

Learn the art of investing from a Buffett

Ex-daughter-in-law of US tycoon to launch online school in S'pore

Sue-Ann Tan

Niche business schools seem to be catching on, and the latest announced today aims to help Singaporeans learn the art of investment.

The online school is being set up by Ms Mary Buffett, a best-selling author of investment books, an international speaker and entrepreneur, and the former daughter-in-law of American billionaire investor Warren Buffett.

Ms Buffett, 67, told *The Straits Times* in an exclusive interview: "Singaporeans are such hard workers and love learning, but they do not have the investment knowledge required."

Ms Buffett said her Buffett Online School will host Web seminars where students can ask her questions in real time. The school will also have a miniature campus in Tanjong Pagar to hold seminars.

The course will teach students to evaluate stocks and help companies grow into a firm that investors will want to put their money in.

Trainers who have been personally taught and chosen by Ms Buffett will be on campus to help course participants tailor their portfolios to their specific needs.

Mr Sean Seah, 38, Ms Buffett's business partner here, said the class sessions will be held once a month and last from about two and a half to three hours.

Sessions cost \$199 each, but students can get a discount if they sign up for a two-year period.

The first intake is limited to 200 students - who can sign up at the Investomania seminar, which is being organised by education firm Success Resources - or online at Ms Buffett's website.

Ms Buffett's school in Singapore will be her first. She plans to open similar outlets in five other countries in the region. "Singaporeans understand the value of saving, but they are conservative in investing. One of the most important things I learnt is if you work so hard for your money, you should also work hard to invest it," she said.

Associate Professor Alison Lim, assistant dean of graduate studies at the Nanyang Business School at Nanyang Technological University, agreed that Singaporeans are probably more savvy about saving than investing, debt and credit management.



MORE THAN JUST SAVING

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MS MARY BUFFETT, on how Singaporeans can prevent their hard-earned cash from going to waste.

INVESTING WITH PURPOSE

We all work for our lives but it's not about how much money you make... It's about making enough so you can live the way you want to. It's not about accumulation, but about having enough to enjoy your health, friends, family and children without having to worry.



MS BUFFETT, on how investing has a higher purpose than simply making money.

Entrepreneur and best-selling author Mary Buffett plans to open her online school in five other countries in the region. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

She added that branded schools have an appeal because they can address these specific knowledge gaps.

"Being tied to highly successful companies or persons lends such business schools the credibility that their teaching is proven to be workable," Prof Lim noted.

"Furthermore, because the courses or workshops focus on a narrow, specialised scope, they appeal to people who are looking for topical know-how or tools that they can apply to solve their business challenges immediately."

While Singapore has seen more of these branded business schools, they have not taken off in a big way, she said.

"There has certainly been a proliferation of new products in business education in the past few years... Business schools started by highly successful companies or individuals, such as Alibaba Business School and the Buffett Online School, are relatively new entrants into the education industry.

"While they are growing in popularity, they don't appear to be

wildly successful in Singapore yet."

While the school is designed to enhance financial skills, Ms Buffett believes investing should not always have the sole purpose of accumulating wealth.

"We all work for our lives, but it's not about how much money you make," she said.

"It's about making enough so you can live the way you want to. It's not about accumulation, but about having enough to enjoy your health, friends, family and children without having to worry."

Ms Buffett herself is a mother of three and has a grandson who just turned eight.

Besides spending time with her family, Ms Buffett's passion is education. She has taught in business schools such as the one at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Teaching is something that makes me very happy because I see my students becoming better for it. It also helps me to learn from others. It is very satisfying."

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