In just five years Singapore Management University has succeeded in reshaping Singapore’s tertiary education arena, gaining a reputation for innovation, and producing highly articulate, passionate graduates poised to influence the business landscape.

Making a difference, SMU style

With the recent opening of the City Campus, SMU has a vibrant new home for its 3,800 students — one that manifests its vision and is a perfect expression of its values. The new 4.5 hectare campus is set to become a national talking point, a true meeting point for open hearts and expansive minds.

“We’re the leader in education branding,” says SMU’s Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Alan Goh. “We caught the paradigm shift in education reform, rode the wave of a revolutionary pedagogy and captured the imagination of a new generation of students. In just five years, SMU has become the hottest brand with the coolest pedagogy.”

Consistent throughout the branding and admissions campaigns that premiered in 2002 is the positioning ‘SMU is different’ SMU students are the stars. “What better ambassadors, they are the living brand,” Alan enthuses. “Their spirit and confidence demonstrate the essence and differentiation of SMU.” The series of campaigns literally made headlines, challenged and changed the face of education advertising.

The 2005 admissions campaign featured other stakeholders — professors, parents, graduates and employers — photographed by Russel Wong who has been shooting the ad series since the beginning.

“It’s an interesting juxtaposition of our targets,” Alan muses. “Our visual ‘icons’ are our stakeholders but in reality it’s the JC and Poly students who are the heroes of the campaign. Through feedback, they told us that they wanted to be schooled in a hip and cool environment; they valued teaching excellence, employability and career prospects. Our campaign addressed these issues and more, by showing them a steady stream of compelling, emerging evidence.”

The results speak for themselves: “SMU continues to attract students like bees to honey. We have seen a momentous roll since 2000, Y05/06 being an exceptionally good year. We had over 9,400 students applying for 1,100 places; this is nine times over-subscribed.”

As Alan affirms, “It’s not just about style but substance. We can now bring a new level of spirit, energy and excitement to the community. Everybody welcomes a breath of fresh air!”

Source: This article appeared in the inaugural issue of Angles, a brand communications publication by Write Angles.
Write Angles has been SMU’s brand partner for five years. “Working with SMU is just awesome” says CEO Jenny Bigio. “It is a privilege to play a part in building such an amazing brand. Our entire team is passionate about its success.”