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The 12th edition of TechInnovation 2024 reinforces Singapore as the innovation hub of Asia

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Alvin How, Chief Technology Officer (CTO), IPI Singapore "Healthcare Horizons" themed forum will unveil the frontiers of healthcare and explore the burgeoning FemTech industry within Asia-Pacific to accelerate healthcare innovations"



Asia's premier technology-matching platform TechInnovation 2024, a IPI's flagship event connecting the innovation and technology ecosystems from Singapore and beyond, is returning to Singapore for its 12th edition.

A technology-centric event, TechInnovation 2024 will connect business leaders, entrepreneurial innovators, technology seekers and providers in order to discover new technologies, explore technology commercialization, and collaborate within the global innovation ecosystem.

With the theme "Healthcare Horizons: Defining Tomorrow's Wellness", the 12th Edition will explore the evolution of healthcare systems, infrastructure, and transformative technologies. The conference explores a range of topics including FemiTech, remote care models, digital healthcare solutions, and the latest advancements shaping wellness in the future. Bringing together industry pioneers, healthcare professionals, and innovators, TechInnovation 2024 envisions a world where healthcare is accessible, personalised, and empowered by innovation. **Alvin How, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at IPI Singapore** shared more insights with Biospectrum Asia, who is an official media partner to the event.

- **What would be the key theme and focus of the 12th edition of TechInnovation 2024? How do you envision the scope and prospects TechInnovation would bring to the region?**

The 12th edition of TechInnovation 2024 is centred around the theme Sustainable Urban Living. This year, we are bringing the spotlight on three key areas: **Future Forward Cities, a Future-Ready Food Industry, and Healthcare Horizons**. These topics reflect the pressing need to address some of societal challenges and explore how technology can be leveraged to build a better, more resilient future.

Since TechInnovation was started in 2012, TechInnovation aims to position Singapore as the innovation hub of Asia, by offering a unique platform for businesses, innovators, and thought leaders to come together and seek innovation and collaboration opportunities. We will continue to ensure that our conference programmes are current and relevant and bring more opportunities for our attendees to foster stronger collaborations and sustainable growth across industries.

- **How would you describe TechInnovation's role as a catalyst to drive and foster global collaborations for breakthrough healthcare innovations?**

TechInnovation, as a platform, will continue to play a pivotal role in driving global collaborations, creating an ecosystem where innovators from around the world can connect with one another. Our conference programme aims to showcase trends and business opportunities to encourage more companies to embark on innovation. This year, we will expect to hear more about the frontiers of healthcare and explore the burgeoning femtech industry within Asia-Pacific. At the same time, we will explore the ways in which healthcare innovations can be accelerated in our inaugural collaboration with Financial Times Live. This year's exhibitors will also be showcasing a variety of technologies, and we will invite relevant industry players to meet with the exhibitors showcasing these revolutionary technologies, continuing to play the role of an innovation catalyst, creating opportunities and impactful outcomes.

- **How do TechInnovation strategies achieve a blend of innovation, artificial intelligence, digitalization, and sustainability? Provide an overview of IPI's commitment to green innovation at the intersection of sustainability with technology.**

Underpinning the entire conference and exhibition is the idea of open innovation. The importance of creating a common goal—sustainability—will expect more parties to come together to co-develop and co-innovate new products and services. Technologies that address environmental and sustainability challenges, such as renewable energy, waste management, and carbon capture, will drive multi-party and multi-country collaborations.

We certainly understand that digital tech, such as AI, will play a crucial role in the future. AI has already started changing the way research is being conducted, how data is analysed, and how technologies are being developed. They will enable more efficient collaboration and facilitate decision-making, providing predictive insights, translating languages, and enabling remote co-development of solutions by sharing data in real time.

