



APO *news*

Productivity, one click away

Information technology (IT) is not only a very powerful productivity tool, but also a gateway to conducting business in innovative ways that allow you to stay one step ahead of the competition. e-Learning is one such innovation. Recognizing its importance, the APO embarked on series of e-learning activities designed to bring this cutting-edge innovation to broader audiences in its member countries. There are two platforms that are used in APO e-learning programs: the APO's own e-Learning Portal and the e-learning facilities of other organizations.



Dispatching productivity information from Tokyo to Sri Lanka via e-learning videoconferencing

Anytime, anywhere: APO e-Learning Portal

"I was overwhelmed by participants' positive response," said Program Officer K.D. Bhardwaj, Industry Department, APO Secretariat, speaking about his training course on Energy Efficiency (EE) implemented through the APO e-Learning Portal early this year. "More than 75% of program participants took part in the online live session, and at the end of each session many relevant and technical questions were received."

In 2006, the APO's three Web-based projects remained popular with participants. Wherever they were, they found it easy to log onto the APO Web site with their assigned usernames, observe the expert presentations with PowerPoint slide illustrations, work through the material provided, and then interact online with APO officers and resource speakers. Because everything is online the cost per participant is very low. "Time management is crucial for successful participation in the online program," said Monitoring Officer Shusil Sharma, Alternate Energy Program Center, Nepal, an EE training course participant. "I had to manage the working hours at the office so as not to miss live sessions because it was mandatory to be present at the course at the specified time." Project Coordinator Trinh Thi Phuong Thao, Vietnam Productivity Centre, another participant, also stressed the importance of passion and dedication to learning as key elements.

Expert guidance in Internet access, hardware, and software are necessities, pointed out as Director, Research and Planning Department and former Senior IT Officer Mukesh Bhattarai, APO Secretariat, who explained, "The rehearsal sessions are carried out to help the resource speakers and participants become familiar with the system and procedure for

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"The goal of education is to replace an empty mind with an open mind."

Malcolm Forbes

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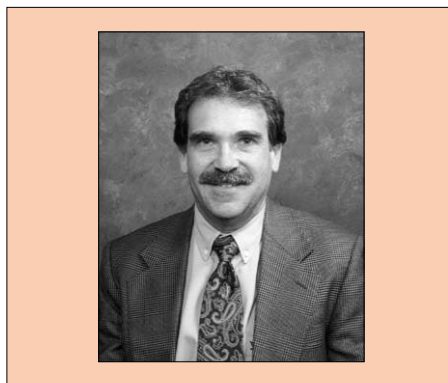


Running at half speed

As my students piled into the train to participate in a Model United Nations conference at Northeastern University in Boston, I could not help but make a mental note that of the 16 only two were young men. The other 14 students were bright, articulate, motivated women who had decided to spend two days discussing pressing international issues facing a troubled world. I could easily extrapolate from this experience to my classroom, where young women consistently outperform their male counterparts. My thoughts ran to the broader picture of a world in which in many instances countries either purposely or through cultural predisposition decided that they would accept the consequences of entering the global arena while leaving behind roughly 50% of their intellectual resources, i.e., women. A business doing the same would certainly flirt with failure.

The USA today reflects a society that embraces but falls short of taking full advantage of the immense reservoir of talent and energy represented by its female citizens. Current political events (including the recent French election) have brought issues of female leadership to the fore. Hillary Clinton's candidacy for president and Nancy Pelosi's tenure as the first woman speaker of the US House of Representatives are forcing the USA once again to take measure of its biases against strong female leadership. We should not forget that women did not receive the right to vote in the USA until 1920, despite their tireless efforts on behalf of the country's poor and disadvantaged. Certainly if there is a litmus test for intellect and courage, women passed it decades ago. Have US women finally achieved equity in leadership circles?

