



Strategic Partnerships
with Planisware

SMU Cuts Reporting Time by 50%



A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognized for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy.

We spoke with Evon Ng, the Founding Director of the Office of Strategy Management (OSM), to learn about the challenges her team faced, the actions they took to solve them, and the results SMU is seeing today.

THE PROBLEM: SMU'S STRATEGIC PLAN OUTGREW ITS ABILITY TO MANAGE IT

In 2021, SMU launched SMU2025, its first university-wide strategic plan, to drive transformative education, cutting-edge research, and engagement with both the city and the world. The plan brought together numerous ideas from across SMU's Schools, Offices, Centres, and Institutes into a single roadmap for growth and impact.

To lead its implementation, SMU created the Office of Strategy Management (OSM). With only 4 people coordinating efforts for the whole university, the team quickly realized that spreadsheets simply couldn't keep up with the scale and complexity of the plan. Each reporting cycle felt like a marathon. OSM sent Excel files to every unit, then spent weeks chasing updates and merging them into one master file. With multiple versions and frequent errors, progress was slow. By the time reports reached leadership, some of the data was already outdated.

Much of the team's time ended up stuck in Excel, fixing spreadsheets and piecing data together, leaving little capacity to track initiatives or focus on strategic priorities.

THE PROBLEM:

“We spent six to eight weeks just preparing updates twice a year. That meant we spent nearly 1/3 of a year manually consolidating data for reporting to senior management.”

Evon Ng,
Singapore Management University (SMU)

THE SOLUTION: STREAMLINING PLANNING AND REPORTING WITH PLANISWARE ORCHESTRA

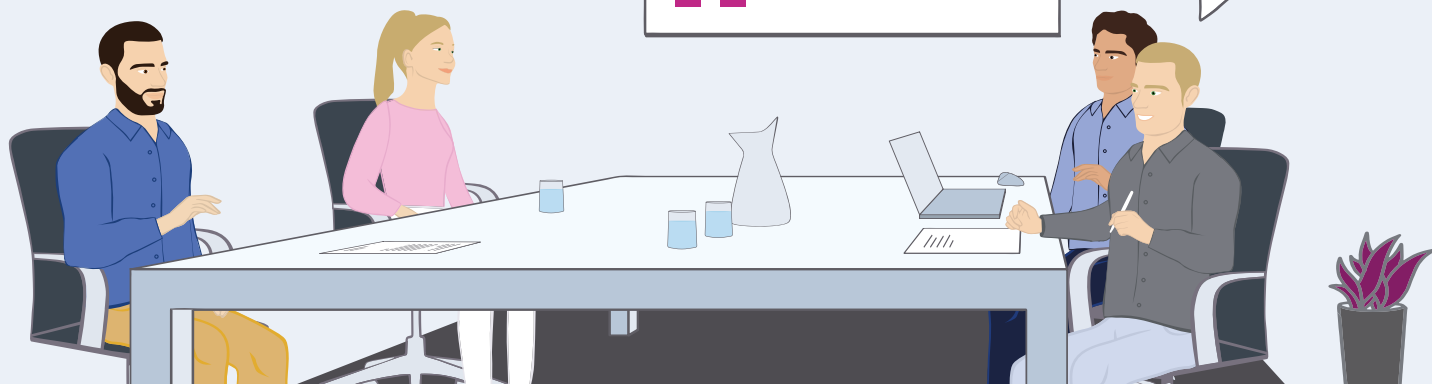
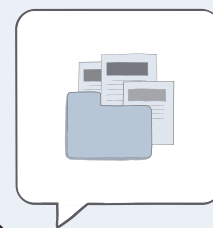
In 2023, SMU adopted Planisware Orchestra to replace its patchwork of spreadsheets. This gave the OSM team a single platform to track initiatives, monitor progress, and manage resources. **With Orchestra, updates now arrive in a clear, consistent format, providing leadership with comprehensive insights to make faster, more informed decisions.**

This shift makes tracking, reporting, and alignment far easier. **Updates that once took 2 months to prepare now take just 4 weeks, cutting report preparation time in half.** Live dashboards provide a single source of truth for decision-making.

Freed from endless administrative work, the OSM team now focuses on supporting colleagues, improving information quality and advancing high-impact projects. In turn, leaders can act quickly to close initiatives that do not align with SMU's goals, freeing resources for higher-impact work.

“Planisware Orchestra changed how people see the Office of Strategy Management,” says Evon. “We used to be viewed as administrators chasing progress updates and information. Now we are seen as partners who help shape decisions and facilitate strategic plans and progress across the university.”





THE OUTCOME: OSM MOVES FROM REPORTING TO INFLUENCING SMU'S SUCCESS

Today, SMU's Office of Strategy Management plays a larger role in guiding the university's strategic planning. **With Planisware Orchestra, the team delivers clear insights on strategic implementation to leadership, enabling confident decision making.**

OSM no longer spends months fixing spreadsheets or chasing updates. Instead, the team works with units to solve problems, improve information quality, and focus on projects that matter most.

This transformation has changed how people see OSM. **Once viewed as a back-office team, they are now trusted strategic advisors.** OSM flags challenges faced by colleagues, finds opportunities, and recommends next steps to leadership.

The change is evident during leadership discussions, where conversations now focus on results rather than reports. **Decisions are made faster, and resources move swiftly to high-impact projects,** building momentum as SMU prepares for its next bold step.

“We finally have the capacity to focus on outcomes, not just updates. Now we give leadership quality insights and show where their decisions are making a difference.”

Evon Ng,
Singapore Management University (SMU)