- **IPI plays a pivotal role in empowering SMEs and startup businesses to scale and compete on the global stage. Would you elaborate on recent endeavours?**

TechInnovation is one of the 2 key platforms that IPI utilises in promoting open innovation (the other being our online marketplace). Aside from these platforms, our services such as technology scouting, technology landscape study and innovation advisory aims to enable companies to overcome the challenges that smaller businesses face in today's competitive landscape.

A recent example is IPI's collaboration with Matralix, a biotech company developing advanced encapsulation platforms. Despite their innovative technology, Matralix faced challenges engaging major companies. IPI connected them with Innovation Advisor Ramachandran Rajamanickam, who helped refine their business messaging, leading to partnerships with global nutraceutical and fine-chemical MNCs and positioning them for international growth.

An example of IPI's technology scouting success is the partnership between Good Pharma Dermatology, makers of Suu Balm, and Singapore Polytechnic's Consumer Chemicals Technology Centre (CCTC), facilitated during TechInnovation 2021. To meet growing consumer demand for sustainable practices, Good Pharma sought to reduce its environmental impact by transforming its liquid body wash into a concentrated formula, which would minimise packaging and emissions. With IPI's support, the collaboration with CCTC is now exploring this eco-friendly solution, highlighting IPI's role in driving innovation for sustainability.

- **How do you see the evolving innovations and consumer trends across the APAC HealthTech (or healthcare) arena? How do you perceive the trends & opportunities in the region's industry landscape?**

The APAC HealthTech landscape is evolving rapidly, with innovations like AI diagnostics and remote patient monitoring playing a pivotal role, especially in elderly care. Consumer demand is shifting toward more accessible, personalised healthcare, with significant growth in preventative care driven by wearables and data analytics. However, moving forward, the regulation and framework for data governance will be crucial, especially regarding trust in technology, data protection, and clinical outcomes. Additionally, AI-powered digital hospitals are emerging as a solution to alleviate constraints on manpower due to aging populations. Opportunities abound in APAC, particularly in improving access to healthcare in underserved regions through digital platforms. Fostering collaborations between healthcare and tech companies will be key to addressing regional challenges and delivering personalised, efficient care across the region.

- **How can technology developers and investors narrow the gap for embracing next-generation entrepreneurs?**

Stronger collaboration and mentorship is key. Providing access to networks, resources, and industry insights can help entrepreneurs navigate challenges more effectively. Tech developers can focus on creating scalable, flexible solutions that cater to the evolving needs of startups, while investors should emphasise patient capital, supporting long-term growth rather than quick returns. Additionally, fostering an open innovation culture—where established players actively collaborate with emerging entrepreneurs—will accelerate innovation and create more opportunities for next-gen leaders to thrive.

This topic will be explored during the upcoming Financial Times Live event on "Accelerating Adoption of Health Technologies", happening on 30 October 2024 at TechInnovation. Moderated by the Financial Times, the discussion will focus on best practices, collaboration and funding models critical to bridging the gap between technology development and adoption.

- **Innovators often encounter challenges in commercialising their inventions, while navigating the funding ecosystem and forming alliances. How will this forum be able to address parallel entrepreneurship's challenges?**

TechInnovation provides a platform for innovators to connect with the industry, bridging the gap between academia, research institutes and companies with industry players. Through curated matchmaking sessions, innovators can have the opportunity to build strategic alliances that accelerate commercialisation. The event provides a space for open innovation, where technology owners and technology seekers can engage to co-develop/co-innovate/co-create new/improved products and services.

- **What key takeaways are awaiting for the entrepreneurial community at TechInnovation 2024?**

TechInnovation can be a goldmine to anyone that attends. It is important to keep an open mind when attending TechInnovation to successfully takeaway some positive outcomes. Attendees and exhibitors that actively network, set up B2B meetings or speak with exhibitors, while keeping an open mind, tend to extract more positive outcomes, especially from cross-industry type of collaborations (which we see rather often). For those who attend the conference programme, be prepared to be inspired and look out for the possible trends and business opportunities that will be shared.

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