

More training opportunities with new e-commerce courses

● LINETTE HENG

Ms Irene Soon, managing director of healthcare product distributor ActivHealth knew that going digital would benefit her business and she decided to go to school to find out how.

Since last year, Ms Soon, who is in her 50s, has attended three courses related to e-commerce at the Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) Singapore Institute of Retail Studies (SIRS), such as the Alibaba Taobao University CEO Programme, and sent three employees on courses as well.

Previously a distributor to pharmacies, the firm now sees a “substantial” increase in sales after they reached out to new customers through listings on Lazada, RedMart, T-Mall and their online store.

The proliferation of e-commerce courses has come with the rising popularity of online shopping.

Yesterday, NYP-SIRS announced that it will co-offer digital commerce courses with Amazon Web Services.

The course, which covers business and technical training, will start next month.

About 1,000 people are expected to be trained within a year, Ms Megan Ong, director of SIRS, told The New Paper yesterday.

Last week, it was announced that Chinese billionaire and entrepreneur Jack Ma’s Alibaba Business College will launch an e-commerce course in Singapore – the first outside China – in January.

The first batch will have an intake of 150, and it will be a “holistic” programme covering topics such as e-commerce trends, online retailing and digital marketing, said Alibaba Business College’s south-east Asia programme director Nick Zhou, who was speaking after the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the

Employment and Employability Institute, LearningHub and Nanyang International Business College.

The 12-day course, in English, is aimed at small- and medium-business enterprise owners as well as individuals who want to learn and apply e-commerce technical skills.

Mr Zhou said renowned academics and successful e-commerce practitioners from China will speak at the course.

He added: “Most classes in the market focus on business-to-business or business-to-consumers models on (specific) platforms. There are also restrictions on certain platforms, but we are different as we are looking at the whole Internet business industry.”

Smaller educational institutes have also seen an increase in demand for e-commerce related courses.

Dr Alfred Ang, chief training officer of private school Tertiary Infotech, which has been offering such courses since 2014, said there has been higher demand for courses on how to set up on platforms such as Qoo10, Shopify, Magento and Woocommerce.

SIRS, which was appointed last year by SkillsFuture Singapore as the anchor provider for retail industry courses, already has partnerships with online retail giants such as Alibaba Group’s Taobao University, Lazada and Qoo10.

More than 1,000 people have gone through SIRS digital courses, which range in topics from driving sales performances to tapping on Facebook marketing, said Ms Ong.

She added: “When we train, it is not just for academic or knowledge purposes, we always train with strategic partners so that (students) can access the business solutions as well.”

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Ms Irene Soon and Ms Megan Ong looking at the upcoming digital commerce course co-offered by NYP-SIRS and Amazon Web Services. PHOTO: NANYANG POLYTECHNIC