

SKILLfully

SkillFully is created to provide enterprises with useful information on SkillsFuture initiatives. Through SkillFully, we hope to stay connected with you as you power up your workplace “fully” with competitive skills.

Discover how these businesses are building resilience through digitalisation with the help of SSG and IMDA initiatives!

> **BIKEMART**

Riding through the pandemic storm

> **CLOVERSOFT**

You don't always need a problem to trigger change

> **HIAP GIAP FOOD**

Keep up or get kicked out



Top 10

Digital Courses Taken by Enterprises in 2020

Message from the Editorial Team

Dear friends and partners,

Welcome to the fifth edition of SkillFully!

This edition is jointly curated by the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) as we felt it would be timely to share the stories of businesses that had begun their digital transformation and thrived in the COVID-19 pandemic. Aligning with the theme of digital transformation, we share the digitalisation experiences of enterprises, highlighting challenges they have overcome by adopting digital solutions and the employees upskilling efforts they have undertaken.

In this edition, we are honoured to feature three inspiring stories from Bikemart, Cloversoft and Hiap Giap Food, companies that are from the vastly different sectors of retail, wholesale trade and food manufacturing. Being small and mighty, these companies have demonstrated their abilities to innovate with government support in times of uncertainty to adapt their business models and eventually emerged stronger. We hope that through their stories, you will be motivated to embark on your own journey of digitalisation and skills training.

As usual, we have also included a listing of the top 10 popular digital courses that enterprises took up in 2020.

We hope you will realise that opportunities abound and resources are available to support business transformation as you follow the stories of the three companies. The search process is not always as daunting as you might imagine.

Reach out to us if you are keen to know more and we hope you continue to keep safe!

Yours Sincerely,
Team @ The Enterprise Engagement Office

Strengthening business resilience with digitalisation and skills development

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a pressing need for enterprises to digitalise. We have seen how digitalisation has become a competitive advantage for businesses that had embraced it versus those that had not against the pandemic backdrop. According to a Microsoft-IDC study, 73% of Singapore enterprises had reported to step up on their digitalisation efforts to cope with and seize new opportunities during the pandemic. In this regard, the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) has played a critical role in enabling enterprises, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to go digital. In April 2017, IMDA launched the SMEs Go Digital programme to make going digital simple for SMEs, with a range of initiatives that include sector-specific Industry Digital Plans (IDPs).



IDPs have been instrumental in guiding SMEs to go digital

Over 75,000 SMEs have benefitted from the SMEs Go Digital programme since its launch. SMEs have used the IDPs to identify relevant solutions to digitalise various business functions from customer relationship management to accounting, e-commerce, inventory and human resources management.

The IDPs provide step-by-step guides on sector-specific digital solutions recommended for each stage of business growth. Based on the IDPs, IMDA pre-approves digital solutions that are market-proven, cost-effective and supported by reliable vendors. SMEs can apply for funding support from the Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG) to defray the cost of adopting these solutions.

Develop skills to sustain digitalisation

SSG has been working with IMDA and Enterprise Singapore to curate complementary skills training programmes for the

digital solutions identified in the IDPs and supported under PSG, to help enterprises benefit holistically from digitalisation. For a start, a set of skills training programmes customised for operational, supervisory and leadership roles have been curated for the Enhanced Retail Management System, E-Commerce - Online Shop (B2C), Accounting Management and Sales Management System, Human Resource Management System and Fleet Management Systems, to guide a whole-of-company skills development.

To further lower cost barriers, eligible companies will be able to use their S\$10,000 SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit to additionally defray up to 90% of out-of-pocket qualifying costs, over and above the support levels of PSG and course fee subsidy schemes when companies adopt the solutions and sponsor their employees for training. As you would have read from the stories of Bikemart, Cloversoft and Hiap Giap Food, the benefits from going digital significantly outweigh the cost of investment.

