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UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA



COMPANY ANALYSIS

The dUCk Group

TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEURSHIP (ENT600): CASE STUDY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an attempt to know how the theories can be applied in practical situations. As a student in UiTM Arau, Perlis, it is a part of study where everyone is required to undergo a case study project. So for this purpose, I got the opportunity to do a research on a company that manufactures the same product as I am developing for my New Product Development (NPD). The company that I have chose in The dUCk Group Sdn. Bhd. that produces handbags and other products with the brand dUCk. This company is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

For the first part of this project report, the general information of the company has been collected and gathered for research purposes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has issued the Movement Control Order (MCO) which restricted student's activities. All researched that has been done were only done via searching the internet.

The second part of the report consists the specialized subject study. The objectives of this project is to work on the company background, organizational structures, product and services provided by The dUCk Group Sdn. Bhd. Next, I also studied on the business, marketing and operational strategy that the company has been implementing for years.

In addition for this case study, I have also analysed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the company faces in the real business world by using SWOT analysis. Hence, from the researches done and analysing the needs and demands voiced by their existing customers, I managed to come out with some best solutions to overcome, meet and fulfil their needs. Therefore, the solutions I have came up from this case study will further be used in my NPD project.

INTRODUCTION

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.” – L. P. Hartley

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is a requirement for me to be assigned with a case study for the subject Technology Entrepreneurship (ENT600). In order to find a suitable topic for the case study, it is important to identify a product that has the ability and significant potential to be innovated, as this is a key element before proceeding. So, I decided to conduct a study on a product that I myself and other people use on a day to day basis. To be precise, I decided to do a study on The dUCK Group’s handbags, as it is seen to be an essential piece of item and used vastly by both men and women of all ages all around the world.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The idea came after brainstorming and discussing with my family and some of my classmates. They addressed some problems with their personal handbags, suggested what technological improvements and innovations that can be done to their dream handbags, respectively. For example, some of the problems I have come across after doing some research about The dUcK Group were the straps of the handbag, the design, the material and safety of the handbag. I also noticed that our local brands do not get enough attention when compared to famous international brands. Therefore, I have some suggestions to modify and improve The dUcK’s Group handbag in terms of product and marketing.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is incorporate technological entrepreneurship skills in modifying and innovating a product with good knowledge and creativity skills. This study is also to raise awareness among consumers about supporting local brands and improving the quality of local brand products so it can fulfill our needs like other famous international brands.

2. COMPANY INFORMATION

The dUCk Group Company comprises of 5 main products lines - scarves, cosmetics, bags, stationeries and home & living.

2.1 BACKGROUND



Figure 1: Vivy Yusof

- Launched on 5th May 2014.
- Founded by popular blogger entrepreneur, Vivy Yusof and husband, Fadza Anuar.
- Main store: The dUCk Store Suria KLCC. (Please refer appendices)
- Other company: FashionValet Sdn. Bhd.
- FashionValet has offices and warehouses in Malaysia, Singapore and Jakarta.

2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

(Please refer appendices).

2.3 PRODUCTS

The dUCk Group has 18 types of bags, but mainly focusing only on 7 types of handbags that women carry everyday. (Please refer appendices)

However, The dUCk Group also ranges in other types of products including scarves, cosmetics, bags, stationeries and home and living essentials. (Please refer appendices)

2.4 BUSINESS, MARKETING, OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

A business strategy defines how the business and its members should evolve in order to achieve long-term success. Companies are often asked to discover new sources of competitive advantage and perform activities differently, better and at a lower cost compared to rivals in the market. The business type for The dUCk Group is an e-commerce fashion company.

A marketing strategic plan discusses the continued efforts and the particular approach that will be employed in trying to execute a marketing plan (Mangram, 2012). The strategic plan is an indication of how the organisation plans on entering the market - it combines the marketing goals into a comprehensive plan (Nykiel, 2011). The dUCk Group's marketing strategy is based from Cialdini's principles which are scarcity, authority and social proof.

(The products from The dUCk Group can be referred at appendices).

Operational strategy refers to the method a company uses in order to reach their objectives. By developing operational strategies, a company can examine and implement effective and efficient systems for using resources, personnel and the work process. For example, The dUCk Group always comes up with hashtags that can be used by consumers. Some of their famous hashtags are #fvootd and #ducktravels. The hashtags are used when consumers use dUCk brand in their daily outfits and also when they bring their dUCk brand product wherever they are travelling. Consequently, this strategy does not only leveraged fans as advocates for dUCk brand, but also normalize this type of behaviour among fans.

