altHR

IN-DEMAND SKILLS

FOR DIGITALISED WORKFORCES IN MALAYSIA (2022)

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INTRODUCTION

The inherent digitalisation of the things we use every day has forced most of the world into rapid adaptation. For regular consumers, the trends have made things like social networks, internet-based applications, and digital services almost necessary for day-to-day survival.

In tandem with all of this, most businesses have also seen the need to adapt to digital purely for the sake of catering to these consumers, all of whom have become quite comfortable with using things like ride-hailing, e-commerce, video conferencing, and many others in the same vein.

Putting it simply, a business that aims to be successful in the current era — big or small — must almost certainly understand the trends, concepts, and technicalities that make up the landscape containing all of today's digital products and services, lest they get left behind by their competitors.

In Malaysia, there is certainly opportunity for businesses to get familiar with the evolving demands of today's consumers. According to MyDigital's 2021 Progress Report, 88 percent of Malaysians are now digital consumers — this shift should also then be reflected in various elements of how businesses in Malaysia are run.

According to data provided by the World Bank, Malaysia has relatively underperformed in terms of digitalisation when compared to most of its ASEAN neighbours, with around 77 percent of SMEs in the country considered still at the very basic stages of digitalisation.

This should serve as a signal to key business decision-makers of the window of opportunity that is still open for businesses to survive, and thrive in the digital era.

WHAT ARE THE SKILLS IN DEMAND?

Assuming you're a business owner interested in seizing this opportunity, you should understand that achieving your digital goals will require the right talent and skills. Hence, the first port of call in your strategy should be to identify the future-ready skills that can help your company match your corporate objectives with the digital trends of today.

To that end, we've gone ahead and listed down a few of the most relevant digital skills and competencies that businesses should take note of and explain just how such talents can add value to Malaysian businesses, regardless of scale and niche.

1.USER INTERFACE AND EXPERIENCE DESIGN

A large part of what makes a digital product great (or horrible) to use lies in the user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) design.

UI/UX encompasses many variables that all add up to how something like a website or a gadget feels like to use, including ergonomics, menus, font and colour choice, and all the way down to how big a button should be on a webpage, for instance.

Having a great experience with a product can yield massive benefits, such as in the case of Apple with its extremely intuitive and accessible hardware and software design.

But sadly, many companies are still yet to fully master the User Interface and User Experience (UI and UX) portion of their digital product or service, and end up driving away customers that could otherwise have become loyal recurring users.

This is the very reason that UI and UX designers are becoming more and more sought after. Illustrating this, an Adobe study that asked 500 managers and heads of departments ended up revealing that 87 percent of them wanted to hire more UX and UI designers as a major part of their growth strategy.
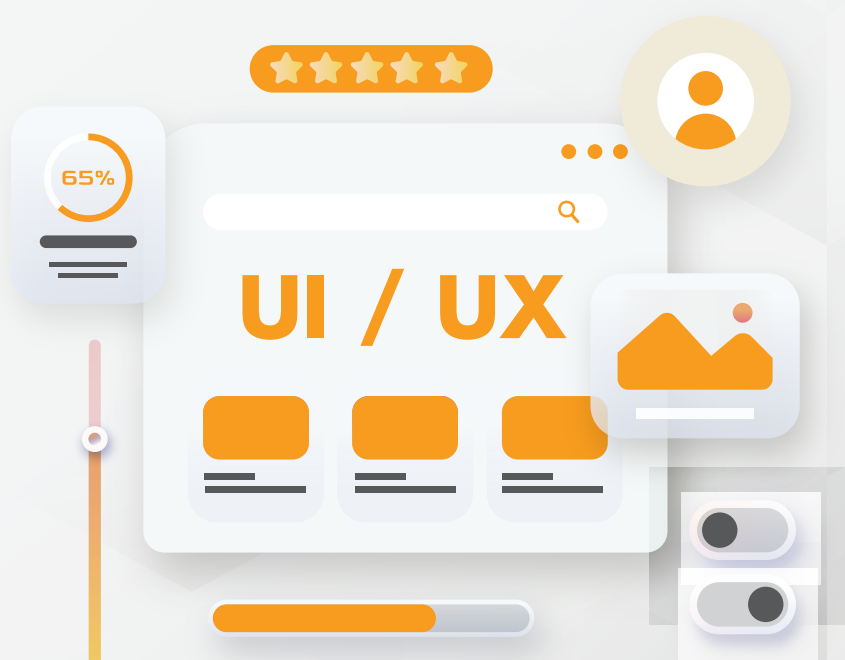
2.CYBERSECURITY

The field of cybersecurity has never been more relevant, especially considering how the majority of businesses around the world now rely on information systems and a wide range of digital solutions to get things done on a day-to-day basis.

