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# Transforming NTUC First Campus' Martech & Lead Management Ecosystem

NTUC First Campus

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### Overview

NTUC First Campus (NFC) is a leading early childhood education provider in Singapore, managing over 170 preschools, including My First Skool (MFS) and Little Skool House (LSH). Despite its strong market position, NFC faced challenges on two fronts: modernising its Martech infrastructure to improve enrolment processes and customer engagement and refreshing the brand and digital presence of its flagship preschool brand, My First Skool.

With Singapore's declining birth rate and a mismatch between preschool supply and demand, NFC needed to modernise its digital ecosystem to stay competitive.





### Introduction and Context

### **About NTUC First Campus**

Q: What were the primary challenges or needs that led to the adoption of this Martech solution?

The organisation recognised the need to not only automate and scale its lead generation and marketing operations but also to ensure that its brand experience was aligned with the expectations of today's digitally savvy parents. Vertis was engaged to deliver a comprehensive Martech transformation and brand refresh, spanning CRM integration, website revamp, and a revitalised digital and visual identity for MFS.

This case study details how Vertis helped NFC achieve a future-ready Martech ecosystem and a cohesive, high-impact brand experience that supports both parent engagement and business growth.

### Challenges & Business Needs

### Martech-Related Challenges

- 1. Inefficiencies in Lead Management: NFC faced significant challenges in tracking and managing leads due to its outdated Martech ecosystem. The existing middleware failed to integrate seamlessly with the CRM and enrolment systems, causing delays in responding to parents.
- 2. Fragmented Data Across Marketing Platforms: The marketing ecosystem was disconnected, preventing NFC from gaining a comprehensive view of its enrolment process. Enrolment advisors had limited visibility into real-time seat availability, creating inefficiencies in matching demand with actual vacancies. Additionally, customer data was siloed, making it difficult to execute personalised and effective follow-ups with prospective parents.
- 3. User Experience Challenges in Enrolment: The enrolment process was lengthy and complicated, contributing to high drop-off rates. Without a self-checkout feature, parents had to wait for manual verification, which was time-consuming and frustrating. Parents accustomed to digital-first experiences found this process slow and inefficient.

### Brand & Digital Experience Challenges (My First Skool):

- **4. Outdated Website and User Journey:** The existing MFS website was not optimised for mobile, had a high drop-off rate, and lacked self-service functionality such as seat reservation.
- **5. Inconsistent Brand Identity Across Channels:** There was a need to modernise the brand while maintaining its values—ensuring consistency across digital, print, and environmental touchpoints.
- **6. Lack of Clarity in Messaging and Design Language:** Messaging frameworks for different audiences (parents, educators, stakeholders) needed refinement, and visual systems lacked scalability and alignment across platforms.

## Technology Overview

Q: What technology solutions were implemented to address these challenges?

### 1. Middleware Overhaul & Martech Optimisation

- The outdated middleware was replaced with a scalable .NET-based solution, significantly improving data flow and orchestration.
- NFC's CRM (HubSpot), enrolment systems (SkoolNet2), and marketing tools were fully integrated in realtime, ensuring better visibility and control over lead management.
- Automated lead scoring & queue management were introduced, ensuring that high-priority leads were identified and nurtured efficiently

### 2. HubSpot CRM Integration & Marketing Automation

- Ease of Use: HubSpot was selected for its intuitive interface and minimal learning curve, allowing NFC's team to adopt the system quickly and efficiently without requiring extensive training.
- **Scalability:** HubSpot's flexible architecture enables NFC to scale operations easily as its enrolment processes expand. The platform supports increasing lead volumes without compromising performance or functionality.
- Integration Capabilities: HubSpot seamlessly integrates with NFC's existing systems, including SkoolNet2 and marketing tools, ensuring smooth data synchronisation and eliminating inefficiencies caused by fragmented workflows.
- Fast Implementation: Unlike legacy CRM systems that demand heavy customisation and complex integrations, HubSpot is designed for quick deployment, reducing time-to-value and allowing NFC to see immediate improvements in lead tracking and engagement.
- **Centralised Data Management:** By providing a single platform for managing all customer interactions, HubSpot ensures NFC can track lead behaviour, enrolment status, and marketing engagement in one place, improving overall decision-making and efficiency.

### Vertis' Expertise

Vertis was the ideal partner for this project due to its extensive expertise in enterprise-level Martech transformations and HubSpot CRM implementations. Their ability to customise workflows, synchronise data efficiently, and optimise user experiences made them the right choice to modernise NFC's digital infrastructure and enhance operational efficiency.

### Implementation Process

Q: How was the solution integrated into NFC's existing digital ecosystem?

### Discovery & Planning:

- Conducted an in-depth audit of NFC's Martech infrastructure and customer journey.
- Identified pain points in lead management, marketing automation, and enrolment inefficiencies.
- Designed a phased approach to implementation, ensuring minimal disruption to operations.