3. COMPANY ANALYSIS

3.1 SWOT

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good reputation among the society.• Good quality in material and handbag production.• Affordable price since it is a local product.• Minimalist and chic design.• Focuses and provides a simplicity and timeless design.	<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires continuous changes to stand out among other international brands.• Does not receive quite an amount of recognition and presence among society due to other high-end international brands.
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evolution in lifestyle trends.• Receive recognition among Malaysian consumers as it is able to undergo evolution in terms of design, features and functions.	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition with other brands that may be cheaper and easier bought.• Keeping up with evolution in technological advancements provided by other handbag brands.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis on The ProDUcktive Group's Bag

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 FINDINGS

According to Wikipedia, a handbag is a handled, medium-to-large bag used to carry personal items. The term handbag began appearing in the early 1900s. Women's bag grew larger and more complex during this period of time and the term was attached to the accessory. For this case study, I chose The ProdUCktive Bag from The dUCk Group as my target product.

4.1.1 Handbag straps is too thin and strap length is inconvenient.

When the strap is thin, it will cause shoulder strain for the users. According to American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), carrying a heavy bag can cause an uneven weight distribution, straining back muscles and affecting blood flow to the shoulders. This problem relates with the theory of pressure and surface area. The pressure exerted on a surface by an object increases as the weight of the object increases or the surface area decreases. This is a problem because other companies are able to overcome this problem. In addition, if the handbag strap is either too short or long will cause inconvenience for the users. For petite and tall users, there is always a problem with adjusting the length of the strap, either it will be too short or too long as it ruins their whole image.

4.1.2 Handbag design is too plain and lacks good first impression factors.

The design of The ProdUCktive Bag is too bland and plain eventhough it is in trend with today's lifestyle. Since handbags are used by a wide range of ages, starting from teenagers to adults, the design must be suitable with all ages. A touch of creativity is also needed in order to compete with other marketing brands. The ProdUCktive Bag seems to lack in uniqueness, which is a criteria required in order to stand out and be recognisable among everyone. The handbag also has to send a great first impression towards buyers and users.

4.1.3 Handbag material is not durable for long-term use.

The ProdUCktive Bag is made from faux leather, a material that does not use a lot of cost in production. However, faux leather is not a durable type of material. It easily tears, punctures and peels after just a few years of usage. Faux leather is also not hypo-allergenic like real leather and it is more environmentally wasteful because real leather is the by-product

of cows processed for their meats. Although it is widely used in the industry, there are still other options available. Nowadays, users prefer environmental-friendly, vegan and cruelty-free materials in order to reduce waste. Not to mention, working women and mothers also carry their children's items in their handbags so they are really looking for a durable and functional handbag without needing to spend too much money on handbag maintenance.

4.1.4 Handbag security and technology advancement.

According to a report from The Star Online on 21st July 2020, three people were arrested after snatching a woman's handbag containing two handphones worth RM2098 on 16th July 2020. Based on a research done by The U.S Embassy in Malaysia, thieves on motorcycles or leaning out of a car window typically snatch handbags, necklaces and handphones from pedestrians. They also suggested some steps to avoid from being a victim of snatch theft. With that in mind, it is very crucial to also add security advancements and technology in handbags as an extra precaution step. This can also reduce the crime rates in our country.

4.2 DISCUSSION

From the above findings, there are some improvement measures can be taken towards the problems addressed which are the handbag straps, design, material and security. Advantages and disadvantages are also taken into account upon coming up with the solutions.

4.2.1 Handbag strap improvement.

For The ProdUCktive Bag, the longer straps should have a larger width than its original design. This will decrease the pressure exerted by the weight carried inside the bag and relieve shoulder strains. However, it may affect the design of the handbag because most handbags do not prefer large widths for the straps. The straps should also have a little padding in order to reduce the shoulder strains. Unfortunately, the straps will look puffy. This can also affect the design of the handbag and be mistaken as a visible flaw. The padding will also wear and tear after multiple usage in a few months or years.

For the length of the straps, additional holes should be added so that the users have more options for adjustments. A buckle is also another good option for adding more proper

adjustments settings. Users are able to adjust the strap length without worrying about the number of holes provided because they can just adjust the buckle. But, if there are too many holes, the handbag will not receive a great first impression. Eventhough it serves a great function, the design states otherwise. Users might probably look into other brands that serves both elements.

4.2.2 Handbag design and first impression improvement.

The ProdUCktive Bag has a very simple design. Although it shows simplicity and class, it is not a preferable design for teenagers. As we know, teenagers prefer trendy and chic designs. In order to find a happy and balanced medium between both design, it is best to find a design that is timeless and suitable for all ages. The colour schemes should have a range of options, starting from pastels to dark. However, not all users will agree with the colour schemes provided as different people have different taste. Besides that, more options will cause more cost in production.

