

New normal needs new skills

Professionals need to have both digital and soft skills during these challenging times, writes **Izwan Ismail**

THE Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way Malaysians work, learn and do business. Functions that once were traditionally face-to-face are now taking place across a digital space.

This requires professionals to possess both the digital skills and soft skills to work, collaborate and manage teams remotely.

"Now more than ever, workers need to pick up not only relevant digital skills, but also the necessary soft skills to help them in their day-to-day work functions," said Feon Ang, LinkedIn vice-president, Talent and Learning Solutions (Asia Pacific).

This will remain true as we move forward. Covid-19 has accelerated the adoption of remote working, which looks like it is here to stay.

"During Covid-19, many of us are working across a digital space. Aside from picking up digital skills like learning to use video conferencing software, professionals and employers also have had to learn how to communicate and collaborate through this space, which requires soft skills," said Ang.

"It's not just employers who are driving remote working practices now and for the future. There's an increasing expectation among employees as well.

The future of the job market will expect employees and managers alike to be equipped with both basic digital literacy skills as well as soft skills to work, collaborate and manage teams across a digital space," she said.



Feon Ang

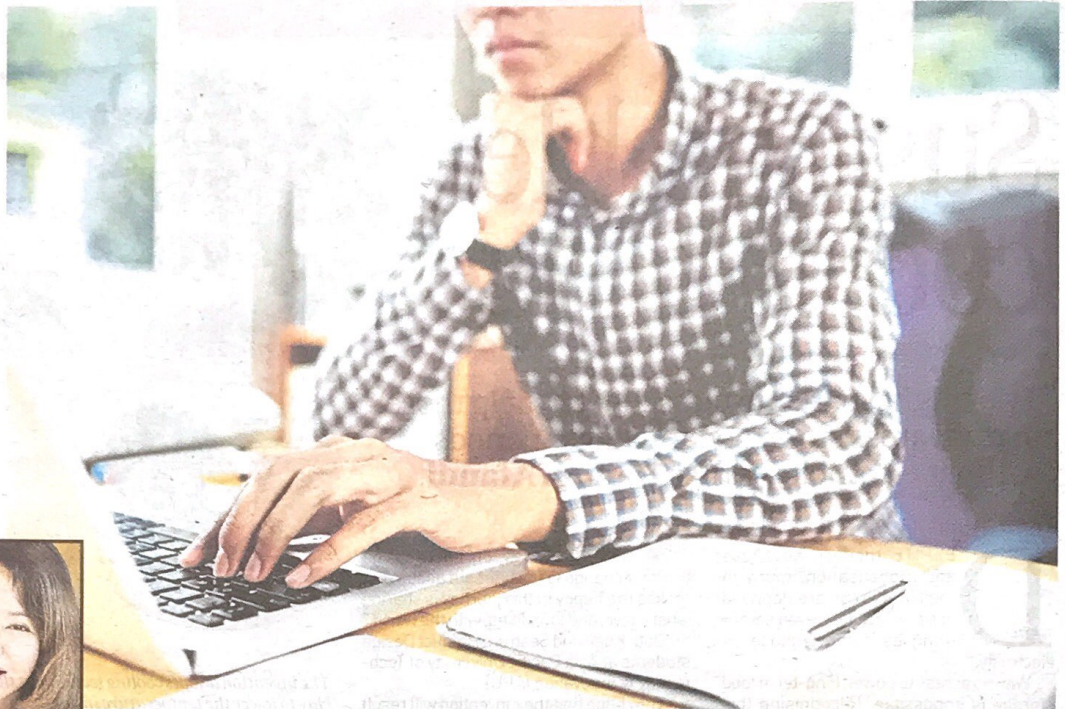
WHAT'S IN DEMAND

The pandemic has made us realise that in future, many jobs will require software skills.

To thrive, professionals will need to adopt a growth mindset and strive for skills diversity. They will need to look out for opportunities to reskill or upskill, said Ang.

"The LinkedIn Economic Graph has identified the top trending skills as of June this year. They include project management, JavaScript, Java, sales management and project planning," she said.

LinkedIn is playing its part in supporting businesses and professionals by providing free resources and tools for those who are turning to online learning to equip themselves with new skills



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during this time.

As part of its commitment to help professionals, businesses and job seekers, LinkedIn, in partnership with Microsoft, has come out with 10 free LinkedIn Learning Paths courses aligned with in-demand roles available through the end of the year.

Some of these courses are suitable for those seeking to develop as software engineers, sales representatives, project managers and IT administrators.

The courses are also suitable for customer service, digital marketing, IT support/help desk, graphic design, financial analysis and data analysis.

IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILLS

Five of the courses are related to soft

skills, such as time management, strategic thinking, remote work foundations, developing our emotional intelligence and communicating with confidence.

"As we move forward into the future economy, professionals must learn to adapt and pick up both digital and soft skills. These courses are free for all to use.

"We also have four additional free learning paths to help job seekers land a job, master critical soft skills and improve their digital fluency in virtual collaboration tools.

"Two of these are titled Finding a Job During Challenging Economic Times and Master In-Demand Professional Soft Skills," said Ang.