Please scan the QR codes or click on the links below for more information on:

Courses curated for the PSG-supported solutions and SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit scheme



GoBusiness Singapore



SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit

Range of support available under the SMEs Go Digital programme



SMEs Go Digital

Riding through the pandemic storm



Bikemart's founder, Mr Tan Jiayu, shared that running his business is similar to his days as a competitive athlete. He believes one needs to constantly experiment on new tactics and master new skills.

As a former national triathlete, Mr Tan Jiayu, founder of bicycle shop, Bikemart, is used to challenges. Not only did he have to withstand the physical strain from riding, running and swimming extensive distances, he also had to fight a huge mental battle to push through the fatigue and compete in the race.

"The challenge in running a business is similarly tough and draining", he said. "No matter how hard it is, it's how you adapt to the situation", shared the veteran athlete.

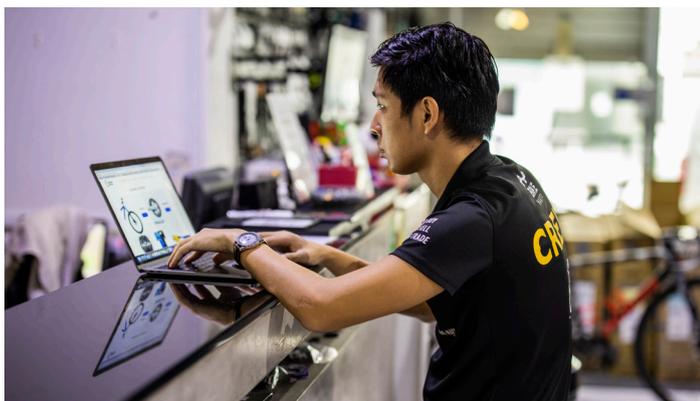
"Whether in doing business or racing, to be resilient means being able to change tactics to boost performance and overcome obstacles", he further shared.

Explore new ways to pivot

This mindset was what helped Jiayu steer Bikemart through the COVID-19 pandemic.

When he started the company in 2018, Jiayu did not pay much attention to his business's online presence as he felt customers would want to try and test the bicycles physically before investing in the big-ticket products.

However, when the circuit breaker hit and his walk-in sales went downhill, Jiayu knew he had to pivot online. He took up a pre-approved e-commerce solution based on the recommendation provided in the Retail Industry Digital Plan under the IMDA's SMEs Go Digital programme, and swiftly expanded Bikemart's online presence with e-commerce platforms such as Lazada, Shopee and Carousell.



To his surprise, this new move led to an increase in revenue by at least 15 percent. This was a huge relief for Jiayu as the revenue stream helped him tide over the circuit breaker period. Today, Bikemart's online sales account for at least 60 percent of its total revenue, a twofold increase from before coming on board the e-commerce platforms.

Be willing to relearn and re-skill

Emboldened by the new success, Jiayu decided to invest resources to create a digital team and tapped on Workforce Singapore's MyCareersFuture portal as well as the SG United Traineeship programme to recruit talent.

In parallel, Jiayu also began to ramp up digital skills training of his employees as he knew that new skillsets were important to grow its online business. Jiayu was keenly aware that he had to use new tactics such as optimising search engine recommendations that were provided to his prospective customers rather than compete on price to clinch businesses in the digital space. As such, investing in training in these specialised areas would be the right thing to do for his business and his employees. On this note, Jiayu was glad that there were many one or two-day short training courses funded by the SkillsFuture Singapore to meet his new business needs.

Setting the stage for a brighter future

To date, three of his eight employees have attended training on Google AdWords and Google Shopping and Jiayu himself has also upgraded his digital marketing know-how. The team now knows more about consumer online shopping behaviours and is able to analyse customer data to enable better product listing and presentation. With this, Jiayu has also set a new goal to expand the website for regional sales.

The advantage in combining tech and skills training has created a further positive outcome for the company as employees became more engaged and satisfied with their work. "I could see the sense of accomplishment in my employees when they were able to use their skills to value-add to the work and the company," he mused.

Reflecting on Bikemart's success in selling online, Jiayu reiterated that obstacles are inevitable and those who are able to adapt quickly will eventually emerge victorious, just like competing in a triathlon race.



