

Tap growing Asian wealth

Learn to analyse the needs of regional consumers in NTU's Master of Science in Marketing and Consumer Insight programme

Christina Ching

WHETHER you are in the education, entertainment or engineering industry, understanding how your consumers think and behave is paramount, so you can tailor innovations for them.

With the rising number of billionaires in Asia, those wishing to service or tap the burgeoning wealth in the region should consider signing up for the Master of Science in Marketing and Consumer Insight (MSc-MCI) programme.

Aimed at executives interested in pursuing or furthering their career in marketing, the programme helps in understanding how consumers in other countries — especially in Asia — think and behave.

It focuses on developing the skills required to analyse, evaluate and appreciate the needs of Asian consumers.

The one-year part-time course is a collaboration between Nanyang Business School at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the Institute on Asian Consumer Insight.

In addition to class hours, there are company visits and invited industry speakers.

Companies that have supported the programme include Nielsen, Symrise, GroupM, CordLife, Four Star, Robinsons, W Hotel, Hotel Intercontinental, Samsung, Unilever, P&G and Flamingo. In addition, students have worked on in-company projects for Kimberly-Clark, Mondelez and O&M, among others.

Ready to service tycoons

Professor Wee Chow Hou, head of the Division of Marketing and International Business at Nanyang Business School, says some of the course graduates are already setting up marketing research companies to provide services for business tycoons keen to learn more about how to reach out to the growing number of Asian consumers.

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— Professor Wee Chow Hou, head of the Division of Marketing and International Business, Nanyang Business School



The MSc-MCI programme at Nanyang Business School focuses on developing the skills required to analyse, evaluate and appreciate the needs of Asian consumers.
PHOTOS: NTU, NEO YEN PING

business tycoons who are in the fast-moving consumer goods markets," he adds.

Other than business-to-consumer industries such as retail and education, the programme also attracts students who are in the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government sectors.

One of the programme's graduates, Ms Neo Yen Ping, is a marketing manager for South Asia at Air Products, a United States-based multinational corporation and a global supplier of industrial gases and chemicals.

An accountant by training, Ms Neo switched to a career in marketing in 2007. A few years into the job, she enrolled in the MSc-MCI programme part-time.

The programme features intensive, full-day classes for two weeks every quarter. This allowed her to complete her studies within a year in January last year.

While her company does not engage consumers, Ms Neo still rates the course as very helpful.

She says: "I come from a B2B industry where con-

sumer insights may not seem so important as compared to B2C industry. However, this is not true.

"Understanding our customers is especially important with the increasingly affluent population in Asia, where local companies are also starting to expand, go overseas and become more diversified operationally and culturally."

Knowing customers' needs and challenges in their operations helps, for instance, in assessing how to cut costs or improve productivity for partners.



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— Ms Neo Yen Ping, marketing manager for South Asia, Air Products

Master of Science in Marketing and Consumer Insight, Nanyang Business School and Institute on Asian Consumer Insight

Next intake: April 2015. Course fee: \$35,000 (one-year part-time).