



Google and UOB launch SME Leadership Academy to help more SMEs unlock opportunities from the digital economy

Apart from training SME leaders on people strategies and business solutions to maximize efficiency, the collaboration also offers help for SMEs to be discoverable online and attract more customers

SINGAPORE, 5 August 2019 – Today, Google and UOB launched **SME Leadership Academy**, a new training programme for business leaders, that aims to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accelerate their digital transformation and compete more effectively in the digital economy. The programme supported by Digital Industry Singapore (DISG) and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) was launched by Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing.

The SME Leadership Academy builds on the successful [Go Global](#) programme - which has helped more than 2,700 SMEs tap into the global market - to offer a specialised learning experience that equips business leaders with the relevant know-how to capitalise on the booming internet economy.

Ms Stephanie Davis, Managing Director, Google Southeast Asia said, “SMEs are the bedrock of Singapore’s economy, and helping them succeed is paramount to building a bright future in the digital economy. Through the SME Leadership Academy, we are equipping business leaders with the knowledge, tools and connections to help them adapt to the changing markets and customer needs and grow profitably.”

Mr Frederick Chin, Head of Group Wholesale Banking and Markets at UOB, said, “In today’s business environment, technology is a critical enabler for companies large and small. At UOB, we are committed to helping SMEs reap the benefits of technology for continued business innovation and growth. Through the SME Leadership Academy, we hope that SMEs will be able to gain the necessary skills and expertise to use technology to improve their performance and to provide a better customer experience.”

The programme was developed based on feedback gathered from more than 100 SMEs across various industries such as retail, F&B, engineering, manufacturing and travel who took part in pilot batches of the programme. They shared their desire for practical advice that would enable them to leverage digital tools to address critical business issues. They identified the top three obstacles as:

- 1) Internal hurdles such as a lack of effective digitalisation strategies
- 2) Lack of talent with sufficient digital know-how and capacity
- 3) Cost/resource constraints

Through interactive discussions and lessons led by business leaders from Google, UOB and other enterprises, SMEs will gain insights and practical guidance on how they can use digital solutions to adapt to the changing business landscape and enhance their workplace to be more efficient and productive. They can use these learnings to improve their competitiveness through:

- Learning and implementing data-driven HR strategies, including best practices on organisational culture, hiring and leading effective teams;
- Generating digital marketing strategies grounded in consumer and industry insights; and
- Maximising the use of enterprise software and tools to boost productivity and to create a collaborative workplace

“To capture opportunities in the digital economy in Singapore and beyond, we have to empower our SMEs to leverage technology and upskill their capabilities,” said Mr Kiren Kumar, Chief Digital Industry Officer, DISG. “The SME Leadership Academy is an exciting opportunity for local business leaders to obtain skills to accelerate their digital transformation. DISG looks forward to collaborating with more companies like Google to transfer technological capabilities to SMEs.”

Since 2015, Google has helped close to 3,000 SMEs in Singapore increase their global presence and exports through a series of free workshops and masterclasses, and providing free tools such as [Google Analytics](#) and [Market Finder](#).

Under this programme, there will be ongoing cohorts in every quarter until end 2020. The next cohort of SME Leadership Academy will kick off on 13 August 2019. SME business leaders who are interested in SME Leadership Academy can visit <https://leadershipacademy.withgoogle.com/> to express their interest in the programme.

Providing SMEs with a fast track to Google My Business

UOB and Google are planning to streamline the registration process for Google My Business, a free tool that enables SMEs in Singapore to build their online profile so that potential customers can find them more easily.

Google’s data shows that businesses that include details such as their telephone number or a company description and respond to reviews on their Google profile can attract more customers. Businesses that add photos to their listings typically see a 40 per cent increase in the requests for map directions.

SMEs will be able to sign up for Google My Business quickly and conveniently on UOB’s website, at any UOB branch or through a UOB relationship manager. SMEs may register their interest now at <http://www.uob.com.sg/google>.

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About Google

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About United Overseas Bank

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia with a global network of more than 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. UOB is rated among the world's top banks: Aa1 by Moody's and AA- by both Standard & Poor's and Fitch Rating. In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as branches and representative offices across the region.

Over more than eight decades, generations of UOB employees have carried through the entrepreneurial spirit, the focus on long-term value creation and an unwavering commitment to do what is right for our customers and our colleagues.

We believe in being a responsible financial services provider and we are committed to making a difference in the lives of our stakeholders and in the communities in which we operate. Just as we are dedicated to helping our customers manage their finances wisely and to grow their businesses, UOB is steadfast in our support of social development, particularly in the areas of art, children and education.

About SME Leadership Academy

Piloted in April 2019, the SME Leadership Academy is developed by Google in collaboration with UOB with the support of Digital Industry Singapore (DISG) and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). The programme aims to help SMEs in Singapore build strong digital capabilities to accelerate their digital transformation by introducing them to collaborative tools and resources to boost productivity, as well as industry best practices to help reimagine the way they work and bring their business to the next level. For more information about SME Leadership Academy, please visit <https://leadershipacademy.withgoogle.com/>