You don't always need a problem to trigger change

“Don't wait until the problems arise”, said Ms Angela Sim, CEO of Cloversoft. For her, building talent and technology resources in advance to protect critical functions such as cybersecurity was the right thing to do for her business.

There weren't strong push factors for Ms Angela Sim to leave her high-flying job at the bank. But when she was given the opportunity to start Cloversoft, a wholesale trade company for eco-friendly products in 2014, Angela knew it was a meaningful opportunity to shift gears.

Just like in her career move, there was no major inefficiency in Cloversoft's business operations that triggered Angela to start the digitalisation movement in the company. It just seemed important to introduce change to constantly challenge the business to do better.

This is how the CEO of Cloversoft rolls – always seeking improvements and introducing change to stay ahead.

Don't wait to ask, “what if?”

Angela shared that Cloversoft's move to transit its server-based business systems to a cloud-based infrastructure was driven by her concern that the data stored on the company's computers would be susceptible to downtime, unforeseeable outages and cyber attacks.

“What if the server crashes and we forget to back-up the data?” Angela mused. “All our important business data and sales records will be lost!”

Angela's concern was not unfounded. She shared that one of her colleagues fell victim to an online scam whilst working from home. It would have been too late if the cybersecurity measures were not put in place to fortify the business solutions and data assets. In September 2020, Cloversoft implemented a pre-approved cybersecurity solution under IMDA's SMEs Go Digital programme to strengthen the company's cybersecurity.

View change as an ongoing journey and not a destination

With the COVID-19 pandemic raging on, Angela believes that digitalisation is inevitable for all businesses. She candidly shared that Cloversoft tried three enterprise resource planning solutions before settling on a suitable system that was supported by the Productivity Solutions Grant. “Don't settle for something that isn't working for you. Cut the losses and try something else,” she advised.

With that business philosophy, Angela also learned how to help her employees cope with the challenges of using the new solutions. Wisely, she quipped that the pain was short-lived, but the benefits would last for years. Shifting to cloud-based systems helped to synchronise processes across various departments, eliminating manual efforts and reducing the time taken significantly.

Complement tech with skills training

Ensuring Cloversoft's employees are well-equipped for change is an important agenda for Angela.

“I am a big believer in skills training,” Angela explained. She added that thanks to SkillsFuture Singapore's funding, she could afford to send her employees for courses in areas where she could not coach them directly.

For example, Angela provided sales training to her employees as she could draw from the experience and knowledge gained in her banking career. On the other hand, she felt marketing was not her forte and therefore, sponsored her employees for external courses such as the WSQ Social Media Marketing programme.

Attesting to the effectiveness of the training was Ms Chuen Kah Hui, Senior Marketing Executive of the company.

“There was a lot of content covered in the course, including practical demonstrations by industry experts. As someone without a marketing background, I benefitted greatly from the course as I got to learn how to use the marketing tools and applied them to my work”, said Kah Hui.

Since applying her new knowledge to Cloversoft's existing marketing efforts, sales have steadily increased each month.

Results like this make Angela especially grateful to the grants and support from the government. She believes these have helped her company build business agility and capabilities to seize opportunities amid the changing business landscape.

She strongly encourages others that are facing similar business situations to do the same and tap on initiatives like IMDA's Industry Digital Plans for Wholesale Trade and other sectors for step-by-step guidance on the relevant digital solutions to adopt at each stage of business growth. After all, resilient businesses are those that do not wait for problems to arise, but those that constantly look out for opportunities to stay ahead of the curve.



Keep up or get kicked out

Ms Dorothy Nah, General Manager of the second-generation family business, Hiap Giap Food, shared how tech and skills training have helped the business remain competitive and stay relevant since the 1960s.

As early as seven o'clock in the morning, employees at Hiap Giap Food, a manufacturer of Asian noodles and dim sum skins, would already be hard at work, taking down the orders sent by their customers from the previous night. Pressure was high and there was little room for error as the employees battled the clock to consolidate the orders for their daily deliveries.