To illustrate the demand for such skills, you only need to look at the astronomical amount of money lost to cyber threats each year: According to reported figures from the Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysians suffered losses of up to RM2.23 billion spanning a four-year period between 2017–2021 — a staggering amount.

But despite its importance, the World Economic Forum has noted a distinct lack of professionals in cybersecurity — short by about 2.7 million individuals — and has urged for governments, businesses, and educators to help increase the number of experts that can help secure the online services and functions that we rely on so incessantly.

The need for cybersecurity expertise is especially pertinent in Malaysia, which coincidentally ranks as one of the top places in Southeast Asia for career opportunities in this particular field.

3.SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION (SEO)

The transformation of search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo! (but mainly Google) from helpful internet tools to things we absolutely can't live without is a sure testament to how society has come to rely on these platforms for information and guidance on nearly everything you can think of.

Consequently, it's no surprise that companies are now seeking to make sure that their names appear as high up as possible whenever their prospective customers hit up a search for the exact thing that they want to sell.

Unfortunately, heavy competition and the convoluted algorithms and protocols that run these search engines mean that getting a brand's website on the front page of Google, for instance, is definitely something that needs plenty of technical expertise.

This is where Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) comes into play. Simply put, SEO is the process of improving a website's visibility on a search engine by manipulating certain factors (such as keywords, backlinks) and using provided analytical data — which can sometimes be extremely confusing to the layman.

While there aren't yet many educational opportunities as far as college diplomas and university degrees go, SEO education is continuing to gain traction via more modern means (such as online courses and experience-based learning), and the demand for such skills is also gradually growing among Malaysian businesses.

The burgeoning cryptocurrency industry has found a massive global following, with the prices of Bitcoin and Ethereum always within earshot of those in the know.

But many unfamiliar with crypto will probably be surprised to discover that the technology behind cryptocurrency has plenty to offer us beyond the concepts of stored value and alternative forms of currency. Blockchain technology, in essence, is a way to securely store digital data via an open ledger that is accessible by several parties — this helps in the security and verification aspects of multi-step transactions (such as crypto).

Art, gaming, real estate, insurance, finance, and social networking are among some of the real-world applications that developers and enthusiasts alike claim can reap benefits of blockchain technology, which include transaction security, reduced compliance costs, and even faster data processing.

Malaysia is already seeing moves in the space, with banking, agriculture, and renewable energy blockchain initiatives already having kicked off and others following closely. And with regards to cryptocurrency as a financial instrument, it has been noted that at least 3.1 percent of Malaysians already own cryptocurrency with the government also seeking to introduce more regulations as the scene continues to grow and mature.

Companies that aren't directly involved in the development and deployment of blockchain technology may still be interested in how it could end up affecting payments and other essential services. As such, the hiring of blockchain experts could very well be on the cards for more than a few Malaysian businesses.

5.ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become incredibly prominent over the past decade, featuring in conventional technology that we use so often, sometimes without us even realising it.

AI and all of its subsets (including Machine Learning, Fuzzy Logic, Natural Language Processing, etc) have many applications today and are used by many businesses to improve the efficiency of their services and provide consumers with better experiences. The versatile nature of these tools and platforms means that they can also be adapted to a wide variety of industries including agriculture, medicine, robotics, manufacturing, entertainment, sales, and a host of others.

When you also consider the quick succession of new developments in the field, you'll also realise the wealth of prospective ways to use AI within businesses that we haven't even considered yet (this could involve the potential optimisation of many current job roles to focus on other human-centric scopes, with menial, repetitive processes automated by AI technology).

As Malaysia's government pushes to meet the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0), the demand for experts in AI is also expected to skyrocket alongside the need for skilled workers in other related fields.

