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Dynamic industry, challenging career

There's more to working in the retail sector than meets the eye

The retail industry provides many people with their livelihoods. According to the Singapore Department of Statistics, the Wholesale and Retail Trade sector contributed S\$55.2 billion to the Gross Domestic Product in 2012.

As a shoppers' paradise, it is no surprise that there's a growing need for well-educated, professionally trained managers in this dynamic sector in Singapore.

The retail sector's fast-paced changes are what attracted Ms Quek Kai Lin, a Senior Retail Services Executive with Wing Tai Retail, to it.

"I love working in the retail sector. The local retail job market has become increasingly diverse as it matures. This is seen in the intense competition among retailers today. This is the draw of the retail industry, challenging in an ever-evolving environment, yet fulfilling and satisfying at the same time," said Ms Quek.

"With the increasing sophistication of our customers, the local retail industry and workforce have bigger shoes to fill. As such, a continuous influx of talent, knowledge and skills is critical in driving an industry that thrives on innovation and good service."

AS STEP UP THE RETAIL LADDER

SIM Global Education (SIM GE) addresses the retail industry's needs through the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Retail Marketing awarded by the University of Stirling, UK.



Ms Quek enjoys working in the fast-paced retail sector. PHOTO: KOH MUI FONG

Available to full- and part-time students, the two-year programme's objectives include helping students understand the importance of retail as a customer-focused activity and as an important service sector.

SIM GE is well-known for partnering with reputable institutions like the University of Stirling, which ranked among the Top 50 in the "World's Best 100 Universities Under 50 Years Old" in the 2012 The Times Higher Education 100 Under 50 rankings.

The University of Stirling's Institute for Retail Studies is also an acknowledged Centre of Excellence for Retailing while the course is known for producing graduates with a broad background in management and more specialised retailing and marketing skills.

SIM GE's partnership with the University of Stirling and the programme's flexibility made enrolling in the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Retail Marketing an easy choice for Ms Quek.

"The course has equipped me with a comprehensive range of analytical problem-solving and professional skills that enables me to identify and analyse business problems, and gather relevant data so that business and marketing plans can be effectively implemented.

"In addition, the course has enabled me to integrate retail experience with the corresponding retail philosophies, concepts and international practices," she said.

WDA SCHOLARSHIP

Ms Quek has also benefitted from SIM GE's collaboration with the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). She applied for — and was offered — WDA's Retail Executive Scholarship, which subsidises 90 per cent of the course fees. The scholarship is open to Singapore citizens and aims to build a core of highly trained managers in the local retail industry.

One of the prerequisites for this scholarship is that the applicant must be accepted by the University of Stirling for direct entry into its Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Retail Marketing programme.

"The scholarship programme has benefitted me immensely and helped reduce my financial burden to a huge extent. Both WDA and Wing Tai Retail have provided me with the support that I need to continue my studies and to actualise my potential and professional competence in the retail industry," said Ms Quek. **PRODUCED BY THE TODAY SPECIAL PROJECTS TEAM**

* ABOUT THE COURSE

● Applications for the August intake of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Retail Marketing close on April 6. To find out more about the programme and to download the form for the Retail Executive Scholarship, visit www.simge.edu.sg. Full eligibility requirements for the scholarship are available at www.wda.gov.sg.