



PROAGE PTE LTD

Introduction



proage

Changing how we age

Location: Singapore

Industry: Healthcare

Founded in 2008

Image Credit to ProAge Pte Ltd

ProAge Pte Ltd is a health and wellness specialist with local and international clientele. It is incorporated in 2008 as a social enterprise to create opportunities for every individual to live and age well; healthy and happy. ProAge delivers health & wellness programmes and services at national, community and individual levels based on three key foundations; a holistic approach, belief in evidence-based practice and a socially inclusive mission. ProAge envisions for every individual to have an opportunity to live the best possible quality of life, regardless of age, background and abilities; and to stay engaged, active and empowered with the knowledge and skills to live and age well.

Social Problem

Isaiah had observed that the physiological decline and social stigma regarding ageing was widespread and evident in society. These negative attitudes and perceptions demeaning older people include putting a blanket label on them as “slow to accept change”, “burden to society”, “outdated”, “of little value”, “slow”, just to name a few. These ageistic mindsets affect the way the younger generation, employers, policy makers, families and communities discriminate in their actions toward them.

Taking a reference from an article written by Professor Tommy Koh, ambassador at large for Singapore and former ambassador to the United Nations, he explains the broader issue of ageism in Singapore as expressed in three forms:

1. The accepted narrative of older Singaporeans as a burden to society

When talking about the issue of ageing in Singapore, we conveniently refer to it as a “silver tsunami”—



this expresses the underlying concern that there is an existential threat to Singapore as older Singaporeans become economically inactive and therefore dependent on society. As Professor Tommy Koh wrote, “the narrative is that older people tend to suffer from various forms of ill health and they would therefore be a drain on our healthcare resources. The narrative is that the increasing number of old people would reduce the vitality of the Singapore economy.”

2. Discrimination of seniors in the workplace

It is not uncommon to hear of the senior PMET unexpectedly retrenched because he is not as “useful” to the company as before. Due to age discrimination, many perfectly healthy older workers feel they have been forced by circumstances into leaving the labour force. Until recently, re-employment age has been raised from 62 to 67 responding to sentiments on the ground that 62 is too early an age to retire and people are well able to work beyond that age.

3. Media discrimination against seniors

Various forms of media tend to portray seniors as a single profile — it goes along the lines of grey-haired, frail, demented, stubborn, troublesome and unable to take care of themselves. In an effort to prepare society for this “silver tsunami”, some of the worst sides of seniors have been highlighted in even good intentioned media (see Eat Already?, a channel 8 series targeted as Singaporean elderly: <http://video.toggle.sg/en/series/eat-already/ep4/448752>), further fuelling worries and reinforcing negative stereotypes. However, quoting from Professor Tommy Koh, there is a need “to portray the older Singaporeans more accurately as a diverse group of individuals who do not always have much in common despite their similar age”.

In short, prevailing stereotypes of seniors as unproductive are unfair and detrimental to their dignity and there is a high urgency for us to re-examine current societal mind-set to make way for a new type of thinking. Challenging conventional beliefs of ageing as a dependent/burdensome stage of life, seniors can and should be seen as an unleashed potential in society that we can tap on.

Social Intervention and Impact created

Ageism expresses itself in various ways but one of the most pervasive forms of discrimination against seniors is that relating to their physical health. While it is true that the body degenerates over time, it is a myth that growing old means becoming a physical and financial burden due to unmanageable sicknesses. This is also spurred on by the media’s description of the future healthcare scene as an impending “silver tsunami”, possibly describing the tide of chronic diseases rising from an ageing population that threatens to swamp the health-care system, economy, and quality of life.

However, such a portrayal of seniors contributes to the inaccurate, damaging perceptions of older age. Research journals have long shown that with the right preventive exercises and nutrition, the healthy elderly can have a marked ability to maintain physiological functioning until late in life and that functional decline can be reversed to the state that one had 20 years. Even our brains can be “rewired” to perform better in old age, a phenomenon termed as neuroplasticity.