Altering a 371-year tradition, Harvard University welcomed its first female president in 2007. It was an ironic twist that her predecessor, Lawrence H. Summers, lost his job in large part because he alluded to the possibility that women have "less intrinsic aptitude" for science than men. That statement caused an uproar throughout academia. Four Ivy League colleges now have female presidents, as does the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This makes considerable sense given that 58% of undergraduate students are women. According to the US Department of Labor, 90% of women are pursuing their studies beyond high



school. The figure is 61% for men. Among people in their 20s and 30s, more women than men have college degrees, and about half of the students in medical and law schools are female. For law school that figure was 10% in 1970. Nationally, of roughly 2,000 colleges and universities, one-quarter are headed by female presidents, up from about 10% in 1986.

"Of women starting out in science, medicine, or law, few remain in the field or rise to the ranks of their male counterparts."

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, only 2% of undergraduates were female in 1960. Today women make up 44% of the student body. This increase is not surprising given that standardized test results in science for high school students in Massachusetts show only a 2% difference between boys and girls scoring in the "advanced" or "proficient" range.

If one assumes an even split between men and women in aptitudes for science, law, and engineering, why aren't we seeing statistics that reveal this 50-50 split in the professions and in board rooms? This misalignment has been the topic of much research and discussion. One argument is the lack

of support women receive from universities if they show an interest in the sciences and technology. They are easily discouraged by a sense of impending failure, real or imagined, that society or individuals (Lawrence Summers) predict will negate all their hard work and hopes. Some university departments in science and technology want to limit enrollment given the lack of laboratory space and financial resources and purposely weed out the weaker students. Those weaker students may not be the least talented, but those that lack the backing of a society that has reinforced the myth that women lack the intrinsic talent to succeed. New programs sponsored by the National Science Foundation want to attract more women into computer science and electrical engineering, hoping to boost the percentage of women in these fields beyond the current 28%.

The study of gender (in)equality does not lack for statistics. Those statistics paint a consistent picture of something gone awry. Of women starting out in science, medicine, or law, few remain in the field or rise to the ranks of their male counterparts. Although we are approaching parity in medical school admissions, 68% of medical faculty are male and 32% female. The unevenness is particularly noticeable in the higher ranks, with 35% of full/associate professors being men and 10% women. There has been progress since 1979, however. Today one in three physicians is a woman; in 1979 the ratio was one in 10. In the legal field, men accounted for 52% of law degrees and women 48%. Partners at law firms, however, are 83% male and 17% female. Some 46% of female law graduates leave the legal profession as opposed to a 31% dropout rate for men.


There is a continuing controversy over the discrepancy in pay levels for women and men who do the same job. The latest statistics reveal that women earn 80% of what men earn one year after college graduation. The gap increases to 69% 10 years after college. That is an improvement, however, from 1979 when women earned only 63% of men's pay. A US Department of Labor study revealed that 60% of women are in the labor force, an increase from 43% in 1970. Among working women, 32.6% have college degrees, compared with 11.2% in 1970. Despite women earning less than their male coun-

terparts many women are playing a bigger role in paying the family bills. In two-income families, 25% of the women bring home a bigger paycheck, while the 1987 figure was 18%.

The impact of women in the economic picture thins out if you consider women at the top, either as corporate board members or as top managers. Of the 100 largest publicly traded companies in Massachusetts, only 10% have women CEOs and 50% have no women board members. Only 9.2% of the executive positions in those companies are held by women. At Fortune 500 companies, 12.4% of board seats are occupied by women and the percentage of corporate officer and director positions held by women is about 15%.

In politics the “glass ceiling” of the business world is replaced with the “marble ceiling.” Despite the heavy news coverage of three women prominent in politics, Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton, and Condoleezza Rice, only 16% of the US Congress is female. Only one woman remains on the US Supreme Court. In 1920, the year women were given the right to vote, there were no women in Congress. Their numbers increased to 10, 11, and 87 in 1950, 1970, and 2007, respectively.

One way to bring more talented women into the US workforce and into leadership positions is to solve the critical issue of childcare in a gender-equal society.