### Solution Development & Integration:

- Developed a modern middleware system to improve system connectivity and data flow.
- Fully implemented HubSpot CRM and integrated it with SkoolNet2 and NFC's marketing channels.

### Testing & Optimisation:

- Conducted rigorous testing with NFC's marketing and enrolment teams.
- Iteratively optimised workflows based on real-time data and parent feedback.

### Go-Live & Continuous Support:

- Rolled out the final solution across NFC's 170+ preschools.
- Provided continuous support, training, and system enhancements.

### Risk Mitigation Strategies Proactive API Consumption Monitoring

 Vertis implemented ongoing monitoring of HubSpot API usage across integrated platforms to prevent overconsumption and maintain system stability.

### Structured and High-Quality Documentation Protocols

- Vertis worked closely with NFC to establish a comprehensive documentation framework, ensuring clarity, alignment, and traceability throughout the project lifecycle. Key documents included:
- 1. Business Requirements Document (BRD): Outlined high-level business objectives and user use cases.
- 2. Technical Design Document (TDD): Detailed the proposed system architecture, configurations, and integration plans.
- 3. System Integration Testing Document (SIT): Defined technical test scenarios across systems and platforms to validate end-to-end connectivity
- 4. User Acceptance Testing Document (UAT): Documented test cases from the end-user perspective to ensure solutions met functional expectations.

### The Vertis Approach

### **Tech-Driven Creativity**

Vertis not only served as a digital transformation agency for NFC but acted as a long-term strategic advisor, offering comprehensive consultancy across Martech and brand transformation initiatives. As NFC's most trusted HubSpot partner, Vertis successfully implemented projects that enhanced both operational efficiency and long-term business strategy—transforming sales and marketing workflows, streamlining enrolment processes, and elevating parent engagement.

### 1. Detailed Requirements Gathering

- Vertis led discovery and planning workshops with NFC stakeholders to align on business objectives, user needs, and technical constraints.
- These sessions enabled accurate scoping of CRM workflows, marketing automation, and enrolment processes.
- Ongoing Sales and Marketing workshops supported future planning and introduced best practices and new technologies

### 2. Consultative Engagement Model:

- Vertis worked hand-in-hand with NFC's marketing and technology teams, auditing their Martech use cases and identifying gaps.
- Through these audits, Vertis provided tailored recommendations to enhance CRM integrations, refine automation workflows, and elevate the user experience across both internal and external systems.

### 3. Realistic Timelines and Business Continuity Planning:

- Drawing from its deep experience in enterprise-level Martech transformations, Vertis established achievable timelines while incorporating buffer periods to accommodate stakeholder feedback and iterative testing.
- Rollouts were executed in carefully planned phases, ensuring minimal disruption to NFC's ongoing operations, particularly during peak enrolment periods.

### 5 Use Case & Functionality

### **Marketing Automation**

NFC leveraged HubSpot's automation tools to send personalised messages and nurture leads through email, WhatsApp, and social media campaigns, improving engagement rates and reducing drop-offs.

### **Self-Checkout System**

Parents could now reserve preschool seats instantly, reducing administrative workload and enhancing the enrolment experience.

### Lead Management

With real-time integration between HubSpot and SkoolNet2, NFC enabled instant lead qualification, prioritised responses, and ensured no enquiries went unanswered.

### **Data Governance & Security**

Compliance with Singapore's data regulations was ensured through encrypted storage, secure API integrations, and strict role-based access

### Projected Impact and Results

### Improved Lead Processing and Responsiveness

NFC's lead management process became significantly more efficient after automation and real-time tracking were introduced. Parent enquiries that previously faced delays are now handled promptly, creating a smoother, more reliable enrolment journey and improving the overall customer experience.

### Reduced Drop-Offs Through Personalised Engagement

With the implementation of personalised lead nurturing workflows and automated follow-ups, NFC saw stronger engagement from parents throughout the enquiry and enrolment process. Communication became more consistent and relevant, leading to fewer drop-offs and more meaningful interactions.

### Greater Operational Efficiency in Vacancy Management

Real-time synchronisation between HubSpot and SkoolNet2 eliminated the need for manual vacancy updates by enrolment advisors. This automation allowed staff to focus on strategic engagement rather than administrative tracking, streamlining workflows and improving internal coordination.

# 7 Challenges and Resolutions

**Legacy Middleware and Data Fragmentation:** NFC's outdated middleware infrastructure led to fragmented data across CRM, enrolment, and marketing platforms. This caused inconsistencies in lead tracking, delays in response times, and hindered scalability across business functions.