While addressing ageism requires a multi-faceted approach tackling issues such as employment, government policies, senior-friendly environments, restructured health systems and supportive communities, one way of



challenging ageism and empowering seniors is by giving them opportunities to live the best possible quality of life by staying engaged, active and empowered with the health knowledge and skills to live and age well. Hence, ProAge partners with government bodies, communities and companies to develop national health campaigns, community projects as well as workplace health programmes that empowers people with the necessary health skills and advocate on ageing well.

Business Model

ProAge is a forerunner in geriatric wellness with a suite of innovative health & wellness programmes and services that cater to the needs of healthy and chronically ill individuals. The medical and fitness team at ProAge develops and delivers these programmes and services to reduce health risk, promote wellness and manage medical conditions in the following areas:

- Corporate Health
- Community Health
- Professional Training
- Consultancy

Their programmes and services span across countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. In Singapore, ProAge is a chosen service provider for the national “Wellness Programme”, a long-term strategy to deal with the nation’s ageing population. ProAge has an education arm, which consists of highly qualified speakers to educate medical / fitness practitioners and/or public audience worldwide.

In addition, ProAge provides consultancy to government agencies and organisations interested in senior-specific programmes/initiatives. ProAge has been involved in various strategic national initiatives with government agencies to promote health, notably in the National Brisk Walking Campaign in 2008 and in 2011, Stimulate Your Mind, the first ever cognitive skills training programme in Singapore. In 2012, ProAge was consulted on Health Promotion Board’s Strength Training Exercise Programme and national-wide Falls Prevention Awareness initiative. ProAge is positioned as an industry leader with strategic global links to academic research institutes, foundations and organisations for the purpose of joint-research, collaborations, knowledge sharing and a member of International Council for Active Ageing.

Current Marketing Efforts

ProAge’s marketing plans for this year includes three areas of focus: brand strategy, corporate marketing (sales) and advocacy. The branding positioning has recently been firmed up and the company hopes to create more brand awareness to drive sales for their corporate workplace health programmes. They are also increasingly involved in advocacy projects with youths and hope to grow awareness about it’s social mission.

1. Social Media

Facebook – 302 likes

LinkedIn- 0 followers, 0 likes (recently set up but crucial channel for HRs)

2. Email marketing



Challenges Faced and Project Scope

While ProAge is an active community partner, it hopes to grow its brand awareness amongst corporate clients. ProAge's workplace health programmes not only help support its community projects, but also strategically target the current (above 60 year old) and next generation of seniors (45 - 59 yr old) in the corporate space.

End 2017, ProAge will be releasing its new app called ImproVee which aims to decrease metabolic risk factors (e.g. diabetes, obesity, etc) through "smart coaching" — combining data driven insights with professional coaching to advise people on making lifestyle changes that will transform their health.

Hence, the participating team should aim to:

Reach the below target audience:

- 1) Primary target audience: Corporate clients/ HR
- 2) Secondary target audience: Community clients

Achieve the below objectives:

- 1) Grow brand awareness of ProAge targeted at corporate clients
- 2) Raise awareness about ProAge's social mission on empowering people to live and age well through caring for their health
- 3) Publicise ProAge's workplace health programmes, specifically 'health coaching' (a targeted programme aimed at lowering metabolic risks)
- 4) Building on the interest in 'health coaching' (point 3), market ImproVee (smart coaching application) to Corporates/HRs toward the end of the year (if the team gets into finals)

Through achieving these objectives, we will effectively target the three forms of ageism highlighted by Professor Tommy Koh above by:

1. Challenging the current narrative of seniors as weak/frail through empowering their health
2. Breaking age discrimination of seniors in the workplace through our workplace health programmes
3. Challenging the media portrayal of seniors through positive media stories shared in this campaign



Useful Links and Resources

Company Website: <http://www.proage.sg/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ProAgeSG/>

Additional References

Mentioned in article by TODAY:

<http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/initiative-tackle-eldercare-mental-health-issues-through-social-entrepreneurship>

Short write-up by Asian Venture Philanthropy Network:

<https://avpn.asia/deals/proage-living-ageing-well/>

Short write-up by Impact Connect, a social investment portal:

<http://impactconnect.asia/proage/##overview>

Mentioned in article by The Straits Times:

https://www.nuh.com.sg/news/media-articles_1583.html

Article by Professor Tommy Koh:

<https://www.population.sg/articles/aspirations-of-an-older-singaporean>