.

Fulfilling the "+" in SCP+, the student-consultants proceeded to the implementation stage with a short-term action plan. The plan was designed to demonstrate the wins that Seagift could achieve within a short time, as well as serve as a testbed for the team's recommendations. Thereafter, the results would be studied and an enhanced set of recommendations would be placed in the final project report.

Casting the net wide

The implementation phase hinged on social media marketing and advertising on Instagram. The objective was to greatly increase brand awareness as well as possible conversion rate that might stem from remarketing advertisements in the future; this aligned with the long-term goal of increasing awareness of Seagift's B2C channel, which would contribute to increasing sales in the long run.

To optimise Seagift's social media campaign, the student-consultants adopted a conceptual ABC funnel approach. At the top of the three-tiered funnel where it was widest, the student-consultants were targeting the largest possible audience for awareness building. The narrower second tier represented the people who, after being made aware of the brand, went to check out the Seagift website. The narrowest last tier, at the base of funnel, were those who were "converted" to actual customers who made purchases.

The SCP+ took place over three weeks, with the student-consultants managing the full implementation process. This spanned from drawing up the social media calendar and providing the content and creatives throughout the period, to tracking and assessing the effectiveness of every element of the campaign. With these insights, the team proposed a

two-horizon approach for Seagift to bolster its business potential in the B2C market, with a key focus on the SME's consumer-facing branding efforts.

Horizon 1 would feature an active, ongoing and iterative social media marketing effort to engage customers. Horizon 2 consisted of longer-term plans that the company could adopt, such as leveraging user-generated content, website redesign and logo consistency. Details of the whys and hows were furnished in the report.

A bountiful catch!

Seagift Director Lee Kiow Seng shared that the findings about consumer preferences “validated our own impressions” and “affirmed my business plan”. Overall, he found the project “well scoped” and the analysis “thorough and comprehensive”. He considered the recommendations “feasible and implementable”, and said that Seagift would continue to leverage the online platforms in its marketing efforts. He also accepted the other proposals from the consulting team regarding the company website, logo and product packaging, among others.

The student-consultants had in mind to help the SME execute its digital marketing plans, and to expand into the B2C market. Both objectives were achieved and it felt “awesome”. They were gratified as “it is never easy to convince a company founder to diversity the sales distribution channel to B2C, given his 20-year experience executing B2B sales”, they explained. Plus, even with the lean resources typical of SMEs, they were given the “space to experiment with different marketing approaches” – something they noted and were grateful for.

