

Refreshing the Recipe for Success

Lee Wee & brothers Traditionally Tasty

Heritage food brand Lee Wee & Brothers originated from one woman's passion for cooking. The Lee family matriarch, Madam Mary Teo, considers food to be her love language. The dishes she created became the highlights of

large, weekly family gatherings and social events. Her scrumptious *otah* is just one of the many heritage recipes for which she is renowned.

Over its 23-year history, Lee Wee & Brothers has continuously adapted to meet changing customer preferences while maintaining its core values. In response to modern consumers' demand for convenient, yet healthy and flavourful options, the company introduced a new line of frozen foods. This innovative range includes frozen Otah Paste, Otah Fries, Otah Croquettes and Honey Chicken Wings — all designed to suit an increasingly busy lifestyle without compromising on taste or health-conscious demands.



Lee Wee & Brother's signature otah paste, which forms the core of many of its products, including the new frozen range, is one of the many heritage delights that family matriarch, Madam Mary Teo, is well known for.

However, entering the frozen food market presented new challenges for Lee Wee & Brothers. The company needed not only to understand its target audience, but also to develop a structured and targeted strategy to penetrate the market effectively. In its quest to bring its well-loved culinary delights in new formats to different audiences, the company employed a data-based approach to maximise the effectiveness of its campaign.

To achieve this, Lee Wee & Brothers harnessed the science- and research-based capabilities of a team of student-consultants from the UOB-SMU Asian Enterprise Institute's (UOB-SMU AEI) flagship SME Consulting Programme (SCP). Guided by an industry veteran serving as Project Advisor and a Project Manager from the Institute, the student-consultants conducted comprehensive primary and secondary research. Their efforts aimed

to understand customer needs and opinions, as well as to conduct a competitor analysis to establish benchmarks, identify trends and uncover potential opportunities. The team then provided Lee Wee & Brothers with an in-depth market research report, complete with tailored marketing strategies.

Churning out the groundwork

To obtain a thorough understanding of consumer buying habits and perceptions, the team engaged in primary research through online surveys and face-to-face interviews. This was supplemented by secondary research gleaned from research databases and journals. The secondary research — which was centred on what consumers consider when purchasing frozen food products — along with a comprehensive competitor analysis helped to shape the operating landscape. These findings informed the types of questions that were asked in the survey and interviews.

The online survey utilised a multi-channel approach over two months, and garnered responses from individuals across both genders and ages ranging from 18 to 58. These demographics were also represented in the face-to-face interviews. Based on primary research findings, the team decided to focus on specific aspects of secondary research, namely consumer behaviour and social media trends.

NEW FROZEN FOODS

Fresh takes on the classics

A one-of-a-kind snack. Made with hand-cut thick chunks of original fish otah. Great with mayonnaise and chilli dips.



The innovative new range of frozen foods was designed in response to modern consumers' demand for convenient, yet healthy and flavourful, options.

Ingredients for market impact

The online survey data revealed several factors that affect consumers' food-purchasing decisions. The in-depth interviews underscored the importance of convenience and promotional offers. Additionally, word-of-mouth marketing and online reviews were identified as crucial elements for

brand image and building brand equity. The competitor analysis, meanwhile, revealed the trends and factors that are vital for developing an effective communication strategy — aimed at boosting consumer awareness and, ultimately, market share for Lee Wee & Brothers.

Interestingly, the team’s methodical research indicated that the younger consumers have significant influence over food purchasing decisions at home. Data, such as from a 2022 study by Euromonitor International, shows that millennials (those aged 26 to 41) and Gen Zs (aged 18 to 25) are responsible for around 80 per cent of the purchasing decisions for home-cooked food. These groups also have good potential of increased spending power in the future.

Plating the perfect strategy

Having applied established data analysis methods and techniques to their findings, the student-consultants proposed a comprehensive yet actionable strategy to establish market presence for Lee Wee & Brothers’ new frozen food line.

To achieve maximum market success, Lee Wee & Brothers needs a strategically timed and optimised product launch, starting with items that most appeal to the target market. Lee Wee & Brothers can also capitalise on its trusted brand name by offering bundled promotions coupling the new items with established favourites.

Easy to Cook

Savor your favourite Lee Wee & Brothers Otah
anytime in the comfort of your home.



COOKING TIME

 20 mins

Lee Wee & Brothers' otah paste is an established favourite among Singaporeans, including Gen Zs and millennials, whom research has shown to have significant influence over the food purchasing decisions at home.