The ProdUCktive Bag can come up with a collaborating version with local artists from the streets for a breath of different and unique touch to their design. Not only does the art gets recognition, the handbag will also receive more attention and overall contribute extra income to the local artists. However, this can take another turn. There are many talented artists that can contribute to a possible collab, so how will they choose the right one.

Another feature that The ProdUCktive Bag lacks is metal studs on the bottom of the handbag. The function of the metal studs is to provide stability for the handbag. Most famous intrenational brands include this feature as it is a main selling point.

Their handbags also comes with a thank you card, gift cards, a birth certificate wrapped inside a woven bag and placed in a beautifully packed box. This is a great way to gain a lot of great impressions from buyers and users, as it portrays that The dUCk Group preserves the quality of their products.

4.2.3 Handbag material improvement.

As the material used for The ProdUCktive Bag is faux leather but that can be changed. Synthetic polymers such as polypropylene is used to replace natural material. They can easily

be moulded or woven and be made into exotic colour or even translucent. Some of the advantages of using polypropylene fabrics is it has a good strength tensile around 4800 psi. this allows the material to withstand fairly heavy loads, despite it being lightweight. It is also a type of complex plastic, so it is safe for humans. However, it is a highly flammable material and according to Gupta, North Carolina State University, polypropylene fibers can only withstand approximately 6 days exposure towards high-intensity UV rays before losing 70% of their strength.

Besides that, vegan materials can also be used. Vegan leather is often made from polyurethane, a polymer that can be made to order for any design, but the disadvantage of polyurethane is it is derived from petrochemicals containing isocyanates which are known respiratory toxins. But it can be treated with vegetable oils that use less chemicals and create a breathable leather. It can also be made from innovative and sustainable materials such as pineapple leaves, cork, apple peels, other fruit wastes and recycled plastics and used to create products that do not use animal skins (pleather). However, it is difficult to make pleather in large quantities and can be expensive to produce. They are also not as durable as real leather. Nonetheless, vegan leather will promise a better future for mankind as it saves animals and repurposes natural wastes for handbag and other item productions. Muslim users also have no need to worry about non-halal products as it does not use any animal skins.

4.2.4 Handbag security and technology improvement.

A technological improvement that can be done is having a beacon tracking system. Accuware Bluetooth Beacon Tracking is a real-time tracking system designed for tracking Bluetooth Low Energy devices (from now on BLE devices) inside multi-floor buildings. The BLE devices are very small transmitters with a very long battery life (years) that can be used for assets and people tracking. Put simply, it is a small device that connects and transmits information to smart devices, making location based searching and interaction more easier and more accurate. The beacon system must be connected to the FashionValet app so it can locate the handbag at a distance of 70 meters. The app will also notify the owner if their handbag is moving closer or further away. If the handbag does not reach its owner, the app will flag the handbag as 'lost'. Then the app will search users' information within its database. The information picked up by other FashionValet users, including location and time stamp, will be sent to the handbag owner. Handbags can have a history and in the case of these

expensive bags, a provenance. There is no reason why a bag cannot prove it's genuine and, for example, provide a history of where it's been and even automatically link to memories. The locating aspect might even help if a bag has been lost. Linking a bag to real experiences and the outside world makes it smart and part of life. Unfortunately, the disadvantage of beacon tracking system is it does not work on its own and relies on Bluetooth with either WiFi or hotspot. It is a hassle to manage as it is non-reliable. Bluetooth is also not battery-friendly. It is hard for people to engage with this technology while trying to not run out of battery all day.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Based on the findings and discussions being made, I have come up with the best solution to overcome the problems faced by The ProdUCktive Bag.

5.1 Handbag strap solution

The best outcome for the handbag strap is providing a larger width for the straps and including an adjustable buckle for multiple length options. By ensuring The ProdUCktive Bag has a large strap width, we are able to solve the shoulder strain problem and reduce quite a number of muscle and back pain cases and prevent future cases among women.

On the other hand, with including the buckle for more adjustment options, we are also able to provide a good first impression for teenagers and women of all shapes and sizes. Women and teenagers who carry The ProdUCktive Bag will have a lot of confidence boost and feel powerful when walking in the streets because of their self image. With both solutions proposed, we can guarantee satisfaction from the users in terms of handbag features and self-image.

