



RELATABLE

I especially like the Asian cases... (Students) can identify with Asian companies or MNCs in Asia and relate to how these companies overcome the challenges.



PROFESSOR WANG YONGGUI, from the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, China, on the Marketing Management textbook.

Textbooks by NUS professors Ang Swee Hoon and Jochen Wirtz include questions that may prompt discussion of newer firms not included in the books.
ST PHOTO: JOYCE FANG

Textbooks by NUS dons a global hit

Books translated, adapted for unis worldwide; they are 'still relevant even in age of disruption'

Yuen Sin

The global market for textbooks has been shrinking with the rise of e-books and online course providers, particularly at the university level.

But a set of textbooks co-written by two National University of Singa-

pore (NUS) marketing professors has bucked the trend. They have been translated and adapted for use in universities all over the world.

In 2004, NUS Business School's professor of marketing Jochen Wirtz became the co-author for the fourth edition of the textbook *Services Marketing: People, Technol-*

ogy, Strategy (United States version) with American professor Christopher Lovelock, who is known as "the founding father" of the services marketing field. It has since been adapted for use in nearly 20 countries.

The various adaptations and translations of the book – now in its eighth edition – have a total sales of about 40,000 every year. Outside the US, it is the most widely used textbook examining services marketing, which covers strategies fo-

cused on selling intangible products such as hospitality or tourism services.

Meanwhile, NUS Associate Professor Ang Swee Hoon's 1996 book, *Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective* – co-written with other local academics and American marketing professor Philip Kotler, has sold about 60,000 copies globally in three editions since 2005. It is targeted at senior undergraduates and Master of Business Administration students.

Prof Ang said the textbook – the first marketing one adapted for an Asian context – was mooted at a time when students all over the world were using books from the US by American professors.

While case studies may tap examples of well-known American companies such as Coca-Cola to illustrate marketing strategies, there were also many instances where "companies that we have never heard of" were included, she said.

With Asia now commanding

substantial economic weight, Prof Ang and her colleagues included in their book Asian examples like apparel retailer Uniqlo, as well as home-grown brands like shoe retailer Charles & Keith and BreadTalk bakery.

They also looked at how Western multinational corporations (MNCs), like the Hyatt chain of hotels, adapted their strategies to suit regional preferences, such as by incorporating fengshui principles in the design of its hotel rooms in Asia.

Students can relate to these companies better, said Prof Ang.

Prof Ang and Prof Wirtz believe that such textbooks will still be relevant even in an age of disruption, where leading companies may go through significant transformations between the four years or so it takes to update the book for new editions.

Said Prof Wirtz: "If you're looking for a television set in the past, you might ask people around you about whether it is good, but in today's age you might do a search online.

"How people (search for products) may have changed, and consumers are more informed today, but the basic principles of why they would buy a product (such as price and reliability) remain the same."

The textbooks also include discussion questions, and may prompt university professors to bring in other real-world examples of newer companies that have entered their domestic markets, even if they are not included in the books.

Professor Wang Yonggui from the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, China, has been using the *Marketing Management* textbook with more than 200 students in his class.

"I especially like the Asian cases as they are relevant to students. They can identify with Asian companies or MNCs in Asia, and relate to how these companies overcome the challenges," he said.

yuensin@sph.com.sg