The US has done poorly in this area. Women in the USA have the highest fertility rate of any major developed country and very weak family leave policies compared with other developed countries. About 43% of professional women leave work voluntarily to attend to their families. This leaves US women in the lurch. Recent trends, however, have shown that women may be devising their own solutions: enter the “mompreneurs.” One study showed that women-owned dotcom start-ups survived the dotcom collapse far better than male-owned companies. Female-led companies increased by 17% from 1997 to 2004, and it is estimated that 40% of all privately held companies in the USA are now headed by women. It is not surprising to see this strong showing by bright, talented women who are eager to be part of an economy running at full speed. 

Michael Manson had a long and close association with the APO when he was the Assistant Director of the East-West Center's Institute of Economic Development and Politics in Honolulu. He helped to initiate a number of collaboration programs between the APO and the East-West Center. Manson also served in the Asian Development Bank, and was Director of Communications with the State of Hawaii's Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. He is presently an educator.



p-TIPS

Keep the wellsprings flowing (Saving water)

Most of us are familiar with the 18th century Scottish proverb: “We’ll never know the worth of water until the well runs dry.” Although 75% of the earth’s surface is covered by oceans, only 0.01% of water resources are available for human use. Changes in lifestyles, population growth, increasing urbanization, and climate change are placing greater demands on water supplies worldwide. It makes sense to conserve as much of this precious commodity as possible and to utilize it in the most productive ways so that our well never runs dry. We all know that water should be turned off while brushing teeth or shaving and gardens should be watered in the cool of the evening to reduce evaporation. American Water & Energy Savers have other conservation tips worth considering.

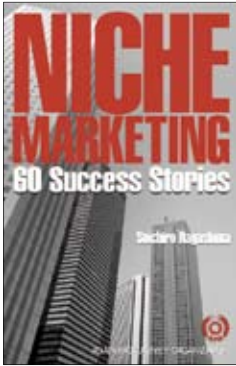
- 1) Create an awareness of the need for water conservation among your children. Don’t let them play with toys requiring a constant water stream; teach them to catch rainwater for potted plants or the lawn.
- 2) Encourage your employer to promote water conservation at the workplace. Suggest ways your enterprise can use water more productively and incorporate useful ones in training manuals.
- 3) Patronize businesses that practice and promote water conservation. This includes using eco-friendly detergents, shampoos, etc. to make

water reclamation easier and lighten loads on treatment facilities, in addition to purchasing water-saving toilets when it’s time to replace old ones.

- 4) Report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, etc.) to the authorities. Take a good look around your home and business, too, to ensure that taps aren’t dripping and pipes aren’t leaking.
- 5) Encourage your school system and local government to promote a water conservation ethic, including tourist awareness programs. The more who become involved, the better.
- 6) Support increased use of reclaimed wastewater for irrigation and other uses. Singapore’s NEWater is a successful example.
- 7) Conserve water because it is the right thing to do. Don’t waste the wet stuff just because you’re not paying for it directly, such as while staying in a hotel.
- 9) Try to do one thing each day that will result in water saving. Even if the amount saved is minimal, every drop counts.



New APO publication



Productivity Series 33 **NICHE MARKETING: 60 SUCCESS STORIES**

By Soichiro Nagashima

APO 72 pp. 2007

ISBN: 92-833-1723-8 (hard copy)

ISBN: 92-833-7059-7 (e-edition)

"Management is the art of adapting to the business environment," states veteran management consultant Dr. Soichiro Nagashima. The problem is that the business environment is very whimsical, subject to a range of political, economic, technical, and social influences, and its changes are not visible to the insensitive eye. However, "For individuals, stagnation means death; for a company, maintaining the status quo is equivalent to giving up and closing down."

The storms of changes in markets and business environments present companies with great challenges and opportunities. Important determinants of business success in the past, such as economy of scale, can be a hindrance when promptly responding to rapid socioeconomic changes. In this new era of the economy of speed, managers of flexible and agile SMEs have increased opportunities to be successful. One strategy is "moving in a different direction from others" to "exploit blind spots in a market" in a niche marketing strategy.