With the speed of disruption, Hiap Giap Food knew it did not have the luxury of time to "wait and see" if digitalisation was feasible, shared Ms Dorothy Nah. Instead, the company actively sought out new technologies to integrate with its enterprise resource planning system and improve its ordering and delivery operations.

Tech is both the solution and strategy

Dorothy added that Hiap Giap Food is a firm believer of the philosophy: keep up or get left behind. Technology is regarded by the company as a strategic business lever and rather than just a productivity tool.

For example, the company leveraged the Food Manufacturing Industry Digital Plan under IMDA's SMEs Go Digital programme and subscribed to an e-procurement solution that enabled them to provide their product listing online, thereby reaching out to more F&B clients.

Dorothy shared that government grants had propelled her to invest and effect the changes sooner rather than later. She felt that the pre-approval solutions process managed by IMDA was reassuring for businesses as this meant that they could trust that the technologies were tested and proven. She was also relieved that there were resource centers like the SME Centres to go to for business advisory and guidance.

Team work to make the tech dream work

Noting that all change inevitably comes with teething problems, Dorothy believes it is important that businesses take the time to find a suitable IT partner—preferably one with experience in helping similar companies with their digital journey—and to appoint an "internal champion" to bring projects to fruition.

"Once the project stabilises and the inaccuracies and tedium of manual process are replaced, the benefits will be apparent," Dorothy shared. Sharing these success stories can inspire and encourage other employees to become more receptive to change, she added.

In her experience, this is especially useful when trying to convince

the older workers to adopt new technology. What also helps, she added, is to meet with the staff one-on-one to address their concerns and explain how the new systems function.

Train to retain

"You have to train your workforce so they can onboard the digital journey and ride confidently with you," quipped Dorothy.

In leading by example, Hiap Giap Food's CEO, Mr Chong Yew Kee regularly upgrades himself by attending relevant training courses. The company's human resources team also constantly sources for relevant training courses for the employees, as well as encourages staff to pursue skills and wellness development.

The company had supported various training courses funded by SkillsFuture Singapore, such as the "Fundamentals of Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA)" and "Train the Trainer – Design and Develop On-The-Job Training (OJT) Programme" for their employees. In this regard, Dorothy urged employers to go to the Enterprise Portal for Jobs and Skills to find out more about the jobs and skills resources as well as training courses for workforce upskilling.



Besides improving business productivity, sponsoring employees for skills training has also helped Hiap Giap Food in staff retention because "workers would want to add value to themselves, and providing them with the opportunities to upskill became intrinsically motivating", shared Dorothy.

"You cannot keep doing things the same way and hope to keep your existing workforce as well as attract fresh talent," said Dorothy. "If you don't keep up with times and transform, you will be left behind." she concluded.

Top 10

Digital Courses Taken by Enterprises in 2020

You have heard how digital skills were crucial to businesses during the pandemic. Here are the top 10 courses that were taken up by enterprises in 2020 to boost their digital capabilities.

Plan your own digital skills development journey today!

Search for the following digital courses and more at go.gov.sg/skillsfuture-course-directory



2

Digital Marketing Strategy

Gain insights on developing an effective digital marketing strategy for both B2B and B2C businesses.



1

Perform Spreadsheet Functions

Understand the basics of using a spreadsheet and be competent in applying formulas, functions.



3

SkillsFuture For Digital Workplace

Enhance your workers' basic digital skills to encourage a positive mindset towards change, innovation and resilience.



4

Digital Marketing Analytics

Learn about the features of Google Analytics and track the effectiveness of your marketing channels.

5

Digital Advertising

Develop digital advertising campaigns by analysing consumers behaviour and critiquing key performance metrics.

6

E-Commerce Campaign Management

Recognise various options for online marketing and use effective social media management for campaigns.

7

Developing Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy

Integrate communication with interactive experiences by marketing strategies, channels, tools and technology.

