

# MediaCorp shuts group-buying website Mocca Perks

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SINGAPORE'S largest broadcaster, MediaCorp, has closed its group-buying website barely a year after starting it.

Dubbed Mocca Perks, the Groupon competitor offered up to 88 per cent discounts on goods such as beauty treatments, digital cameras and furniture.

A message now appears on the website, reading: "Our site is closed to make

way for a new e-commerce initiative. Look out for our e-newsletter coming your way soon."

All unredeemed vouchers must be claimed by Sept 2.

The closure comes a month after the broadcaster took down the home page of its online classified website, Mocca.com.

Mr Philip Koh, the managing director of MediaCorp's convergent media division, declined to answer questions when contacted about why it shut the website.

Instead, he said the closure was part of efforts to bring in new online products to serve the changing needs of customers, and that MediaCorp "regrets" that the site is "taking a break" to make way for a new e-commerce initiative.

Marketing experts said Mocca Perks had failed to differentiate itself.

Singapore Management University professor of marketing Philip Zerrillo said a business model that is too similar to those of other companies will not work in

a market saturated with group-buying websites.

There are about 50 of them here – including Groupon, Deal.com.sg, StreetDeal.com and UrbanJourney.com – offering heavily discounted deals on items including beauty and travel products, and consumer electronic gadgets.

"The challenge is to retain customers, and the only way to do it is to specialise and know your market segment well,"

said Prof Zerrillo.

Marketing and retail lecturer Andrew Lee of Singapore Polytechnic's Business School said: "Group sites need to find their niches to survive the fickle minds and tastes of discerning consumers."

About 300,000 coupons a month are bought on average in Singapore, according to tracking website AllDealsLeak.

Last year, a total of \$80 million worth of vouchers were sold here by group-buying sites.