

14 Postgraduate Studies II

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Look East

The Asian focus of NTU's MSc in Marketing and Consumer Insight prepares marketers for the continent's growth potential

Douglas Chew

UNDERSTANDING what makes consumers tick is a cornerstone of any company's marketing strategy. But not all consumers are alike, and companies intent on penetrating Asia will have to learn more about Asian consumers.

Associate Professor Sharon Ng, (above) programme director of the Master of Science in Marketing and Consumer Insight at the Nanyang Business School of Nanyang Technological University (NTU), says: "Companies entering foreign markets realise that consumers in different countries or cultures do not think similarly.

"They want and desire different things, they process information from advertisements and products differently and the factors that may affect their purchasing decision also differ."

With companies craving such knowledge, this programme aims to equip its students with the skills and tools to understand their customers in their specific industries better, and be able to design and run successful marketing programmes as brand managers or consultants.

Cutting-edge modules such



PHOTO: NTU

as neuromarketing and business analytics are taught by world-renowned faculty such as Professor Gemma Calvert, a visiting scholar and expert in the field of neuromarketing, and Associate Professor Goh Kim Huat.

Almost all modules are supported by industry site visits or guest speakers who are top executives in industry, with recent batches visiting Samsung's regional headquarters and the Singapore University of Technology and Design's prototyping laboratories.

Executive-style course

The one-year part-time executive-style programme admits students in January and April. Since the programme began last year, the university has received 50 to 60 applications, of which half are offered places.

Ms Kate McGhee from Britain — a marketing research consultant for Shell and managing director of her own consulting practice emBold — is currently on the programme.

Even with her 18 years of experience

in marketing and research, she has benefited from what she has learnt.

"Marketing is accelerating at an even faster pace than I realised. There is a real need for professional marketers to upgrade their skills and knowledge base across all areas of marketing, including research, analytics, consumer behaviour and new domains like neuromarketing," she says.

She relishes how she can immediately take the knowledge gained from the classroom straight into her work.

"I have been using what I learnt from the Creativity and Design module to push myself to think about taking less conventional approaches to market insight gaps," she adds.

Ms Zhang Xikai, a lecturer at the Shandong University of Technology in China, decided to sign up for the programme to enhance her understanding of the Asian consumer.

She is learning not just from the lectures but also from her classmates who hail from other industries and countries.

"During projects, we share different ideas and search together for solutions to solve the problems. It is a great opportunity for us to learn from each other," she says.

Entrepreneurs such as Mr Wong Sin Hin, who founded Sinyoong Solutions, have also signed up.

"The programme has directly impacted on how I see opportunities, listen empathetically and feel for my surroundings both professionally and personally," he says.

"The lessons learnt are invaluable as they intertwine building technical know-how and shaping the characteristics of what I believe is the DNA for leaders in the Asian century — analytics, connection and empathy."

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