### Vertis resolved this by:

- Implementing a modern, scalable .NET-based middleware to enable real-time integration between HubSpot, SkoolNet2, and other key platforms.
- Reducing the number of workflows by 30% to streamline operations and improve maintainability.
- Automating CRM database clean-up processes to maintain data hygiene and reliability.
- Introducing cross-platform automation to handle deal progression, significantly reducing manual workload for sales and marketing teams.
- Achieving a 95% SIT and UAT success rate, demonstrating both the robustness of Vertis' solution architecture and the quality of test documentation, which effectively covered all required scenarios.

**Unstructured Workflows Across Departments:** Prior to the transformation, NFC's marketing and enrolment teams used inconsistent and siloed workflows, leading to duplicated efforts, inefficiencies, and missed lead follow-ups.

### Vertis resolved this by:

- Conducting joint discovery workshops to identify workflow gaps and map out the ideal parent journey.
- Standardising lead handling processes across departments to ensure alignment and operational clarity.
- Automating these workflows in HubSpot to support consistent execution, scalability, and performance measurement.
- The successful transformation of internal workflows added to Vertis' track record of 50+ major and minor project completions, reinforcing confidence in its delivery capabilities and expertise in complex Martech implementations.

**Complex Stakeholder Alignment:** Coordinating input and feedback across multiple NFC teams—marketing, technology, operations, and enrolment—posed challenges in maintaining alignment and driving timely decision-making.

### Vertis resolved this by:

- Establishing a clear communication and escalation framework that included weekly progress check-ins and issue escalation protocols.
- Facilitating cross-functional collaboration through transparent status reporting and shared milestones.
- Maintaining stakeholder engagement and accountability across all phases of the project, which ensured a smooth, coordinated delivery process.

### 8 Stakeholder Feedback

### Internal Stakeholder Feedback

"With HubSpot, we were able to completely transform our lead management process. We now respond to parent inquiries much faster, and with over 300 automated workflows, our team can focus on what really matters—engaging with families and ensuring a smooth enrolment experience."

- Eleanor TanChief Customer OfficerNTUC First Campus

### **End Users:**

- Many parents highlighted that the real-time seat availability updates allowed them to make informed decisions quickly, reducing uncertainty in the enrolment process.
- NFC's enrolment advisors noted that automated workflows significantly reduced administrative workload, allowing them to focus on personalised support rather than manual data entry.
- Parents also praised the omnichannel communication options, such as WhatsApp and email updates, which provided clear and timely information throughout the enrolment process.

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Lessons Learned & Future Plans

### Integrated Martech Ecosystem is Critical for Efficiency

- Fragmented systems previously led to inefficiencies in lead tracking and engagement.
- Centralising CRM and integrating HubSpot with SkoolNet2 improved visibility and responsiveness.
- Some use cases exceeded HubSpot's native capabilities, requiring integration with external vendors such as WhatsApp and Al-based platforms.

### Automation & Self-Service Improve Customer Experience

• The rollout of 300+ automated workflows across email, WhatsApp, and social channels streamlined communication and reduced manual workload

### Redundant Legacy Workflows and Procedures in HubSpot

- A full audit revealed outdated processes that were replaced with optimised workflows and custom code.
- The number of workflows were optimised and trimmed down from 500+ to 300+ workflows, improving efficiency across both the NFC and Vertis delivery teams

### Tri-Way Integration Challenges Between Website, Middleware, and HubSpot

- Conflicts in API response timing between platforms caused submission delays and data inconsistencies.
- Vertis resolved this by optimising timeouts, introducing queuing logic in the middleware, and improving form submission stability across the full stack.

### HubSpot API Management Requires Strategic Planning

- High integration volume posed risks to API usage limits and performance.
- Best practices such as batch updates, cron-based scheduling, and proactive load management were implemented to ensure stability.

### Best Practices

### Adopt Agile and Sprint-Based Project Management for Martech Initiatives

- The phased, iterative approach used in this project helped minimise disruptions while allowing for continuous testing and refinement.
- Future Martech projects should adopt similar agile methods to maintain flexibility, accelerate delivery, and enable faster user feedback integration.

### Leverage Personalisation to Drive Engagement

- Targeted nurturing campaigns and automated lead scoring enabled NFC to prioritise high-intent leads effectively.
- Future implementations should deepen personalisation efforts to further improve lead conversion and engagement outcomes.

### Future Recommendations

### Implement Al-Driven Chatbots for Enhanced Support

• Use AI chatbots across website and messaging platforms to handle common enquiries, provide instant responses, and personalise engagement based on user profiles and behaviours

### Scale Self-Checkout Functionality Nationwide

• Extend the successful self-checkout enrolment feature across all preschools to improve accessibility, convenience, and transparency for parents.

### Develop a Customer Data Platform (CDP) for Predictive Personalisation

• Consolidate behavioural and engagement data into a unified CDP to enable predictive analytics, smarter audience segmentation, and hyper-personalised marketing strategies.

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### About Vertis

Vertis is a digital agency on a mission to constantly innovate and create exceptional digital solutions, elevating clients' brands and the experiences they deliver through the power of technology-driven creativity.

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