

Taking it in their stride

To mark International Women's Day, we talk to women who say that although entering the tech world has not been easy, they are making headway by working together.

By **ANGELIN YEOH**
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WHEN Najwa Alia Rusli, 24, announced plans to start selling personal computers, she was met with scepticism.

"Some of my friends and family members asked if I was sure about my business plan because it was completely different from what I was doing," she said.

At that point, she was selling cosmetics and offering personal shopping services through her Telegram channel but felt the pandemic had shifted demand to tech products.

"My business partner proposed the idea and I thought, why not? It was evident to me that tech products will be in demand as people adapt to the new normal," the Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka graduate said.

Najwa Alia set out to meet suppliers on her own while learning to sell and repair laptops from her business partner, and is grateful to be surrounded by friends who have been supportive in developing her technical skills.

"My tech-savvy friends gave me devices to fix and encouraged me to figure out the issues on my own so I'll be inclined to focus on learning and improving myself," she said.

She opened her computer shop in Jasin, Melaka last year.

"However, when I greeted customers, some asked if they could speak to an expert or a technician instead? Most male customers would assume I don't know anything about computers. Well, I'm happy to prove them wrong," she said.

Najwa Alia is working on inspiring customer confidence by helping them make the right purchase.

"You can't assume your customers know everything. I will ask them why they need a laptop and look through the inventory to check what is suitable while considering their budget," she said.

If they are getting a second-hand laptop, she will offer a three-month warranty, ensuring that the internal parts have been checked and replaced if faulty.

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