Niche marketing is targeting a product or service to a small portion of a market that is not being readily served by the mainstream product or service markets. Niche marketing usually refers to SMEs producing specialty products or services for a limited segment of the market. "The strategy for seizing a market niche requires an understanding of important marketing concepts and strategies based on segmentation," wrote Dr. Nagashima.

Dr. Nagashima has served as an APO expert for some 40 years. He is also the author of two APO bestsellers, *100 Management Charts* (1987), and *Corporate Strategies for a Borderless World* (1997). This new publication, *Niche Marketing: Sixty Success Stories*, introduces examples of mainly Japanese companies that have achieved success through visionary insight and creative ideas. Their stories fall into four categories, each connected to a different strategy: creating demand leading to new products; using a competitor's strength; turning woe into weal; and expanding sales. Background information and explanations in each part and the accompanying strategies provide readers not only with guidelines on how to develop their own strategies but also management knowledge. Readers will enjoy the author's optimism and passion as he presents each example with personal details.

The companies introduced are diverse in terms of size and type of industry but all created new ideas for unique products and services and satisfied newly created demand or needs. Part I, for example, introduces JALPAK, which provides combined service from flight reservations to local dining arrangements for Japanese tourists in a "total strategy."

Niche Marketing was originally published in Japanese, and the English translation is published in a shorter version to be used in international seminars and management workshops, as number 33 in the APO Productivity Series. The author hopes that readers realize that similar success stories could occur anywhere at any time, especially with the spread of information and communication technology, and that the examples in this volume will motivate entrepreneurs and SME managers to act on their own ideas for innovative products and services.

For order and inquiry on APO publications and videos, please contact the Asian Productivity Organization, Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F, 1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan. Phone number: (81-3) 5226-3920, Fax: (81-3) 5226-3950, e-Mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org

COMMON SENSE TALK



"When a problem comes along, study it until you are completely knowledgeable. Then find that weak spot, break the problem apart, and the rest will be easy."

Norman Vincent Peale

"Of all the attitudes we can acquire, surely the attitude of gratitude is the most important and by far the most life-changing."

Zig Ziglar

"The goal of education is to replace an empty mind with an open mind."

Malcolm Forbes

"One cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty counsels. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat."

Woodrow T. Wilson

"News is like food: it is the cooking and serving that makes it acceptable, not the material itself."

Rose Macaulay

"Thought that is silenced is always rebellious. Majorities, of course, are often mistaken. This is why the silencing of minorities is always dangerous. Criticism and dissent are the indispensable antidote to major delusions."

Alan Barth

"The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts."

Bertrand Russell

"It is but a truism that labor is most productive where its wages are largest. Poorly paid labor is inefficient labor, the world over."

Henry George

"War challenges virtually every other institution of society—the justice and equity of its economy, the adequacy of its political systems, the energy of its productive plant, the bases, wisdom, and purposes of its foreign policy."

Walter Millis

New officers at APO Secretariat

On 1 August, Yoshikazu Kihira joined the Industry Department in the Secretariat. After obtaining a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Tokyo's Chuo University, where he specialized in accounting theory and practice, he was employed for 17 years by the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED). At the JPC-SED, Kihira's wide-ranging responsibilities included organizing training courses and seminars on corporate governance, the balanced scorecard, etc.; developing a database of resource persons; budgeting and accounting; initiating a Web site marketing project; and developing a dedicated online portal for seminars in collaboration with 25 major Japanese enterprises. He stated, "I would like to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the Asian region by fully utilizing my intensive experience at the JPC-SED." In addition, as a Japan Quality Award Self-Assessor, Kihira hopes to use that skill to help optimize Secretariat operations. In his time off the job, Kihira enjoys trekking in the mountains with his wife.



Eriko Katashiro joined the APO Secretariat as an officer in the Industry Department on 17 July. Born in Japan, she received a BA in economics in Tokyo and during that course was an exchange student to Maastricht University, the Netherlands. Subsequently Katashiro attended the New York University (NYU) Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, where she earned a Master's degree in Public Administration and focused on public and nonprofit organization policy and management. Her professional history includes internships at UN Headquarters, UNIDO, and the NYU Institute of Public Administration. She served as a wholesaler for a financial institution, a researcher at the Japan External Trade Organization, and more recently as a program coordinator for the Japan International Cooperation Agency, where she was involved in SME promotion, technical assistance for trade and investment, and other areas. Katashiro divides her free time into playing the piano, surfing, jogging, snowboarding, yoga, and flower arrangement.



