

Media Release

ABS to adopt Leon the Skameleon as anti-scams mascot

Chameleon drawing by 10-year-old student wins ABS anti-scams mascot design competition

Singapore, 28 June 2024 – The Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS) said it will adopt “Leon the Skameleon,” a colourful chameleon as its mascot in a campaign to raise awareness among bank customers of the rising threats of digital scams.

The design by 10-year-old student Constance Ambre Le Grande de Mercey was judged the winning entry in the ABS Anti-Scam Mascot Design Competition, which ran from 16 April to 31 May 2024.

“Leon the Skameleon” is based on the idea that scammers are like chameleons, a type of lizard that changes its colours to blend into its surroundings. Scammers have been known to adapt their fraudulent tactics to different platforms, devices, apps, etc, to deceive customers into thinking the information sought after is from their banks in order to gain access to their bank accounts.

“Leon the Skameleon” features a QR code on its “skin” which, when scanned, will lead bank customers to information on scams, how to detect them and what preventive actions to take.

The mascot design competition met with overwhelming response from the public, receiving nearly 400 entries. It was part of a series of industry efforts to counter the escalating number of digital scams in recent years. ABS invited the public to design a mascot to serve as a visual reminder of the need to be vigilant. The mascot is intended to help people foster a ‘stop and check’ habit before clicking on any apps or web links.

ABS Director and competition judge Mrs Ong-Ang Ai Boon said: “I am glad we finally have our anti-scams mascot for the banking industry and MoneySense to use in all their collaterals to alert customers to remain vigilant and avoid hasty actions. A picture tells a thousand words and whenever people see ‘Leon the Skameleon’, they will be reminded to be alert to the threat of scams, and they should stop, check, and not click hastily.”

Another judge, DBS Group Strategic Marketing & Communications Managing Director Karen Ngui, said: “Constance’s design stood out as she defied traditional mascot norms and designed a very different kind of mascot.

“We hope that ‘Leon the Skameleon’ will serve as an effective reminder that one always has to be careful and vigilant as scammers, much like chameleons, are masters of camouflage and disguise. They are constantly changing their tactics as they target different customer segments across different circumstances.”

Ms de Mercey, who studies at The International French School Singapore, moved with her parents from Paris to Singapore eight years ago. She used to attend art class as a hobby and enjoys sketching, baking and hiking.

She said: “My father heard about the competition and told me about it because he knows I am always sketching something.



“I thought ‘Skameleon’ sounded like ‘chameleon’ and I wanted a chameleon to warn people that it’s difficult to detect scammers because they can hide so well.

“I hope when everyone sees ‘Leon the Skameleon’, it will alert them to stop and think before they click.”

Her design won the first prize of \$10,000. The second prize of \$3,000 was awarded to comic artist Andy Choo for PAW (Pause And Wait) the Cat, and the \$2,000 third prize went to education officer Yang Wenjun for Spotty, a red dot.

The end of the design competition signals the start of a new two-year anti-scam campaign, which forms a key pillar of ABS’ Community Giveback Programme. The campaign will prominently feature the mascot in various media and educational materials including animations, digital content, promotional items such as keychains and fridge magnets, as well as a costumed character for skits conducted at school assemblies, institutes of higher learning, shopping malls and other high-traffic areas throughout the year.

ABS is also partnering with Act 3, a leading local theatre that specialises in making theatre accessible to the young, to use skits to support the anti-scam collaterals. These will be rolled out in 120 schools to enhance awareness among school children, urging them to spread the message of caution and vigilance to their friends and families.

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About the ABS Community Giveback Programme

The programme encompasses two pillars: a social and environmental focus, and a new anti-scam campaign. While the Programme is the first combined banking industry effort, it is over and above each individual bank's ongoing community, environmental and anti-scam activities.

Pillar 1: Social and Environmental Focus

On Saturday, 8 June 2024, ABS set up one-day pop-up community marketplaces for the "shopping" experience at 22 locations in collaboration with SG Cares Volunteer Centres across Singapore.

More than 1,500 bank staff volunteers were deployed across the 22 marketplaces to create a fun "shopping" experience for beneficiary households. The number of stalls and goods at each marketplace was bespoke to the beneficiary households in each community, supported by bank staff volunteers.

At each location, beneficiary households "shopped" for home essentials from various stations, stocked with different types of goods. Each household was given up to \$80 to "shop" for home essentials.

The Community Giveback Programme also includes a meal delivery service to individuals and households who cannot cook for themselves. Staff volunteers from 20 ABS member banks will work with about 10 community partners to deliver meals to beneficiaries throughout the year in locations across Singapore.

Overall, the ABS Community Giveback Programme dovetails with the national #GiveAsOneSG campaign launched in 2023, which focuses on encouraging more Singaporeans to volunteer and give back to society.

Additionally, in line with its commitment to environmental stewardship, ABS will organise beach clean-ups at locations such as East Coast Park and Changi Beach Park. These events will engage about 1,000 volunteers from member banks, fostering a sense of community and responsibility for preserving the cleanliness of Singapore's coastline.

This year's clean-up will be held in the latter half of 2024, with a second clean-up planned in 2025.

Pillar 2: Anti-Scam Campaign

ABS' new anti-scam campaign, spanning two years, will prominently feature the mascot in various media and educational materials including animations, digital content, promotional items such as keychains and fridge magnets, as well as a costumed character for skits conducted at school assemblies, institutes of higher learning, shopping malls and other high-traffic areas throughout the year. Using theatre to connect with primary and secondary school children, ABS is partnering with Act 3, a leading local theatre that specialises in making theatre accessible to young audiences through memorable anti-scam skits. These skits, supported by



anti-scam collaterals, will be rolled out in 120 schools to reinforce awareness among school children, encouraging them to spread the message to their friends and families to be careful and vigilant.

About the Association of Banks in Singapore

The Association of Banks in Singapore (ABS) plays an active role in promoting and representing the interests of the banking community in Singapore. In doing so, ABS works closely with the relevant government authorities and other stakeholders towards the development of a sound financial system in Singapore. Since its establishment in 1973, ABS has promoted common understanding and trust among its members and projected a unifying voice on banking issues. It has brought its members closer together through various guidelines and banking practices as well as the support of projects of mutual benefit to face the challenges of the financial and banking communities in Singapore. Today, ABS has a membership of over 150 local and foreign banks.

More information on the ABS is available on the association's website, www.abs.org.sg.