

Chinatown businesses get help going digital with Chope, Qoo10

The tech partners will develop initiatives for precinct; help boost online, offline sales

Jessie Lim

Chinatown businesses, badly battered by the dearth of tourists during the Covid-19 pandemic, will get more help in going digital.

The Chinatown Digitalisation Committee has appointed two technology partners, Chope and Qoo10, to develop digital initiatives for the Chinatown precinct and boost both online and in-store sales.

These include a dedicated online store listing products from Chinatown businesses, creating digital marketing campaigns and working with merchants to offer promotions and packages.

The project will begin with the Kreta Ayer, Telok Ayer and Bukit Pasoh zones, which are home to about 1,000 merchants, including food and beverage ones.

Speaking at the launch of the initiatives yesterday, Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information Sim Ann said that the project builds on existing efforts to help traditional precincts digitalise.

She noted how similar initiatives have been in the works in Little India and Kampong Glam since 2018. In 2014, Chinatown was also the first cultural precinct to offer free street-level Wi-Fi service for visitors.

"Today's launch in Chinatown marks a further step in our digitalisation journey by supporting our Chinatown businesses to come on board Chope and Qoo10, helping our cultural precinct evolve with



Chope's campaign sales manager Hazel Lee (second from right) showing Minister of State for Trade and Industry Low Yen Ling how to purchase a ChopeDeals voucher at Nanyang Old Coffee in South Bridge Road yesterday. With them are Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information Sim Ann and Nanyang Old Coffee managing director Lim Eng Lam. ST PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

the times even while preserving our heritage," said Ms Sim.

It has been a difficult year for Chinatown businesses.

Mr Lim Eng Lam, managing director of coffee chain Nanyang Old Coffee which has its flagship outlet in Chinatown, said: "During the pandemic, we had fewer customers because tourists were not coming in. People were also working from home."

To help Mr Lim and other business owners increase footfall at their stores and grow their online presence, restaurant-booking platform Chope will produce food maps and videos of Chinatown over the next few months.

It will offer discounts and vouchers for food and beverage outlets

on ChopeDeals, as well as heavily discounted Dine & Stay staycation bundles to give Chinatown hotels and F&B businesses a boost.

F&B companies will enjoy substantial discounts on Chope's reservation and table management services.

E-commerce website Qoo10 will create a microsite for Chinatown merchants and promote these businesses in weekly e-mails.

To attract more customers to Chinatown, Qoo10 has also developed a game where shoppers can receive shopping vouchers when they catch virtual monsters in the merchants' stores. These vouchers can be used on the spot.

The Chinatown Digitalisation Committee said these efforts will

be reviewed after a year.

Set up in July last year, the committee is led by the Infocomm Media Development Authority, Enterprise Singapore and the Singapore Tourism Board.

Yesterday, Enterprise Singapore also announced the opening of a new SME Centre at Chinatown Point to complement the Chinatown digitalisation initiatives.

SME Centres are one-stop facilities that provide business advisory to small and medium-sized enterprises, helping them upgrade their capabilities.

Firms can get advice on how to digitalise, boost productivity and internationalise, among other things.

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