

85 Percent of Malaysian Companies See the Need to Equip their Employees with Digital Skills

- *48 percent of companies in Malaysia adopted digital tech platforms for day-to-day operations in 2021, compared to 19 percent in 2020*
- *Companies shifting digital upskilling from digital productivity tools to more technical digital skills including data science, digital marketing, cybersecurity, and software development*

CYBERJAYA, 1 OCTOBER 2021: Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), Malaysia's lead digital economy agency, recently concluded a Digital Talent Survey, which showed that companies are accelerating the adoption of digital technologies and are accordingly focused on reskilling and upskilling their employees in digital technologies and applications.

The MDEC Digital Talent Survey 2021 revealed that more companies have adopted digital platforms due to the pandemic. According to the survey findings, 48 percent of companies in the country adopted digital tech platforms for day-to-day operations this year compared to 19 percent in 2020.

With this shift, 85 percent of companies surveyed recognise the need to reskill their employees. Over the past year, the focus has shifted from digital productivity and remote working skills to technical skills such as data analytics, cybersecurity, cloud computing, digital marketing, and software development.

The results of the survey were shared at MDEC's Digital Talent CEO Roundtable which was held during the recently concluded Malaysia Tech Month. The roundtable involved 25 CEOs and C-suite leaders of local tech companies and multinational corporations; industry associations such as the National ICT Association of Malaysia (PIKOM) and Malaysia Digital Association; and think-tank Social Economic and Research Initiative (SERI).

The industry leaders provided valuable insights on the local digital talent landscape. With regards to recruitment of digital talents, there was consensus that companies are increasingly prioritising skills over academic qualifications.

As an example, Francesca Chia, Co-Founder of GoGet, shared that the company tended to recruit more fresh hires from coding academies or training centres rather than fresh graduates from universities. Alejandro Kikuchi, Head of Asia for Workana, also shared that companies that were unable to source or recruit suitably qualified talents were hiring freelancers, contract, or remote workers.

The CEOs also discussed the importance of nurturing the future talent pipeline and recognised the need for companies to take a more active role in providing inputs to curriculum and project-based learning.

Henrick Choo, CEO of NTT MSC, noted that the salary growth of digital talents was much steeper than non-digital talents as the experience level grew, even though entry-level salaries may be similar for both digital and non-digital roles.

Industry leaders are also seeing more companies focusing on internal staff mobility, where staff are reskilling and changing roles within the organisation. Stephanie Sitt, CEO of 123RF Malaysia, cautioned that while digital skills are important, people management skills are just as – if not more – important in the increasingly remote-working environment.

"In line with MDEC's vision to create shared prosperity amongst all Malaysians, we are committed to empowering Malaysians with the necessary skills to succeed in an increasingly digitalised economy. In this regard, the MDEC Digital Talent CEO Roundtable is an important platform to ensure alignment of our efforts with industry requirements," said Dr Sumitra Nair, MDEC's Vice President and Head of Digital Skills and Jobs.



Over the years, MDEC's digital talent and inclusivity initiatives have impacted more than three million Malaysians via digital skills and income opportunities. These include initiatives such as #MyDigitalMaker Movement, eUsahawan, Premier Digital Tech Institute, Digital Skills Training Directory and Let's Learn Digital, among others.

In response to COVID-19, the government via MDEC has also introduced the #MyDigitalWorkforce Work in Tech (MYWiT) initiative earlier this year to help reskill or upskill unemployed Malaysians for digital tech and services jobs. This is a hiring and training incentive that is expected to benefit 6,000 unemployed Malaysians.

This is the second Digital Talent CEO Roundtable following the initial one taken place in 2019. The first roundtable had formed the basis for MDEC's recent digital talent development initiatives, which included Digital Skills Training Directory, MYWiT, and the digital tech curriculum standards for TVET institutions.

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About Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC)

Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) is the agency under the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia leading the digital transformation of the economy for 25 years. We aim to enable a progressive, innovation-led digital economy.

To achieve this, MDEC will execute on its **NADI** (Nadi Digital) framework, based on the four thrusts: **New skills, Adoption, Digital ScaleUps and Investments**. NADI will drive our core programmes for the rakyat, industry and investors. MDEC will continue to lead Malaysia's digital economy forward towards becoming a globally competitive digital nation, anchored on innovation, sustainability, and shared prosperity, firmly establishing Malaysia as the Heart of Digital ASEAN.

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