Finally, the team’s secondary research showed that it is important to leverage social influence and online reputation to promote food products locally. Nearly half of Singaporeans, including Gen Zs and millennials, rely on recommendations from friends and families, according to Euromonitor 2022 data. A 2021 iKala report also showed that up to 76 per cent of consumers take into account reviews and ratings before buying a product.

Therefore, the company should leverage social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, to build brand awareness and brand share. Besides creating and amplifying eye-catching and useful content, such as simple recipes and product reviews, key opinion leaders — or influencers — could be sought to help amplify the brand’s reach. The consulting team also prepared a viable project timeline and budget list to guide these recommendations.

Savouring the results

The team’s suggestions and implementation roadmap proved invaluable to Lee Wee & Brothers. The brand’s Manager for New Business and Planning, Mr Darren Lee, noted, “The recommendations were feasible and implementable, and the implementation roadmap was helpful. The primary research findings also helped to validate certain aspects of our operations.”

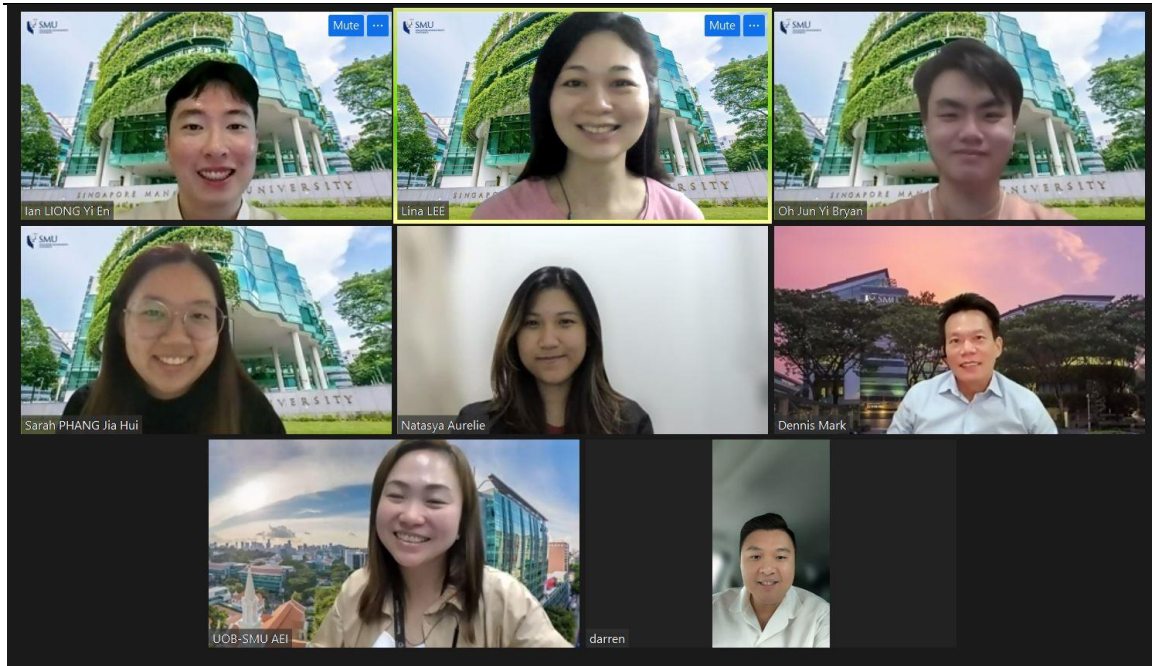


Lee Wee & Brothers, which also opens its Central Kitchen doors to share its rich heritage and culinary story with the community, credits student-consultants for providing invaluable recommendations that have helped validate and enhance their operations.

This outcome was exactly what the student-consultants aimed for — one of their main objectives was to gain practical experience in the consulting industry while assisting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Team member Bryan Oh, stated, “The project allowed me to successfully apply various frameworks I learnt in school, and witness their practical implementation and effectiveness.”

Project Advisor Dennis Mark observed that the team “developed good depth in their research and created a logical proposal”. “They also provided a substantial spectrum of perspectives for the SME’s leadership to consider,” he added. “The successful implementation should help the SME adapt its business model to younger consumers’ preferences and habits.”

Project Manager Lina Lee concurred, saying, “I am delighted that the findings presented were detailed and thoroughly researched. Additionally, the recommendations included low-hanging fruit, making them easy and feasible for the SME to implement immediately. I also want to acknowledge the client’s openness and exceptional support, which contributed significantly to the project’s smooth progress.”



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