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Epson Research: Singapore SMEs among Lowest in Southeast Asia to adopt Sustainable Business Operations

SINGAPORE, 10 March 2020 – [Epson](#), the global leader in printing and projector technologies, today revealed the findings of its report, [SME striving for Digital Transformation amidst many hurdles](#), which states that Singapore small-medium enterprises (SMEs) are among the lowest in Southeast Asia (SEA) to adopt sustainable business operations. This is despite Singapore SMEs having the strongest understanding of the ‘Digital Transformation’ concept amongst organisations in the region.

Indeed, Southeast Asia businesses have started the transition to a low carbon economy.^[1] To this end, they are taking the climate change threat more seriously by evaluating and improving the environmental impact of every aspect of the business – from products to process, in response to changing customer preferences and expectations^[2]. In particular, there is increasing awareness among SMEs in SEA that hardware footprint and innovative products can successfully lower their business impact on the environment.

Large hardware footprint amongst Singapore SMEs

A majority of SMEs in Singapore (57 per cent) indicated that they would prefer an office printer that is environmentally friendly – consumes less energy and have a lower impact on health, such as dust particles and heat. Some Singapore SMEs also believe that the use of collaboration tools such as interactive projectors will help optimise the waste of natural resources.

However, the environmental impact is one of the least considered factors influencing purchase decisions when it comes to printer choice, with lower running costs (77 per cent) and reliability (74 per cent) taking precedence. In addition, compared to SMEs in SEA, Singapore has the lowest number of SMEs (47 per cent) using inkjet printers.

When it comes to the use of interactive projectors, SMEs in SEA are still at the early adoption stage, despite citing the ability to interact with documents (78 per cent) and the ability to collaborate (74 per cent) as top drivers for projector choice. In Singapore, most SMEs (68 per cent) still own standard table or mounted projectors.

Robotics is another tool that is welcomed by SMEs in Singapore, with 87 per cent of them considering robotic solutions for their speed, productivity and scalability benefits. However, one in four Singapore SMEs said that they do not have plans for automation in the near future – the highest number of SMEs anywhere in the region.

Perception versus reality

A promising number of Singapore SMEs (71 per cent) believe that digital transformation will bring about significant improvements to their business performance and customer experience. However, the upfront costs of new tools and technology is a top obstacle to them beginning their digital transformation journey. As a result, most SMEs have barely kicked-off this process.

Ms. Tan May Lin, Director – Sales, Marketing and Customer Service of Epson Sales division, Epson Singapore said, “There is a large misconception among SMEs that adopting new tools and technology is expensive. While the upfront costs might seem daunting, SMEs will see huge savings in the long term due to lower running costs and improved productivity. At the same time, the environmental and operational benefits far outweigh the initial upfront costs.”

Digital transformation for sustainable growth

Digital transformation is a must-have in today’s digital economy. As SMEs start their digital transformation journey to modernise their business, it is important they consider environmental impacts as a business goal.

“It is very promising that we have a large number of SMEs (68 per cent) agreeing that the only way to sustain growth is via digital transformation. It is clear that committing to the environment has to be more than just an altruistic gesture, and only those organisations that embark on this journey will emerge ahead of their competition,” concluded Ms. Tan May Lin.

About this research

Epson commissioned research firm, Intuit to understand the digital transformation journey of SMEs in Southeast Asia – Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam – to gauge their progress and identify challenges, as well as gaps in awareness of the benefits of updated technologies or emerging tech solutions. The survey captured the perspectives of 864 SMEs across the region and uncovered how much work is still required to help SMEs understand the value and overall benefit that investments in technology will have on their competitiveness and growth.

More than 80 per cent of the respondents were either business owners, key decision-makers, decision influencers or senior managers within their respective organisations, which spanned the manufacturing, corporate, retail, food and beverage (F&B) and hospitality, engineering, architecture and textile sectors. Companies surveyed were between 10 to 250 employees in size.

[1][Power Trip: Southeast Asia's journey to a low carbon economy, Eco-Business Research, 2018](#)

[2]<https://sg.yougov.com/en-sg/news/2018/01/04/businesses-and-environmental-damage/>

About Epson

Epson is a global technology leader dedicated to becoming indispensable to society by connecting people, things and information with its original efficient, compact and precision technologies. The company is focused on driving innovations and exceeding customer expectations in inkjet, visual communications, wearables and robotics. Epson is proud of its contributions to realizing a sustainable society and its ongoing efforts to realizing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Led by the Japan-based Seiko Epson Corporation, the worldwide Epson Group generates annual sales of more than US\$10 billion.

<http://global.epson.com/>

About Epson Singapore

Since 1982, Epson has developed a strong presence across major markets in Southeast Asia and South Asia. Led by the regional headquarters Epson Singapore, Epson's business in Southeast Asia spans an extensive network of 11 countries with a comprehensive infrastructure of close to 500 service

outlets, 7 Epson solution centres and 7 manufacturing facilities.

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