



MEDIA RELEASE

NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC LAUNCHES SINGAPORE'S FIRST HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN INSTITUTE

Singapore, 14 October 2022 — Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP)'s Continuing Education & Training Academy (CETA) today announced the launch of Singapore's first-ever Human-Centred Design Institute (HCDI) in partnership with global training institute, LUMA. The HCDI will help organisations upskill their employees with design thinking skills to supercharge the innovation process for business transformation in an increasingly complex, post-pandemic landscape. Guest-of-Honour Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State for Education and Manpower officially launched the HCDI at NP's inaugural CET Annual that spotlighted CETA's end-to-end learning and development solutions, as well as the corporate partners that have benefited from them.

HCDI augments CETA's suite of training solutions

Workplaces today call for employees to be agile and nimble, so that organisations can harness the opportunities and possibilities that emerging technologies offer. Using the human-centred design approach, the HCDI will equip organisations with the tools to navigate change, generate new ideas and create solutions through experimentation.

Through the HCDI, NP has gained a proven training methodology that can now be applied in CETA's customised training programmes. With the human-centred design methodology complementing CETA's suite of training solutions, NP is well placed to help organisations upskill employees in critical core skills identified by SkillsFuture Singapore as necessary for the future economy.

Customising training solutions for greater effectiveness

The digitalisation of the workplace and emergence of new technologies mean organisations need to constantly upskill their employees in specific technical skills. At the same time, employees are required to apply these skills in the context of their organisation's unique culture and business realities. As such, in place of a "one-size-fits-all" approach to training, CETA's training programmes are designed to offer holistic curriculums that allow participants to hone both technical skills to meet job needs, as well as the critical core skills that enable employees to perform their role competently within their organisation.

Prior to the setting up of the HCDI, as part of its customised training programmes, CETA partnered LUMA to successfully deliver human-centred design training to local organisations. With the HCDI, organisations that commission CETA to customise its training programmes will acquire fundamental

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design skills in the areas of ethnographic research, understanding people and systems, as well as concept ideation. Their employees will also gain access to the LUMA Workplace® digital platform, which comprises a comprehensive suite of resources including planning templates and guides that will allow them to effectively apply human-centred design in their daily work.

Mr Lim Kok Kiang, Principal & CEO of NP, said: “The HCDI adds a powerful tool to NP CET Academy’s suite of training solutions. As part of our mission to nurture lifelong learners who can thrive in the workplace of tomorrow, the HCDI provides a platform for organisations to innovate and problem-solve, helping them stay ahead of the curve amid today’s evolving business landscape.”

Ms Yap Aye Wee, Senior Vice President, Head of Learning & Development and Organisation Development, OCBC Bank, said: “We see NP CETA as a valuable partner. Our Customer Centricity Certification Pathway, which was co-designed with CETA, was aimed at equipping our workforce with critical future core skills that address genuine workplace needs. Through the programme, our employees gained a blend of valuable technical and soft skills such as prototyping and agility, which helped them to better frame and solve problems at work. Our colleagues tell us they are now more equipped to think differently in their roles.”

NP has been conducting soft skills training through its School of Interdisciplinary Studies since 2009, while its CETA has drawn from the expertise of NP’s nine academic schools to offer customised training solutions for organisations since 2020. With the HCDI, CETA will train up to 1,200 professionals from 30 organisations in human-centred design over the next three years, further unlocking the innovation potential of organisations through skills training.

Case Studies of NP CETA’s Customised Training Solutions

OCBC Bank

OCBC Bank partnered NP CET Academy to customise a learning pathway to build customer-centric skills for its employees in 2021. Working with CETA, it curated a series of six short courses lasting six months for its employees. Besides human-centred design, employees were also exposed to other customer-centric approaches including UI/UX design, participatory design and behavioural insights.

In each of the technical modules, participants also learnt the related soft skills so as to gain a more holistic appreciation of the application of the skill sets. For instance, in the behavioural insights module, participants learnt about sense-making, or how to make sense of various behavioural nudges to design more effective and user-friendly programmes and initiatives.

At the end of the programme, employees took part in a two-day bootcamp, during which they proposed solutions for a genuine workplace challenge. For instance, the first cohort of participants looked at how to smoothen the registration process for a particular product, using human-centred design skills to frame and propose solutions to the problem.

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This Customer Centricity Certification Pathway is one of the many other pathways under OCBC Bank's Future Smart programme that seeks to transform and future-proof its workforce. Prior to this, the bank had worked with NP to develop a Data Certification Pathway to deep-skill colleagues in data science and analytics.

VITAL Shared Services

In 2021, NP CETA worked with VITAL, which provides a wide range of corporate shared services for public agencies, to design a customised learning pathway in data analytics. The objective is to equip VITAL officers with data analytics skills and related critical core skills such as storytelling, sense-making, problem-solving, communication, collaboration and digital fluency that will help them to be effective in their job roles.

The 22-day training programme spread over four months culminated in a data hackathon, during which employees had to use their newly acquired skills to propose solutions to tackle organisational challenges that they faced in their workplace. These included administrative delays in invoice processing and low take-up rate for courses that were provided to address employees' learning needs.

During the hackathon, employees used their collaborative skills to work together to develop a solution based on data analytics. Following which, they applied sense-making and storytelling skills to present their solutions to the judges.

VITAL's CEO Dennis Lui gave a positive assessment of the programme, citing that it was refreshing to see his colleagues apply their newly acquired skills to genuine workplace problems and proposing solutions that were practical. He noted that in other training courses, a common feedback was that they were not sure how to apply what they had learnt. To date, about 140 VITAL officers, from executives to assistant directors, have undergone the data analytics training provided by NP CETA.

For media queries, please contact:

Allison+ Partners on behalf Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Joseph Chong

Tel: 8188 8483

Email: Joseph.chong@allisonpr.com

About Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Ngee Ann Polytechnic started in 1963 and is today one of Singapore's leading institutions of higher learning with over 13,000 enrolled students in close to 40 disciplines. It seeks to develop students with a passion for learning, values for life, and competencies to thrive in a global workplace. The polytechnic also supports Continuing Education and Training (CET) through its CET Academy, which offers a wide range of part-time programmes and short courses. It works closely with industry partners to curate programmes for emerging skills, develop talent pipeline for the industries and help adult learners stay agile in today's rapidly changing global economy.

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