

Publication: Digital News Asia

Date: 23 July 2014

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PUBLISHED ON JULY 23, 2014

- **'Squared Data Programme' to train 20 students in data analytics**
- **Theoretical and practical training, including 10-month work placement**



WEB analytics firm Sparkline will be training fresh graduates in data analytics skills as part of the Google-Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) capacity-building 'Squared Data Programme' (SDP) that was announced in February.

The SDP is part of the IDA's Company-Led Training (CLT) programme, and was formally launched on July 18.

The Squared Data Programme will provide 20 Singaporean graduates with intensive training and mentorship in analytics, Sparkline said in a statement.

The company also said it was the only analytics agency to participate in the Squared Data Programme. It will facilitate the Data Architecture and Data Analytics training modules. Singapore-based Sparkline was founded in 2012 by three Google alumni.

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“This is Sparkline’s first education initiative for fresh graduates,” said Sparkline managing partner Vinoaj Vijeyakumar (pic).



“While we provide analytics training to many companies, equipping recent graduates with analytics skills speeds up the learning and development process for them, and for their future employers.

“The amount of data in Singapore is expected to grow eight-fold by 2020, according to EMC Corp’s Digital Universe study. The demand for analytics talent will grow rapidly and we’re proud to be doing our part to equip people with the skills to meet that demand,” he added.

Vinoaj, who is also guest lecturer at the Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Singapore Management University (SMU), will train participants on core competency frameworks across Web Analytics and Data Infrastructure, Sparkline said.

Topics will focus on real customer needs such as increasing marketing effectiveness and improving customer relationships.

Participants will undergo theoretical and practical training, including a 10-month work placement within a media agency. Two SDP participants will work at Sparkline for 10 months, providing analytics services to its range of clients across the Asia Pacific region.

“A strong talent pool of data scientists and analysts is essential to achieving Singapore’s ‘Smart Nation’ vision,” said Prabir Sen, chief data scientist at IDA’s Data Sciences Group.

“Businesses, government and ICT companies will be able improve productivity and drive business growth through mining data for critical insights.

“IDA is happy that the Squared Data Programme will enhance the data analytics potential of our young infocomm talent pool. Partners with industry experience in data analytics are crucial to bringing relevant knowledge and real world insights to the training, translating theory to action,” he added.

The Squared Data Programme will cover topics in data analytics, information management, business intelligence and consumer and marketing insights, moulding candidates into industry-ready data analytics specialists.

Google will provide the eight-week full-time training, with support from experts and Singapore-based agencies. A Google mentor will provide 35 weeks of on-the-job mentoring.

Candidates are also provided with a monthly grant of S\$2,400 (US\$1,935) over a 10-month training period.

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Prerequisites for candidates for the programme include Singapore citizenship and a university degree. Trainees are also required to serve a one-year bond for an info-communications related job in Singapore upon completion of the programme.

“Asia is experiencing an amazing shift to digital. For instance, research predicts that by 2015, Asia will be the largest e-commerce region in the world, reaching US\$568 billion,” said Joanna Flint, country director at Google Singapore.

“This shift online is a huge opportunity for businesses, enabling them to connect with consumers at scale, and measure their performance more easily.

“It also means you need to have people in place with the skills to do all that measuring – making analytics very important.

“The ‘Squared Data Programme’ is a pioneering initiative to give Singapore graduates an end-to-end training programme and entry point into the media and analytics industry,” she added.