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Headline: Singapore has to reduce reliance on foreign labour

Disruptive technologies and heavy reliance on foreign labour are among the skills challenges some key growth industries in Singapore are facing.

Rapid policy change before targeted industries can mature to gain scale and depth is another issue that needs to be addressed, according to a new report from Singapore Management University and J.P. Morgan.

Singapore's innovation-driven economy requires not only skilled workers, but also those with the right mind set – curious, creative, collaborative, adaptable and willing to take risks.

An orientation in skills and behavioural training is thus especially pivotal where technological disruptions are present.

Jobs across various sectors should also be redesigned to achieve better use of technology and increase labour productivity so as to reduce the country's heavy reliance on foreign labour, especially low-skilled migrant workers.

Employers should tap into the vast experiences of displaced mature Professionals, Managers, Executives, and Technicians (PMETs) and non-traditional sources of workers including retirees and homemakers, instead of foreign workers.

This will also help local workers stay meaningfully employed beyond the official retirement age.

In choosing new growth industries to promote, the government should consider the availability of local workers who can meet or who can be trained within a relatively short period of time to meet the skill needs of these industries, the report titled *Managing Skills Challenges in ASEAN-5*, recommended.

This study focuses on skills gaps in key growth industries such as ICT and fintech across five Southeast Asian countries, namely Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, and how they can be effectively managed.