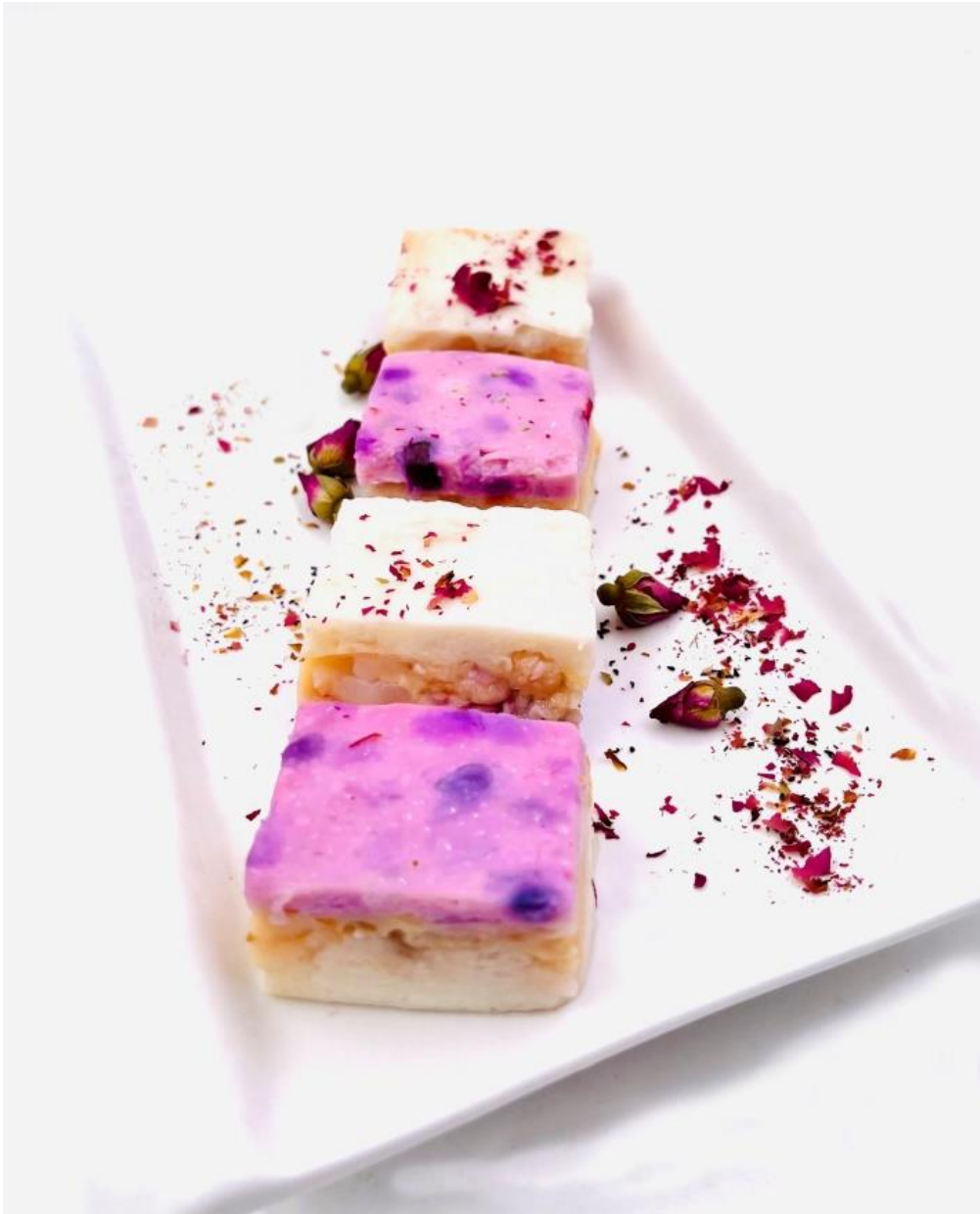
Project Advisor Kenneth Oh, in addition to ensuring that the project would achieve the desired outcomes, also focused on guiding each student according to his/her area of interest, which he had ascertained at the start of the project. To him, success lay in the students gaining “much practical knowledge and experience working on a real-world project”. For the SME, success would mean “tangible and valuable insights that allowed them to view their business differently and, hopefully, gain a breakthrough in their business model”. He believed the project accomplished both.

It was the process that left a deep impression on Project Manager Chen Shan Shan. From watching the students put together and implement a marketing campaign, under the guidance of the project advisor, to the willingness of the SME founder to “learn alongside the team and help to move the campaign forward”, the good outcomes were the direct result of the joint efforts of the entire Seagift team and the Institute's project team.



UOB-SMU
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Project Manager	Chen Shan Shan
Student-consultants	Bill Wong Hong Ming Bachelor of Accountancy & Bachelor of Business Management/2019 Joanna Pan Yue Ying Bachelor of Business Management/2017 Liaw Yong Hao (Casey) Bachelor of Business Management/2019



Seafood Trio: Seagift's very own unique and nutritious Seafood Trio is made up of three bountiful layers of fish, shrimp and purple yam. You can serve it by simply steaming, microwaving or pan-frying from frozen.



Pumpkin cheese stick: Pumpkin cheese sticks were Seagift's new product launch last month. Enjoy this classic appetizer with its delicious crispy, cheesy bite which has a nutritious pumpkin outer coating.

All photos are courtesy of Seagift Food Pte Ltd