

# ALUMNI SHARING SESSION

## INSPIRING WORK EXPERIENCE & COVID19 PANDEMIC CHALLENGE

### MODERATOR



Ts. Dr. Johanna Binti Ahmad  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Computing, UTM

### MEET THE SPEAKERS



Tan Yong Keong  
Data Science Engineer  
Micron Semiconductor Asia



Mohamad Zamarul Akmal  
Data Engineer  
PPG Coatings (M)



Qistina Batrisyia  
Social Media Data Analyst  
TM One

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**JOHOR** - A talk was organized by Technology and Information System, School of Computing from University Technology of Malaysia through Webex, titled 'Inspiring Work Experience and COVID-19 Pandemic Challenge', on 29th December 2020. There are three speakers named Qistina Bastriyia binti Azman Shah, Mohamad Zaharul Akmal bin Mohd Hussin and Tan Yong Keong, with one moderator, Dr. Johanna Ahmad.

### PREPARED BY



Huda Najihah  
A20EC0045



Keshiniy A/P Mogan  
A20EC0057



Mamisha  
A20EC0075



Woon Zi Jian  
A20EC0171

### PURPOSE

*The purpose of this talk* is to let the speakers share their working experience and also how to encounter their problem during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This talk is targeted at fresh graduates, students, and even the public. The talk also shared about how to improve one's skills to be hired. Besides, the speakers also share how to improve our soft skills.

### HOW DID THEY GET THE JOB?

*The first question* of this talk was shot to Tan on how he managed to get his job. Tan managed to get his job by participating in a lot of competitions where he gained some professional skills and his presentation skills have improved. Besides that, he also did freelancing jobs where he was able to develop some technical skills. He got his job interview during a competition where he won. Not only that, Tan also did his internship at ViTrox Technologies Sdn. Bhd. In addition, he proudly mentioned about his Chancellor Award on his 63rd competition.

*For Zamarul*, he is currently being absorbed as a permanent staff in his intern company, PPG Coatings. His advice on increasing the chances of getting hired is to keep being proactive by frequently giving out ideas and opinions. Before he proposed the idea to create one system that could monitor everything, such as a support dashboard, the company used a manual monitoring tool. This proposal then became his final year project, which led to his supervisors giving him more attention due to his appeal. Through his proactivity, he was able to become a permanent staff in his company.

*Meanwhile for Qistina*, she has been in the position since her internship at TM One. During internship, she showed a lot of effort to join real life projects. She also said she volunteered to do a dashboard for a project and from there, her supervisor cum manager asked her to join the company to further complete the project. When asked what kind of project she is part of, she answered that most of the project is focused on social media where she gathers social media data and then creates it into a dashboard. The client will use the data on establishing their branding.

# MAIN CONTENT

*Currently*, Tan is a Data Science Engineer at Micron Semiconductor Asia Operations. He is dealing with factory loading optimization where he gathers a lot of data and optimizes the market demand based on the current factory tools availability. Mostly Tan uses Rouen data science tools, Hadoop systems and Apache spark platforms to gather data and process data. The next question was asked to Tan which is how people learn new languages. According to Tan it is not about learning the new language but it is about learning the concept. "You need to conquer one concept then you can spread similar concepts to other languages" said Tan.

*Dr Johanna then asked* them for any tips to increase the chances of getting hired as a fresh graduate during the pandemic. According to Qistina, "in terms of technical skills, you must have great skills on Excel, Python and SQL. The most important is to be proactive. When given a task, do not wait until someone teaches you or tells you what to do. Ask around." She also advised to not limit oneself and try to learn new things as in a company, there are a lot of things that can be learnt. Giving herself as an example, she always mingles around with people and offers to help others.

*In Zamarul's opinion*, it is important to learn new technical skills and to not entirely depend on the fundamental knowledge gained in university. He suggested taking online courses, such as using UTM E-Learning and EDX; though EDX requires payment for you to obtain the certificate, students could then attach it on their resume. Zamarul then continued to explain the significance of improving soft skills, such as communication skills by expressing ideas and suggestions, and polish teamwork skills because it is easier to complete tasks in a team, compared to individually.

*Dr Johanna questioned Tan* on how to love programming where he answered it by saying loving programming depends on the person. People have to think about creating something new either software or app through programming. The software or app you created must tackle the real world problem that can help the community.

*Continuing with her questions*, Dr Johanna asked the speakers on how to gain confidence. In Tan's point of view, confidence can be trained by participating in a lot of competitions. When students participate in a competition they have to present the idea or project very well. Therefore, they must show a high level of confidence so that they can beat other teams.

*Zamarul's way to* gain confidence is to always join programs and volunteer themselves to present discussion topics. He also advised all students to take these chances, because it is always good to join activities that require you to speak to clients, in comparison to solely preparing codes.

*Qistina agreed* with what Tan has said, as confidence can be trained. She added that she joined a lot of programs that needed her and her team to present their projects. Qistina also ensured the participants that there are a lot of programs and projects that could be joined to build their confidence. She reminded them to not be shy and enjoy their study life with their friends.

*The upcoming question* was asked to Zamarul which is what is on the difference between study life and career life and which one he loves the most. In Zamarul's opinion, he loves and enjoys university life most because there is a lot of free time in comparison to the career life he is experiencing, because every day it is a requirement to live a repeated cycle. He spoke more in terms of responsibilities, where when you are in university, the worst thing that could occur is not receiving an A grading on your exams. However when you are working, it can entirely affect your future in new job applications. Zamarul urges students to confront and consult seniors and lecturers when facing doubts to minimize potential mistakes.

# SUMMARY

*Graduated in June 2020*, with a CGPA of more than 3.0, Qistina managed to secure a job in TM One as a social media data analyst. Qistina emphasized on joining a lot of programs to expose the students to varieties of experiences and to build self-confidence. She also said how important it is to be proactive, as Qistina, herself got the job from being proactive during her internship. She also shared what it takes to be a social media analyst.

*Zamarul has stressed a lot on* polishing the soft skills because it is important to be able to blend in and communicate with others. He also reminded students to always be proactive in sharing ideas and opinions, as it could be an extra step for a company to notice you. Zamarul's talk was very insightful and knowledgeable, and he shared plenty of his experiences for everyone, especially the first year students to understand.

*Tan graduated from UTM* in June 2019 with a CGPA of 3.92. He has participated in a lot of competitions from his first year of University. Through these competitions, he gained his professional and technical skills and his confidence also has been trained through these competitions. Tan keeps himself motivated by setting his mindset to create something new that contributes to the world. Tan's dedication in participating competitions has brought him the Chancellor Award.

# REFLECTION

*There are some strengths and weaknesses* of this talk. One of the strengths of this talk is this talk conducted online and also being recorded. Since the talk ran online and being recorded, the students or the public are more comfortable attending the talk and can refer back to the recording whenever they need anything from the talk. Moreover, the speakers are just graduated in the past few years. The speakers are more understand the mindset of the younger generation and more comfortable to communicate with them. This will cause the fresh graduates to gain and learn the experience more comfortable. The weakness of this talk is that the time being conducted is too short. There is only one hour to let three speakers share their experience. Therefore, the speakers only share a little bit of their experience instead of the full story. Lastly, we can learn from this talk that we need to improve our soft skills to secure a job, especially in this COVID-19 pandemic. This is because, except for hard skills, soft skills are the most important criteria for a company to hire you.