SINGAPORE, Nov 28, 2007 (MARKET WIRE via COMTEX) -- IBM | charts | news | PowerRating
-- IBM (NYSE: IBM)

Nanyang Technological University (NTU), National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore Management University (SMU), and 15 industry first-movers -- supported by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) -- today announced their collaboration to push the frontier of service innovation through Service Science education, research, talent development and collaboration with government, academia and industry. A major milestone is the offering of the Service Science, Management and Engineering (SSME) programme by Singapore's universities from 2008, in collaboration with IBM.

Services is a key pillar of Singapore's economy(1), and it has become a key engine of growth across a variety of industries, including finance, healthcare and logistics. In particular, the demand for high value services is growing in the IT and business consulting space, where companies are seizing new business opportunities by building more efficient IT systems, streamlining their business processes and embracing the Internet.

Rear-Admiral (NS) Ronnie Tay, Chief Executive Officer, IDA, said, "The introduction of the SSME programme by IBM and the Institutes of Higher Learning, or IHLs, is a timely one. It is aligned with the iN2015 masterplan where nurturing a pool of ' techno-strategists ' is critical in helping to achieve the vision of an intelligent nation, global city powered by infocomm. Developing a multi-disciplinary infocomm workforce, ready for the service-based economy will certainly enhance Singapore's status as an infocomm hub. The efforts by industry leaders like IBM and the IHLs are most encouraging."

Teresa Lim, Managing Director, IBM Singapore, said, "Service Science creates a new and exciting paradigm, which transforms the way we develop, deliver, manage and measure service. It provides a means to sustain and scale quality service performance and accelerate service innovation through research."

Lim added, "This industry, academia and government ecosystem collaboration is unique. It provides a critical foundation to sustain success in Singapore's services sector growth and differentiate Singapore's competitive position globally. Singapore has the opportunity to become a global knowledge centre where innovative services are created and delivered globally and seamlessly. These are exciting times which emphasise the need to raise service level capabilities become more systematic in service innovation, venture into service research, and constantly strive for service excellence locally and globally."

Developing Service Science Expertise

In today's announcement, IBM signed separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NTU School of Computer Engineering; NUS School of Computing, Institute of Systems Science (ISS) of NUS, and SMU School of Information Systems on Service Science curriculum development and research exploration. The new Service Science curriculum is called Service Science, Management and Engineering (SSME).

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Rear-Adm (NS) Tay of IDA; Nick Donofrio, Executive Vice President, Innovation and Technology, IBM Corporation; Gloria Ng, Senior Programme Director of ISS; and Professor Howard Hunter, President of SMU.

IBM has designated Dr. Jim Spohrer, Director of Service Research, and Paul Maglio, Senior Manager, Service Systems Research, both from the IBM Almaden Research Center in San Jose, California, to lead IBM's collaboration with the university faculties and ISS. Under the MOU, the collaboration includes review of existing curricula, development of new courseware and case studies, and defining areas for service research.
In the beginning, SSME will be integrated into the undergraduate curricula of the university faculties as follows:

-- NTU School of Computer Engineering - Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science/Computer Engineering)
-- NUS School of Computing - Bachelor of Computing (Computer Science/Information Systems)
-- SMU School of Information Systems - Bachelor of Science (Information Systems Management)

The universities will announce details of the SSME curricula in March 2008 when students enrol for their courses for the academic year starting August 2008.

NUS School of Computing will also be introducing a SSME specialisation in the undergraduate degree programme and will explore joint research opportunities on service science.

In addition, SMU’s School of Information Systems said it will offer SSME as a specialisation track.

NTU’s School of Computer Engineering is also looking into the possibility of offering SSME as one of its specialisations.

ISS plans to introduce SSME into its Master of Technology, professional and executive continuing education programmes, and, also, embark on joint research in service science.

The collaboration aims to develop a new breed of service scientists and service entrepreneurs who understand service systems, are trained to enable efficient and systematic approaches to service delivery, and serve as catalysts for service innovation in organisations and for various industry sectors.

SSME-trained graduates will likely enter the workforce as solution designers, consultants, engineers, scientists, and managers. After gaining practical experience across multiple industry sectors and with rapidly evolving technology tools and solutions that transform businesses and institutions, they will then go on to be successful entrepreneurs, executives, researchers, and practitioners, with a solid grounding in theory and best practices in designing high-value service solutions.

National Infocomm Scholarships

To catalyse the development of multi-disciplinary professionals through infocomm and service science, IDA, together with Avaya Singapore Pte Ltd, DBS Bank Ltd, IBM Singapore, Singapore Computer Systems Limited (SCS) and Singapore Telecommunications Ltd are sponsoring talented students who are keen to pursue infocomm and SSME-related courses through the National Infocomm Scholarship (NIS). The Scholarship aims to identify and nurture a group of talented students for a career in infocomm. Together, the six organisations have pledged their support to sponsor up to 38 new scholarships from 2008, enhancing next year’s NIS.

Industry Support for Service Science and SSME

The industry first-movers in Singapore which have expressed their support for Service Science and SSME include: Avaya Singapore Pte Ltd; Cisco; DBS Bank Ltd; Fuji Xerox Singapore Pte Ltd; Intel Technology Asia Pte Ltd; Land Transport Authority; Lenovo Singapore; OCBC Bank; Oracle Corporation, Asia Pacific; PowerSeraya Ltd; Singapore Airlines; Singapore Computer Systems Limited (SCS); Singapore Power Ltd; Singapore Telecommunications Ltd; and United Overseas Bank Ltd.

Given the importance of services as a key growth driver, businesses are expected to invest more to make innovation in services more systematic. Greater and more open collaboration among the academia, government and industry will also lead to initiatives to capture the vast quantities of service data being generated by the business world everyday, and leverage them for research which is the seedbed for generating new service value and innovation.
For more information on the IBM SSME Initiative, visit: http://www.ibm.com/university/ssme

For more information on IDA or the National Infocomm Scholarships, visit: http://www.ida.gov.sg or http://talent.singaporeinfocomm.sg.

For more information on NTU School of Computer Engineering, visit: http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sce/

For more information on NUS School of Computing, visit: http://www.comp.nus.edu.sg/

For more information on Institute of Systems Science, National University of Singapore, visit: http://www.iss.nus.edu.sg/

For more information on SMU School of Information Systems, visit: http://www.sis.smu.edu.sg/

(1) Economic Surveys Series 2005: The Services Sector published by the Department of Statistics (October 2007)

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