Currently, it is estimated that the global AI industry is expected to reach a market cap of US$267 billion by 2027, and the ripple of demand will undoubtedly extend to Malaysian shores as well.
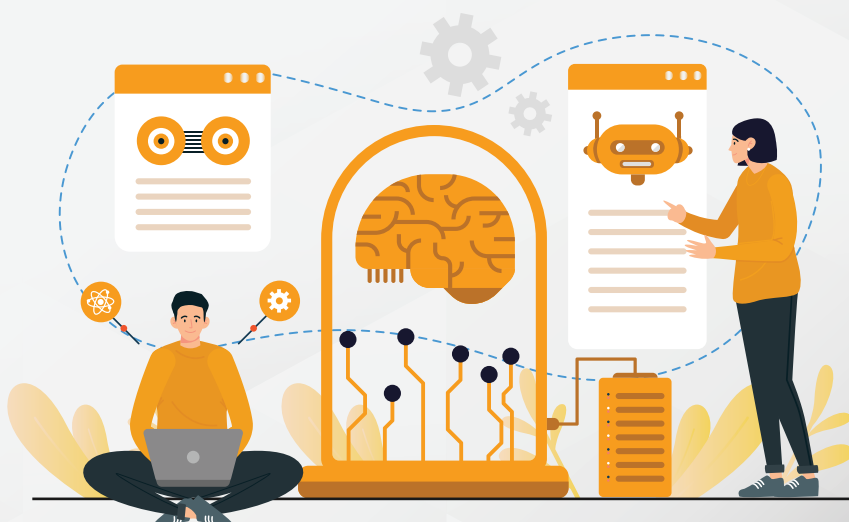
6.SOCIAL MEDIA/COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

In the current era, businesses that operate a well-oiled social media machine have a massive advantage over those that don't.

With over 3.6 billion people around the world already on some social networking platform of some sort, the number of eyeballs that can land on a brand – which then potentially turn into sales – is too good to pass up.

According to Sprout Social, it's estimated that about 55 percent of all consumers now learn about new brands via social media, while 78 percent admit a willingness to buy from a company again following a positive experience or interaction on social media.

The numbers simply do not lie: Doing social media properly is a powerful tool for growth.

Hence, it should come as no surprise that the skills required to run effective social media marketing and community management will become incredibly useful for businesses (particularly those that operate on a B2C basis), especially those in markets with stiff competition.

With 88 percent of the Malaysian population already online (and an overwhelming majority of them familiar with social networks), there's definitely room for local businesses to invest in their social media marketing efforts, or begin incorporating social media into their growth plans if they haven't already.

7.DATA SCIENCE

Data is the lifeblood that keeps people, businesses, and entire nations going and is essential to helping people make sense of why some things work better than others.

With the world now running on digital services, every single mouse click and tap on a screen can be distilled down to zeroes and ones, only to then be translated back into insights that businesses can use to plan their next steps.

The need for individuals with the skills to make sense of the limitless data available to us has spiked in recent years, with the demand for data specialists growing by 37 percent from 2019 to 2020. This comes from the data analytics platform Quanthub, which also revealed that 67 percent of companies were interested in expanding their data science divisions.

With Malaysia clearly wanting to become more digital in all aspects, the prospects for potential data scientists and analysts should be at least promising, if not lucrative.

For example, more and more local businesses will seek to leverage insights from consumer behaviour and use them to formulate better strategies for customer retention, while government departments will be able to use data to inform their next decisions during policymaking.

Getting digital-ready with altHR

The skills above should provide valuable insight into the development of the digital landscape in Malaysia and help employers and key decision-makers in organisations better understand the required skills for businesses to meet the needs of their customers in an always-online world.

With many industries now pushing the boundaries of going digital, this has necessitated a rethink when it comes to the workforce and talent management. This is readily apparent in digital HR systems, a must-have element in any successful digital-ready business. A reliable, comprehensive digital HRMS will handle the end-to-end of all things HR — including employee engagement, onboarding, talent management, and even digital workforce management.

Enter: Digi's super app, altHR — as utilised by over 1,500 employees of the telco giant in Malaysia. Designed to help businesses in Malaysia survive, and thrive in 2022 (and beyond), altHR has undoubtedly become essential for organisations of all sizes looking to successfully navigate the new normal, and the digital era.

With a wide range of modules ranging from core HR functions such as Leaves and Expenses to Time Tracking and Rostering, the super app even comes with add-on features that truly help to take your HR to the next level. This includes modules such as Performance Management for regular employee appraisals, Spaces for check-ins and occupancy monitoring for communal spaces in the workplace, and even an e-Gifting feature to help employees stay connected during a difficult, remote period.

It's a continually evolving product, and one that has a stated aim of being the perfect tool to help Malaysian businesses' digitalisation journeys.

Ready to go digital with altHR?

Click here to find out more

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