8

Digital Strategy & Leadership

Develop leadership and critical thinking skills to formulate a digital service plan.

9

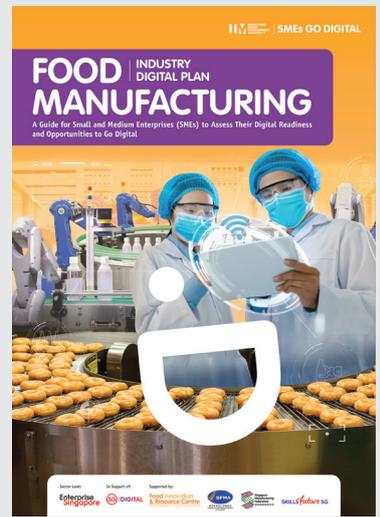
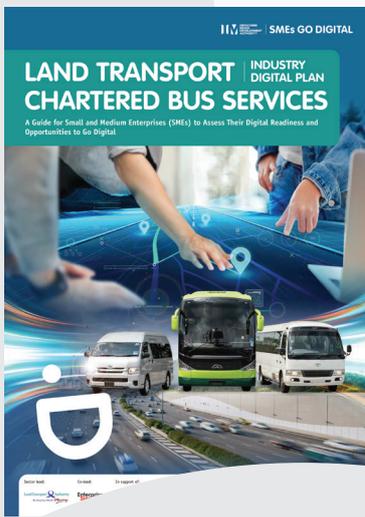
Inbound Digital Marketing

Learn to retain and cultivate new leads to your digital platforms and products through targeted content creation.

10

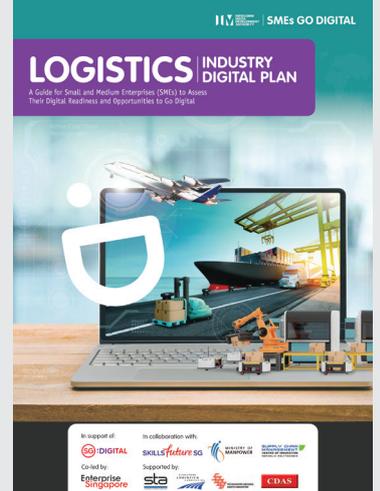
Basic Digital Marketing

Discover fundamental concepts of digital marketing by determining marketing objectives and suitable technologies.



The **SMEs Go Digital** programme aims to make going digital simple for SMEs. It includes a wide range of initiatives to meet the diverse digitalisation needs of SMEs at different stages of growth and digital maturity.

As the key pillar of the SMEs Go Digital programme, sector-specific Industry Digital Plans provide SMEs with a step-by-step guide on digital solutions relevant for them, with grant support for pre-approved solutions, and relevant training for their employees at different stages of their growth.

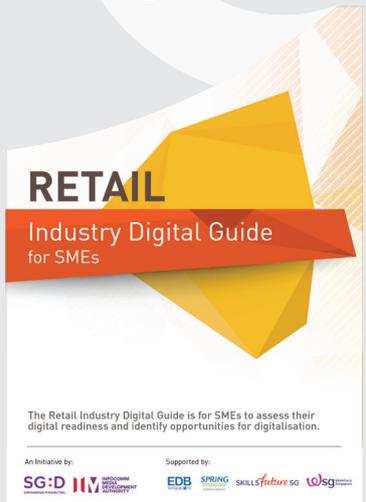
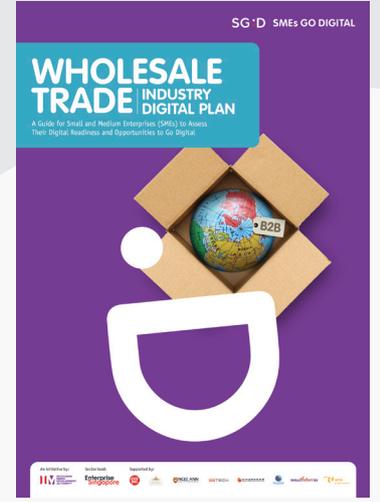


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