

Innovation courses to gear up lawyers for future economy

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Lawyers and legal professionals need to think like tech entrepreneurs and use the skill to find new solutions to problems they encounter in their practice.

To help them get started on this, the Future Law Innovation Programme (Flip) and the Singapore Management University Academy will launch two modules on design thinking and entrepreneurial ideation this month. In entrepreneurial ideation, lawyers learn to look for business opportunities and creatively generate new ideas.

These four-week courses will provide the foundation for lawyers here to kick-start their own innovation, said Mr Paul Neo, executive director of Singapore Academy of Law Ventures, which runs Flip.

“Not all lawyers are business management trained, and we have to teach them the basis of business strategy in order for them to think of innovation,” said Mr Neo, who spoke to the media on Thursday during Flip’s first anniversary.

The modules, which are open to working legal professionals with classes thrice a week, are just one out of a string of initiatives that Flip will launch this year in a bid to bring about more innovation and change to the legal sector.

Flip is a two-year pilot programme launched in January last year by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon to prepare the legal sector for technology disruption.

The programme brings together

lawyers, technopreneurs, investors, academics, and regulators, to help develop the model for the delivery of legal services in the future economy.

Apart from the new modules, Flip will also launch its own start-up accelerator to groom and mentor promising start-ups in the legal technology sector. Unlike generic accelerator programmes, the Flip bespoke accelerator programme would suit the specific needs of the legal tech start-ups, said Mr Neo.

“Some have taken part in generic accelerators, but the investors don’t understand the solutions they’re trying to sell or market, because it’s quite specific,” said Mr Neo. “And coming from the legal sector, we believe law tech is quite a unique area.”

Mr Jerrold Soh, a Singapore Management University lecturer and legal tech start-up founder said the accelerator is a particularly promising new initiative. He is involved in another new Flip initiative to produce an annual report on legal innovation in the region.

The former law and economics student noted that the Flip accelerator could help legal tech entrepreneurs get business leads easier, and network with like-minded people working on similar issues and problems.

“Hopefully this could help to shorten the trial and error experimentation stage that accompanies every start up in its early days,” said Mr Soh.

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