Productivity, one click away (Continued from page 1)

accessing online sessions." However, unforeseen technical problems with servers, video or audio feed, or presentation slides, although rare, have resulted in postponed or cancelled sessions. The projects were popular despite occasional difficulties according to Bhardwaj, who noted, "Participants' feedback showed that all of them were happy to participate in this type of training course despite facing those problems. However, we should make all efforts to minimize technical difficulties as well as improve the contents of the courses."

Everybody present onscreen: e-Learning facilities

Entering the Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC) of the World Bank is like entering a TV news studio. A large screen, divided into four sections, sits in front of the speakers' seats. The screen shows each national venue, with another larger screen showing the venue at which a resource speaker, local project coordinator, or a participant is reaching for a hand-held microphone.

Projects have been implemented using the e-learning facilities of the TDLC, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Association for Overseas Technical Scholarships, and other organizations. In 2006, the three APO projects reached 320 participants in 12 countries. The APO will offer three e-learning projects this year on Green Productivity (GP) and Integrated Management Systems (IMS), the Toyota Production System (TPS), and ISO22000, all in three phases. While each phase has the same content, the participating groups composed of 20 or more individuals differ. Bhattarai emphasized the importance of the content in e-learning courses, "In an e-learning program participants cannot enjoy the benefits of a face-to-face program, such as

firsthand experience or direct interaction with resource speakers and other participants. Content should be attractive enough to compensate." Time allocation in delivering those contents is also crucial, as TDLC Program Coordinator Eiko Wataya explained, "Our staff and the APO officer in charge review the contents and discuss how best to convert that into the e-conference format to hold participants' attention. Speakers' presentation times, Q&A sessions, and short breaks are carefully allocated."

The advantages of the e-conference format according to APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia Md. Zainuri Juri, who coordinated the GP-IMS course (Phase I), are, "A greater number of participants at lower cost is one big advantage of the e-learning format. There is less traveling time for participants, who can go back to work or home from the learning centers." However, several hurdles must be overcome before these projects can be expanded. "Major challenges were marketing and getting participants for the program, especially when the timing was quite unfavorable, at 23:00, for this project," reported Consultant Nilesh Roneel Kumar, the Fiji coordinator for the GP-IMS course (Phase I).

Some of the advantages of the e-learning program can also be shortcomings. Shigeru Yoshida, the resource speaker for the ISO22000 course (Phase I) noted that he "had to generalize the topics to be presented due to the variety of participants. It was also very difficult to go into specifics without knowing participants' background and interests," adding that indirect contact with the participants made it difficult to respond immediately or adjust presentations to their needs.

Aging Asia and its challenges for the productivity movement

Asia occupies roughly one-third of the earth's land area and is home to more than 60% of the world's population. It is also home to the greatest number of the elderly, a figure rapidly increasing in both absolute and relative terms. The problem of aging is a global phenomenon. Both developing and developed countries are experiencing an explosive growth in the number of older people. This presents numerous challenges not only to the productivity movement. The study meeting on Productivity in Aging Societies held in the Republic of China, 17–20 July, discussed these challenges and suggested policy directions and recommendations to enhance the quality of life and productivity of the elderly.



Seniors keeping fit in a Tokyo park

Of the many challenges, the three most pressing are financial security, employment, and provision of healthcare for the elderly. Financial security is the most difficult as the burden of supporting an ever-growing population of the elderly is falling on a decreasing number of the working-aged. “The Japanese government faces, as a result of its aging population, a deterioration in the financial health of the public pension system,” said Associate Professor Sumiko Ebisuno, Kaetsu University, Japan, one of three resource speakers deputed by the APO. Prof. Ebisuno stressed the necessity of employment for older people and

reported cases where people aged 60–65 had been reemployed by Japanese companies. Associate Professor Dr. Priscilla Dawn Allen, Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Social Work, presented the various dimensions of healthcare by introducing LSU Research's determinants of healthy aging: social activity, diet, genes, productive pursuits, and exercise.

