SINGAPORE: Singapore logistics industry players have a leg up now in infrastructure and technology, according to some industry watchers.

But they say local players will need to personalise their services in a substantial way - in order to gain an edge in Asian markets.

Consumer markets in the Asia Pacific region are diverse and fragmented.

Market watchers say that is why Singapore logistics players seeking to get an edge in the business will need to tailor their services well.

Professor Hau Lee, Operations and IT at Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, said: "Logistics providers have to provide much more customised solutions, much more diverse solutions. And so you tailor the right logistics solutions for the right market segments, the right locations and even the right time."

Analysts add that companies can plan their processes in such a way that they can prevent extra costs when customising their services.

Professor Hau Lee said: "What are the ways that I can fully utilise the whole container and then break it up in the last minute so that I can serve the customer segments differently?

"What are the ways that I can utilise information so that I have information flow first before I make the physical flow? Because often times, if you make the physical flow and than you customise the solution, it turns out the demand and supply did not match."

But this could mean training logistics workers across disciplines.

Steven Miller, Dean of School of Information Systems at the Singapore Management University, said: "We have the infrastructure to collect massive amounts of data and use it in sensible and intelligent ways to make supply chain and distribution decisions.

"And the companies doing that are really showing a competitive advantage. So one of our challenges in Singapore is to get the manpower, to get the people cross-trained in the IT, the business analytics and the applications and operations in supply chain."

But first, logistics companies have be well run. Industry players say that is because a fully-optimised work and goods flow serves as the foundation for providing individualised services in various Asian markets. - CNA/de