

UOB underscores essential factors for startups to succeed in the world of business

Singapore, 3 August 2016 – United Overseas Bank (UOB) has identified essential factors for startups to make the leap to become small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These are being nimble and flexible; having a strong product-market fit that serves an unmet need or creates greater efficiency; and being able to tap business partnerships and networks.

The insight was shared today at an investor showcase organised by The FinLab, which is an innovation accelerator programme jointly set up by UOB and Infocomm Investments Pte Ltd. UOB noted how essential these qualities are for startups to progress.

Ms Janet Young, Head of Group Channels and Digitalisation, UOB, said, “Given UOB’s eight decades of banking SMEs across the region, we have a deeper understanding of the challenges they face and what enables them to succeed. Many of these small businesses began as startups. This is why the Bank is well-placed to guide and to help FinTech startups grow.”

As part of the FinLab’s innovation accelerator programme, UOB’s senior management actively mentored the first batch of eight startups, helping them refine their business models and propositions.

Ms Young added, “We want to help the startups become sustainable businesses. For that, they need the right attitude, opportunities, networks and relationships. We assessed more than 200 startups before selecting the final eight. All eight have the potential to be viable in the long term and we look forward to supporting them as they move on to the next stage.”

The startups were chosen for their diverse mix of financial services offerings that meet personal and business needs. Over the course of the 100-day programme, UOB’s mentors helped shape the solutions through rigorous assessment, practical application and by harnessing the essential factors.

Being nimble and flexible

Stock2Day is an app that aims to help retail investors interested in the Thai stock market make better decisions through mobile gamification. Their initial value proposition focused only on one market. UOB guided them to explore regional expansion options as well as other revenue-generating lines such as licensing their proprietary tools to other businesses.

Serving an unmet need

CardUp enables consumers to make payments by credit cards whether or not the recipient accepts the plastic. For example, through CardUp, a tenant would be able to pay their rent to their landlord by credit card and earn reward points, air miles or rebates. UOB acquired CardUp as a merchant thereby enabling the startup to test their model in the real world. More than 700 users have signed up for CardUp's service in less than a week.

Tapping partnerships and networks

Nickel is a cross-border money transfer platform that had set out to help SMEs in Asia facilitate foreign exchange payments and receipts more efficiently and at competitive rates. Having tapped UOB's network reach, professional expertise and market insights, Nickel has strengthened its business model, making it more viable and scalable in order to serve both SMEs as well as multinational companies across the world.

Mr Felix Tan, Managing Director of The FinLab, said startups, many of which are operating in environments new to them, would do well to learn from the experiences of others.

“As our eight FinTech startups move on to the next phase of development, we hope that they will continue to glean from the lessons learnt during their time at The FinLab and contribute to the startup community.”

– Ends –

About United Overseas Bank

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia with a global network of more than 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. UOB is rated among the world's top banks: AA1 by Moody's and AA- by Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings respectively.

In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as branches and representative offices.

UOB plays an active role in the community, focusing on art, children and education. It has, over more than three decades, held the longest-running art competition in Singapore, the UOB Painting of the Year, which has since been extended across Southeast Asia. In recognition of its contributions to the arts, UOB was conferred the Singapore National Arts Council's Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the twelfth consecutive year in 2016. UOB also encourages its employees across the region to be involved in its regular volunteer activities. This includes the annual UOB Heartbeat Run which is held in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

For media queries, please contact:

Maybelline Tan

Group Strategic Communications and Customer Advocacy

Email: Maybelline.TanWL@uobgroup.com

Tel: (65) 9685 2199

Eunice Seow

Group Strategic Communications and Customer Advocacy

Email: Eunice.SeowHW@uobgroup.com

Tel: (65) 8432 8388