5.2 Handbag design solution

The solution for design of The ProdUCktive Bag is collaborating with Malaysian street artists. This is an effort to increase awareness among Malaysians to support local businesses and products and in conjunction, contributing to extra income for the local street artists. This will portray that people from The dUCk Group are giving back to the society while producing a high-quality handbag. This will also draw a lot of attention from the society because this is a very bold move in order to strive for a unique approach in the vast and fashion-forward

industry. The design should also include metal studs at the bottom of the handbag in order to provide stability and preserve the high-class and high quality design of The ProdUCktive Bag. This tiny feature has the ability to increase the handbag's current worth value as it is a staple feature in other international, high-end branded handbags.

5.3 Handbag material solution

The best material to substitute faux leather is vegan leather or pleather. This is because we are able to recycle our natural resources and save the planet at the same time. We can control the number of wastes by repurposing and introducing it in the fashion industry. Since the industry is evolving, users also prefer a durable yet safe and eco-friendly material for their handbags, so The ProdUCktive Bag should be the first to serve this option for the users out there. Besides, The ProdUCktive Bag can also be the first Muslim-friendly handbag because it does not include any animal skins in the production. With vegan leather as the material, this will also reduce the risk for snatch theft as it's handle is made from a durable material.

5.4 Handbag security and technology solution

The beacon tracking system is the best technology for The ProdUCktive Bag to incorporate in production. Not only it is an advancement in technology, it will also reduce crime rates in our country. Not to mention, users will feel more secure and confident when carrying their handbag out in the streets. The ProdUCktive Bag can provide this luxurious feature in order to preserve their users' welfare. This feature will become the main selling point as it focuses on safety and security for both user and product. It is also easy because users are able to connect the beacon tracker via Bluetooth with their smartphones through the FashionValet app.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the recommended solutions are found to be the best and most suitable solutions that I can propose and provide for The ProdUCktive Bag.

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8. APPENDICES



The Bucket Bag

Figure 2



The Carey Top
Handle Bag

Figure 3



The Hannah
Crossbody Bag

Figure 4



The ProdUCktive
Bag

Figure 5



The Satchel Bag

Figure 6



The Weekender
Duffel

Figure 7



The Yaya Bag

Figure 8

Figure 2-8: Types of handbags from The dUCk Group

FASHION
VALET

<http://www.fashionvalet.com/>

Figure 9: FashionValet logo

dUcK

<http://duckscarves.com/>

Figure 10: The dUcK Group logo



Figure 11: The ProdUcKtive Bag Collection



Figure 12: The dUcK Store in Suria KLCC

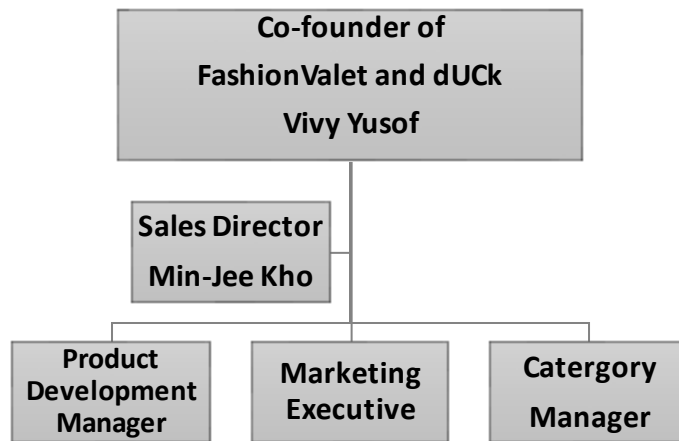


Table 2: Organizational Structure in The dUCk Group

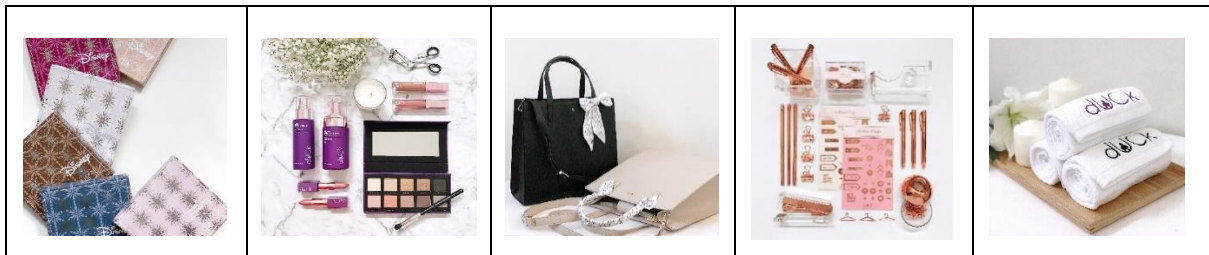


Table 3: Product Lines from The dUCk Group