



**PRESS RELEASE  
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**SMU AND SYNAGIE PARTNER TO UPSKILL AND PLUG SKILL GAPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA'S ECOMMERCE AND TECH WORKFORCE**

*The partnership aims to upskill over 3,000 eCommerce and tech professionals by 2025, to help the region maintain talent competitiveness*

**17 May 2022, Singapore** – Leading digital commerce enabler in Southeast Asia, [Synagie](#), and [Singapore Management University](#) (SMU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to co-develop continuing education and training programmes. The programmes are specially designed to address the specific talent and skills shortages faced by the technology and eCommerce sector in Singapore and Southeast Asia, with the aim of upskilling over 3,000 sector professionals by 2025.

The MoU signing ceremony was held at SMU, and attended by Guest-of-Honour, Minister of State for Education and Manpower, Ms Gan Siow Huang. Top level executives from major eCommerce companies and leading brands such as Lazada, Shopee, Shopback, L'oreal, Shisiedo and Blackmores gathered for the MoU signing ceremony and a panel discussion titled “*Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Decade of eCommerce*”.

**Bridging the digital skills gap**

More than 60 SMU-certified programmes across 7 areas of focus will be co-developed by SMU Academy (SMUA), the professional training arm of SMU and Synagie Commerce Academy (SCA). They include:

- 1 Personal Development
- 2 Customer Business Development
- 3 Channel Development Management
- 4 Marketing & Creative Services
- 5 Supply Chain Operations
- 6 Customer Engagement Solutions
- 7 Business Analytics Solutions

With the push for digitalisation in Southeast Asia, businesses around the region are facing challenges in recruiting talent with relevant specialist expertise to meet their business needs. Through holistic, scenario-based experiential learning, the programmes and modules co-developed by SMUA and SCA seek to deepen the specific skillsets needed to fill the skill gaps in the digital commerce ecosystem.

Complemented by SMUA's highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning, the modules delivered at SMUA will be taught by leading eCommerce and tech experts with industry experience. The programmes will be launched progressively in the later part of this year. Upon successful completion of the programme, participants will receive a certificate jointly issued by SMU and SCA.



## **Strengthening partnerships between Institutes of Higher Learning and industry players**

**Mr Jack Lim, Executive Director of Singapore Management University Academy**, said, “The partnership with Synagie signifies our commitment to deepening collaboration and engagement with the industry to create practical learning programmes for adult learners who are looking to upskill and reskill. Drawing from the proven andragogy expertise of SMU Academy and industry knowledge from Synagie, these programmes will serve to better equip the workforce with in-demand digital skills, eCommerce experience and bridge talent and skill gaps in this era of disruption.”

**Ms Olive Tai, Managing Director and Co-Founder of Synagie**, said, “Southeast Asia’s eCommerce and tech ecosystems are thriving. While they face many opportunities over the next decade, they also face significant challenges due to skill and talent gaps. To truly maintain their position as global leaders of the eCommerce sector, Southeast Asia’s eCommerce and tech players must come together to inspire and build the next generation of talent. Synagie’s partnership with SMU marks significant milestones for 2 of the Company’s strategic schemes – Synagie Commerce Academy (SCA) and Synagie Partner and Network (SPAN) – roadmapped to propel and future proof the Company position as Digital Commerce’s leader and change agent for good.

The event also featured a panel of key industry leaders who came together to discuss the future of the eCommerce industry and the challenges and opportunities it will face in coming years. Moderated by Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Business Federation, Mr Lam Yi Young, the panel was representative of the spectrum of businesses across the eCommerce industry ecosystem. Panellists included Executive Vice President Marketing Solutions from Lazada, Ms Moony Li, Co-Founder of Shopback, Mr Joel Leong, General Manager of Digital Commerce at Nike, Mr Ken Yamada, Founder and Managing Director of homegrown skincare brand, Porcelain, Ms Pauline Ng, and SMU Assistant Professor of Communication Management, Dr Roh Sungjong.

Topics discussed during the panel included how brands can leverage data to better understand consumer behaviour, factors the industry needs to consider to meet sustainability goals and most urgently - the need to nurture talent and build capabilities for the industry.

**-ENDS-**

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### **About Synagie:**

Synagie is the #1 Digital Commerce Enabler in Singapore (2020 Financial Times, Statista Report) and the #4 fastest growing player across Asia Pacific (2020 Straits Times). Synagie is also the Winner of Lazada Regional Partner of the Year 2021 and is 3-starred (highest rating) certified by Lazada and Shopee under their respective enabler certification programs.

Synagie leverages big data and its cloud-based ecosystem of solutions and services to automate, integrate and simplify all aspects of the digital commerce value chain. Having over 600 brand partners, the company specialises in beauty, fashion, sports and premium alcohol and has also expanded rapidly into home & living, electronics and digital goods.

Synagie's prolific client list includes Estee Lauder Companies, L'Oreal, Shiseido, Nike, FILA, Coach, Furla, Mont Blanc, Moet Hennessy, Diageo, Johnnie Walker, William Grant & Sons, Nestle, Kimberly Clark, Akemi and Grohe. It is also Singapore's largest digital commerce provider for SMEs with over 100 brands under its care. Synagie also extensively covers all major channels and marketplaces across Southeast Asia, and provides omnichannel services for brands such as Nioxin, Trichoderm, GOO.N, Schwarzkopf as well as brand dot com solutions for the Estee Lauder Companies.

In 2021, Synagie managed over 85,000 products with a turnover of more than S\$100million.

### **About Singapore Management University**

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 12,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and post-graduate research programmes, SMU, is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)



### **About SMU Academy**

Since its inception, Singapore Management University (SMU) has built a strong reputation as an innovative and progressive management university with a well-established interactive pedagogy incorporating business cases and strategic links with leading businesses and industry. Leveraging on SMU's reputation and linkages, SMU Academy offers a comprehensive array of cutting-edge interdisciplinary programmes that supports lifelong learners in their pursuit of continuing education while helping organisations meet their upskilling and reskilling goals. <http://academy.smu.edu.sg/>