



Databricks to invest over \$445m here, double workforce to more than 500 over next 3 years

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American data and artificial intelligence company Databricks will invest more than US\$350 million (S\$445 million) in Singapore as it expands its operations here, including doubling its workforce to more than 500 employees over the next three years.

Singapore is where the company's headquarters for Asia-Pacific and Japan is sited. Its local technical team will also double to more than 200 employees, from the current headcount of over 100 employees, over the same period.

Among the roles it is hiring for are forward deployed engineers, who work directly with customers to build and adapt AI tools for their specific needs and integrate them into the customers' existing systems.

The company is also hiring field engineers and product specialists.

Databricks, which provides enterprise tools for companies to manage and use their data for AI applications, is expanding as businesses in the region move from experimenting with AI to deploying it more widely across their organisations.

"We are going to help organisations across all sectors, including financial services, healthcare, manufacturing and connectivity, to take their most valuable, most impactful AI use cases from pilot to production," company senior vice-president Simon Davies said on Sept 16.

He was announcing the Singapore investments during Databricks' Data + AI World Tour Singapore event held at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre.

By scaling up the technical team, the company will be able to bring hands-on skills and dedicated engineering support to local enterprises and establish operating models to scale future AI initiatives, said Davies, who is also the general manager for Asia-Pacific and Japan.

The growing workforce will



Databricks' senior vice-president and general manager for Asia-Pacific and Japan Simon Davies said the company will help organisations take their AI use cases from pilot to production. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

move into a new 32,000 sq ft office at IOI Central Boulevard Towers in November, which is four times the size of Databricks' current premises.

New customers include wealth management platform iFAST Corp, telco Singtel and border enforcement agency Singapore Customs.

They join other financial services and public sector organisations already using Databricks, including fintech platform Airwallex and government agencies Central Provident Fund Board and Government Technology Agency of Singapore.

Databricks will also train another 20,000 people in data and AI skills in Singapore over the next three years, supporting the country's broader push under its National AI Strategy to build up its AI workforce.

It is working with the Infocomm Media Development Authority and local universities to incorporate its training and tools into courses for undergraduate and graduate students.

Singapore Management University (SMU) will be the first to do so, with students learning skills such as data engineering and analytics, as well as how to build AI applications and agents using Databricks' platform.

They will also receive Databricks certifications as part of their courses.

Databricks will also work with the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and SMU on a hackathon involving students from across the three universities.

In November, it will launch a four-month accelerator for early-stage start-ups building AI as a core part of their products with an initial group of 10 companies, and plans to support more than 100 over the next three years.

The programme is open to companies from pre-seed to Series B funding stages, when start-ups typically begin scaling up their operations. Participants will receive technical support and training, up to US\$200,000 in credits to use Databricks' AI and data tools, and opportunities to connect with investors and potential corporate customers.

Davies said these are not isolated initiatives.

"We believe every industry, every function and, over time, every role will be impacted by AI. That means (opportunities) must reach every corner of Singapore... all the way from students, early career professionals, experienced practitioners, business leaders, entrepreneurs. We need them to be able to participate in this AI transformation," said Davies.

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