Participants brainstormed to suggest solutions to the major problems identified. Restructuring of private and public pensions was suggested to ensure financial support. To improve employment prospects, working past retirement age

was proposed, with education and training of the elderly to allow them adapt to new roles. Training family members in basic elderly care, developing innovative programs like Medicare or social support systems for the elderly living independently, adult daycare programs, improved transport facilities, and home care services were mentioned. As fundamental solutions, promoting family values, norms, and ethics was recommended, along with including the elderly in making policies affecting them. The APO was requested to play a key role in identifying best practices to contribute to more informed and better policy decisions on making the elderly more productive in member countries. 🌐

Safety management in food industry SMEs

Ensuring food safety is vitally important but problematic in the densely populated Asia-Pacific region because most food producers and processors are SMEs. SMEs are constrained by limited resources and a lack of expertise concerning food safety standards and management systems. To support food industry SMEs in addressing such problems, the APO organized a training course on ISO22000, 9–13 July in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Korea Productivity Center.

Food moves from farms to consumers via supply chains composed of multiple actors. Since safety hazards can enter the food chain at any stage from farm to fork, adequate control under ISO22000, a generic food safety management standard, is essential. ISO22000 integrates the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) application steps developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It defines general food safety requirements that should apply to all organizations regardless of size and anywhere in the supply chain regardless of the process involved. Therefore, combined efforts of all parties throughout the food chain is required. ISO22000 provides the framework for a harmonized food safety standard that is accepted worldwide.

“The training was basically on food safety management. The importance of ISO22000 and its benefits compared to the current certification is very critical for any food company. Three resource speakers of equally high caliber tried their best to teach us through their presentations as well as practical experiences,” said Nutan Sudhir Kale, Technical and Quality Assurance Manager of Chordia Food Products Ltd, an Indian SME exporting food products to the UK, USA, and Dubai. For hands-on training the participants simulated two case studies, one on plant layout and work flow, and the other an audit scenario.

The participants also made site visits to two local companies: Ottogi Corporation, a leading “instant food” corporation in Korea famous for noodles; and Sahmyook Food Ltd., an ISO22000-certified SME producing soy drinks, baby formula, vegetable proteins, and other soy and tea products. “The visit to an ISO-certified manufacturing plant was very useful and interesting. It gave the participants practical insight on what the physical and operational conditions of being an ISO22000-certified plant should be in the Korean setting for benchmarking,” said Amor Gracia Diaz, Head of the HACCP-based Fish Inspection Unit, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Philippines. 🌐



p-Experts deputed by the APO

AUSTRALIA

General Manager **Richard Barton**, Business Improvement Advisory Services, Australia, and Managing Partner **Anton J. Benc**, and **Bruce Searles**, Benchmarking Partnerships, Australia, were deputed as resource persons for the study mission to nonmember countries on Business Excellence, 18–22 June 2007.

FIJI

Director and Group Head **G.S. Krishnan**, NPC, India, was deputed as expert for TES on Developing Emergency Response Plans, 20–27 June 2007.

Manager **Ivan K. Choi**, Palladium Consulting Pte Ltd, Australia, was deputed as resource person for the training course on the Balanced Scorecard, 25–29 June 2007.

INDONESIA

Director (Industry Research) **Dr. Mark Goh**, Logistics Institute-Asia Pacific, National University of Singapore Business School, was deputed as chief resource person, and Professional Counselor **Naoki Ito**, Organization for Small & Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, Japan, and **Prof. Sang Chang Park**, Department of Industrial Engineering, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, as resource persons for the study meeting on SME Productivity for International Trade and Competitiveness, 12–15 June 2007.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Regional Director **Dr. Peter Aun-Chuan Ooi**, Asian Regional Center, AVRDC-The World Vegetable Center, Thailand, 13–24 June, and Consultant **Dr. Gerd Walter-Echols**, Thailand, 16–24 June, were deputed as experts for TES for Integrated Participatory Crop Production and Protection Management, 13–21 June 2007.

