

ZBJ-SPH joint venture partners retail studies institute to launch Gig Economy Immersion Programme

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ONLINE professional services marketplace ZomWork inked an agreement with Nanyang Polytechnic's Singapore Institute of Retail Studies (SIRS) to launch the Gig Economy Immersion Programme on Friday.

ZomWork helps to match gig-seekers and companies on a temporary or project basis. It is a joint venture between China's largest online freelancing platform, ZBJ Network, and Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), which publishes *The Business Times*.

Speaking at the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing, Jason Teo, general manager of ZomWork, said: "As technology facilitates the ease of remote working, and employers become more accustomed to managing contingent staff, the number of skilled professionals searching for gig work is sure to only grow in Singapore."

"To better help grow this new way of working here, we have looked to China for inspiration – where the gig economy is already thriving."

The newly launched programme will consist of a series of trips to China. Participants will learn from Chinese companies and local government officials how to better leverage a model based on utilising freelancers and temporary workers.

This programme will be open to all interested participants, re-



(From left) Jason Teo, general manager of ZomWork; Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Chan Chun Sing; and Jeanne Liew, principal & CEO of Nanyang Polytechnic, after signing the Memorandum of Understanding at Pan Pacific Hotel on April 6. BT PHOTO: JONATHAN CHOO

gardless of whether they are freelancers or chief executives. They have to register through SIRS, and the programme costs about S\$7,000. But there are subsidies available like SkillFuture credits to those who are eligible.

Other than the immersion programme, SIRS will also provide local courses to both gig-seekers and companies on ZomWork, in respective areas such as entrepreneurship and cost-efficiency.

Megan Ong, director of SIRS, said: "We find that this partner-

ship will provide the supply of talent and vice versa, because we are also helping individuals to contribute to the economy or to find jobs. We actually help both the supply and demand side of the business with ZomWork."

Also announced at the signing was the launch of ZomWork's revamped website. The revamped website will introduce an escrow feature – where the ZomWork acts as a neutral third party that holds and regulates payment of the funds – and a webspace that

records transactions and stores documents.

To date, ZomWork has about 150 registered gig-seekers and 200 companies.

Mr Teo said: "Apart from being a platform for talent and companies to connect, we are deeply committed to providing the tools and skill upgrading needed to ensure everyone can benefit from this new world of work."

The MOU signing was witnessed by the guest-of-honour Chan Chun Sing, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office.