

## Asia-Ready Webinar Series

### **The Future of Work & What it Means for You(th)**

The Asia-Ready Webinar Series is co-curated with various partners to allow youth to gain a better appreciation of the regional developments and a greater awareness of Singapore's interconnectivity with the regional markets.

Sat, 18 Sep 2021

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Online Event



#### About the Webinar

##### **Speaker**

Mr Frank Koo – Head of Asia, Talent and Learning Solutions, LinkedIn

##### **Synopsis**

The workplace has changed dramatically as COVID-19 accelerated digitalisation and the use of technology to keep things in motion – automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly integrated into workflows to facilitate remote work.

It has been observed that organisations are increasingly hiring for skills instead of traditional qualifiers like educational background and years of experience. For some types of jobs,

remote work has also become the default, which made organisations more open than ever before, to consider hiring beyond geographical boundaries.

With a wide range and variety of digital skills, what are the top digital skills organisations and hirers are looking out for today? Besides digital skills, what are some 'timeless' skills that continue to be critical and relevant? How can Singaporean youth stand out and be better prepared for the future of work in a digitalised ASEAN?

*This webinar is brought to you by the National Youth Council (NYC) and the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA).*

## What We've Learnt

### **Changing Trends Related to Work**

Due to COVID-19, the mode of work has changed drastically, which has enabled the trend towards flexible or hybrid work arrangements. This presents both an opportunity and challenge. With technology, people are now able to work anywhere, at any time. According to a survey conducted by LinkedIn, 70 per cent of the workforce feel that they would still prefer returning to the office on certain days of the week or certain days of a month, to have the personal touch and connection with co-workers. While this may be an opportunity to improve how and where we work, the challenge is that the option of remote work will also create more competition for jobs, as the workforce supporting Singapore organisations or Singapore-based organisations need not physically be in Singapore.

With digitalisation, skills needed in the workplace are also evolving in three key areas, advanced digital skills, adaptive digital skills and transferrable or soft skills. Advanced digital skills include areas such as coding and online marketing. Adaptive skills include proficiency in Excel and foundational online marketing. Soft skills consist of strategic thinking and communicating with confidence. Other timeless skills that are valued by employers are research, problem solving, adaptability and creative thinking. Many courses have been made available online free-of-charge to help people upskill themselves in order to adapt to the shift / change in "in demand" skills brought about by the pandemic.

The digital transformation has also impacted the job market. There is high demand for roles requiring strong digital and coding skills, such as software engineers, which is the top trending job on LinkedIn for Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines. At the same time, other roles which have been in existence for many years, like business development manager, project manager, business analyst and account manager remain high in demand in Singapore. What has changed for these jobs however, are the underlying skills, which has become more digital, requires a lot more collaboration, requires one to work across different countries and having a growth mindset and curiosity to continue to upskill and reskill to continue to be relevant.

### **Singapore Remains Open to the Region**

Singapore's education system has equipped youth with skills and opportunities to be work-ready in the ASEAN region. As a small country, working with ASEAN is crucial as it gives us the opportunity to tap into the larger ASEAN market with a population of 620 million. As Singapore collaborates with the region, it is important for youths to be culturally sensitive. The Southeast Asia region is a melting pot of cultures and religions. Being culturally sensitive will allow Singaporeans to have the humility to learn from other Southeast Asians in the same way that they learn from Singaporeans. Having a great online network is crucial as it opens doors to many people of different nationalities, to either learn from or provide mentorship when needed.

### **Ensuring Digital Inclusion**

There are concerns that rapid digital transformation could result in a large segment of people being left behind and unable to catch up. We can ensure digital inclusion with government programmes that support people of all ages. The Singapore government has created programmes to support non-digital natives with basics like using Microsoft Office and using video conferencing applications. There are also schemes that aid in profession conversion from non-tech jobs to tech jobs by helping these workers acquire advanced and adaptive digital skills. While such programmes are available, workers still need to take ownership and have the will and determination to develop these skills to take the leap.

## **Questions Answered**

*by Mr Frank Koo*

### **What are the top three skills that are in high demand?**

While it is important to develop technical skills, youth should not be overly worried about acquiring those types of skills as it highly depends on what they aspire to undertake. However, broad categories of skills that are important are the adaptive digital skills and transferable skills that will allow youth to be successful in the workforce.

### **What do organisations look out for the most, aside from education qualifications and internship opportunities — how does one best reflect them on LinkedIn?**

Companies consider a candidate's aptitude and attitude. While most candidates have foundational skills, employers are also looking at their potential to acquire new skills and they do so by watching out for the candidate's sense of curiosity and whether they are an agile learner. Employers also seek out candidates with good attitudes which includes their passion for the job, the ability to collaborate and support teammates as well as humility.

Besides sharing about academic achievements, it is important to also share about what you have learned from personal projects, internships, programmes, or events that you have undertaken or participated in which would resonate with some potential employers. Through artificial intelligence, LinkedIn will map candidate's key areas of interest with what employers are looking for in a job post.

## **How can Singaporeans stay competitive in the job market considering that other ASEAN youths are also picking up digital skills while commanding lower wages?**

Enabling youths in ASEAN to succeed should be a common goal and democratising skills and capabilities is one way to do that. It is also important to acknowledge that competition is no longer restricted to just Singapore or within one's borders, and youths today face competition globally regardless of where they are based. Therefore, be a global citizen, have global awareness and read up more on happenings outside of Singapore. By virtue of the awareness, understanding and knowledge you have, this allows you to be more competitive by default.

Youth should also pick up skills and knowledge in areas they are passionate about and delve deep into them as employers often seek people who are knowledgeable in specific areas. At the same time, youth also need to be flexible in their career choice due to the ever-changing job market in order to leverage on better opportunities when they come along. It is also important to build a safety net through a network of connections to help you bounce back should your career hit the skids.

Citing VUCA, which has often been used to describe the Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity of general conditions and situations, there may not be clarity in one's job or role in five years' time. Hence with the above-mentioned skills, one will be able to stay competitive, regardless of how the environment or job market changes.