APO/NPO update

New APO Director for Fiji

Mr. Subhas Chandra, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth, Sports, Employment Opportunities & Productivity, was appointed APO Director for Fiji w.e.f. 3 August 2007.

New APO Liaison Officer for Mongolia

Ms. Batchimeg Chimeddorj, expert, National Productivity and Development Center, was appointed APO Liaison Officer for Mongolia w.e.f. 20 August 2007.

Consultant **Mohan Dhamotharan**, Germany, was deputed as expert for TES on Improving Participation through Rural Women Facilitators, 10–16 June 2007.

JAPAN

Executive Director **Thomas Thomas**, Singapore Compact for Corporate Social Responsibility, was deputed as expert for the seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility, 11–15 June 2007.

MALAYSIA

President **Dr. Mina T. Gabor**, Philippine Small and Medium Business Development Foundation, 4–5 June, and Project Leader **Enver Loke**, CONTOUR Projects b.v., Netherlands, and Vice President **Rajendra Narshingh Suwal**, KGH Group of Hotels, Resorts and Travels, Nepal, 4–8 June 2007, were deputed as resource persons for the seminar on Community-based Rural Tourism.

PAKISTAN

Associate Dean, Graduate Studies Office, Prof. **Tan Khee Giap**, Student Affairs Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, was deputed as resource person for TES on Skill Mapping and Labor Market Information, 24–28 June 2007.

PHILIPPINES

President and Principal Consultant **Lou Magritzer**, AQAC International, Australia, was deputed as expert for TES on Integrated Food Safety Programs for Small and Medium Enterprises, 25–30 June 2007.

SINGAPORE

Special Advisor CEPEJ **Dr. Pim Albers**, Council of Europe, Directorate General Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Cooperation Directorate, France, and **Hon. Justice C. Wheeler**, Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Western Australia, were deputed as experts for TES on The Framework for Court Excellence, 27–30 June 2007.

Global Business Excellence Leader **Mr. Hans van Beek**, Philips Consumer Electronics, Netherlands, was deputed as expert for TES on Singapore Quality Award for Business Excellence Programme, 2–6 July 2007.

THAILAND

Director **Richard Dowse**, Dowse Quality Consulting, Australia, was deputed as expert for TES on Applying “Organic Development” Knowledge to the Thailand Quality Award Consultation Approach, 4–8 June 2007.

Program calendar

November

Canada

Study Mission to Nonmember Countries on Entrepreneurship and Technology/Business Incubation, 26–30 November 2007.

Republic of China

Study Meeting on Quality and Safety Standards for Fruit and Vegetables, 12–16 November 2007.

Japan

Study Meeting on Venture Business Support, 13–16 November 2007.

Asian Forum on Venture Business, 14–16 November 2007.

Coordination Meeting for the Research on Productivity Improvement in the Service Sector: Retail Industry, 26–28 November 2007.

Republic of Korea

Workshop on Green Productivity and Sustainable Community Development: Case of Natural Farming, 5–9 November 2007.

Malaysia

Training Course on Development of Productivity Specialists: Advanced Program, 12–23 November 2007.

Nepal

Training Course for Trainers in Participatory Village Development Planning, 26 November–3 December 2007.

Singapore

Multicountry Study Mission on Business Excellence: Best Practices of Singapore Quality Award Winners, 20–22 November 2007.

Sri Lanka

Seminar on Best Practices in Agricultural Technology Transfer, 5–9 November 2007.

Pakistan

Training Course on Postharvest Management of Horticultural Crops: Fruit and Vegetable Chains, 26 November–1 December 2007.

Kindly contact your NPO for details of the above activities, including eligibility for participation. If you need the address of your NPO, it is available from the APO Web site at www.apo-tokyo.org.

Erratum

The July 2007 issue of the *APO News* stated that TES experts on Enhancing Market Access for SMEs to International Markets had been deputed to Singapore. That project has been postponed to 4–6 December.

— APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka speaks —

Starting his second term in office, APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka responded to interview questions, looking back at the past and ahead to the future of the organization.

What do you regard as the major achievements of the APO during your first term as Secretary-General?

I would like to mention substantial Secretariat reform as a major achievement, especially reducing the number of departments from six to four in January 2007. That was an attempt to make the Secretariat “leaner and meaner,” while serving member countries better by pooling resources and abilities. It improved coordination and cooperation among and within the four departments, to which the new office layout also contributed. The latest step in Secretariat reform was setting up a new performance appraisal system. It has been operating on a trial basis since July this year after approval from the Governing Body. Individual work targets are now aligned with departmental objectives and then with the overall mission of the APO.



Secretary-General Takenaka

What has given you the greatest personal satisfaction during your tenure?

I also take personal satisfaction in Secretariat reform. The superior performance of the four-department structure has been confirmed, and the new office arrangement reflects the organizational change.

What was the greatest difficulty faced by the organization during your tenure?

The Secretariat went through a period of severe belt-tightening. It was difficult for all of us to see some colleagues leave. I am sorry for that but at the same time am grateful for the trust and support from member countries as well as Secretariat staff.

What are your aspirations for the APO in your second term?

I would like to continue with the reforms set in motion in my first term. One of the most urgent tasks is consolidating and fine-tuning the performance appraisal system of the Secretariat. Efforts to identify new challenges affecting productivity will continue. The knowledge gained will be incorporated in APO projects and enable the organization to achieve its ultimate goal of contributing to the socioeconomic development of Asia and the Pacific.

Which immediate major challenges do you see facing the productivity movement in the Asia-Pacific region?

Due to the different stages of socioeconomic development of member countries, different approaches are required to build up the capacity of NPOs, some of which are struggling to maintain their competitiveness as productivity promoters. Efforts should be made to raise public awareness of the overriding importance of productivity to development. This will pave the way for further progress in the productivity movement.

The Governing Body endorsed a new method for determining the APO budget and the formula for membership contributions. Why were those changes necessary and how will they affect the work of the organization?

Under the new formula, the budget size will first be determined biennially by the Governing Body based on the number of projects proposed by the Secretariat which it approves for implementation. This project-based budget system will have more merits. However, the procedure for determining the estimated budget must be established. The Secretariat must prepare a two-year plan and biennial budget proposal for consideration by the Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs and then approval by the Governing Body. There will be an adjustment period of trial and error, but I believe that all these efforts will eventually bear fruit with improved organizational efficiency.

The APO has expanded its role to include nurturing the productivity movement in Africa. How significant is this role and where else will the APO extend its support and collaboration?

After more than four decades, we have amassed a wealth of knowledge of and experience in productivity improvement in the Asia-Pacific region. The Africa Program is meant to strengthen strategic global partnerships by sharing that accumulated experience in productivity. We believe that benefits will also accrue to the APO membership, given today's increased economic interdependence. However, the APO will always listen to the wishes of its member countries and consult them before further expansion of this program.

Do you plan to expand cooperation with other international organizations for mutual benefit and to avoid duplication of efforts?

The synergy derived from networks with other organizations has been mutually beneficial. Therefore, we are expanding cooperative relationships with the ASEAN Foundation, Colombo Plan Secretariat, OECD, ILO, World Bank, and other agencies under the UN. I think that the key to optimizing synergies is a constant exchange of information. This will allow us to extend the scope and depth of future joint efforts.

48th WSM to convene in Hanoi

The 48th Workshop Meeting (WSM) of Heads of National Productivity Organizations (NPOs), the second such meeting in 2007 is scheduled for 16–18 October in Hanoi, Vietnam. The second WSM will be held to facilitate the transition to a new schedule with biennial program planning and budget preparation as a result of the new membership contribution formula approved by the APO Governing Body Meeting in its 49th session in Mongolia. This WSM will be hosted by the Directorate for Standards and Quality and organized by the Vietnam Productivity Centre.