



APO *news*

Dawn of a new DON Program

The Development of NPOs (DON) Program is a key thrust area of the APO. As part of the Secretariat restructuring plan, from January the DON Program has two components, DON Strategy and DON Implementation. DON Strategy, the responsibility of the Secretariat Research and Planning Department, involves identifying new topics and challenges and planning accordingly to meet the needs of member countries. DON Implementation is a downstream activity and is handled by the Industry Department.

A detailed need-assessment survey of NPOs is presently underway as part of DON Strategy. The results will be used in a future strategic capacity-building program for NPOs. As part of the survey, two coordination meetings were convened in Cambodia, 26–27 April, and in Fiji, 8–9 August. Fifteen member countries are at present participating in this survey. For expediency, they have been grouped into two clusters and are guided by two chief experts each to facilitate communications and guidance. The coordination meetings were held to finalize the common methodology for collecting baseline data on NPOs and member countries. Ideas and suggestions both from national experts and chief experts as well as the Secretariat were advanced, and a consensus was reached on a common approach and methodology for the survey, as well as on the format for the report.



Developing research methodology at Fiji coordination meeting

The survey is an upstream project, and the findings will be used to formulate an APO DON Strategy and a concrete roadmap for the long-term development of NPOs. “The APO through the DON Strategy initiative is facilitating NPOs in assessing their total preparedness to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing socioeconomic and competitive market environment. The survey is somewhat similar to a strategic training need survey in industry,” Chief Expert S.A. Khader, India, commented. According to Chief Expert Mah Lok Abdullah, Malaysia, “The present DON Program with its two-tiered approach is a very principled and focused initiative of the APO. I believe that this will assist NPOs and its member countries in identifying clearly and specifically the relevant problems, enhancing existing competencies, and acquiring new competencies in member countries.”

“All eight national experts of cluster A are on the verge of making their final draft reports,” stated Khader. The final draft will highlight the specific programs that are needed for each NPO and country. Despite having started their work three months after cluster A, cluster B experts have been working hard, collecting and analyzing data. Chief Expert Choo Tuck Low from Singapore reported, “Based on feedback from the national experts of cluster B, we are optimistic that the individual NPO’s survey findings will be ready in time for the second coordination meeting.”

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“If I had my life to live over, I would perhaps have more actual troubles but I’d have fewer imaginary ones.”

Don Herold

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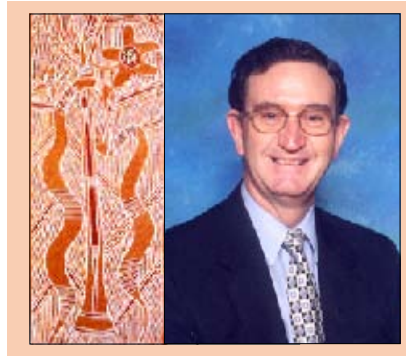
Business excellence frameworks as the no. 1 productivity improvement tool

Some would say that the business excellence framework is another one of those management fads that will pass, just like process reengineering, TQM, QA, customer service, lean manufacturing, just-in-time inventory, the balanced scorecard, best practice benchmarking, etc. However, well-informed observers know that the whole productivity-related alphabet soup of abbreviations and acronyms is wrapped up in the single package known as the business excellence framework.

“...the business excellence framework provides a vehicle that can assist the top management to measure performance and to plan effectively for the future while delivering superior customer service.”

The business excellence framework is a contemporary dynamic framework for managing an enterprise for sustainability and improved competitiveness. The most well known is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program—Criteria for Performance Excellence, which came into existence in late 1987. Other national brands carry associated titles like National Quality Awards or the Business Excellence Framework, but all are slight adaptations of the original Baldrige criteria. Recent research has shown that there are about 70 identifiable business excellence frameworks worldwide. In the USA, there are 44 active state and local quality award programs in 41 states. There are adapted criteria for health and education as well. Further examination reveals there is about a 90% correlation between them all, and the body of knowledge is similar and now very considerable.

Award recipients have presented their achievements to thousands of organizations and they delight in telling their success stories. The business excellence framework criteria are about winning in your market every day with high performance, integrity, and ethics. Whether the organization is large or small, involved in manufacturing or service, or in the



public or nonprofit sector, the business excellence framework provides a vehicle that can assist the top management to measure performance and to plan effectively for the future while delivering superior customer service.

Participation in awards program has valuable benefits. It is designed to strengthen the competitiveness of enterprises to:

- Help improve organizational performance practices, capabilities, and results;
- Facilitate communication and sharing of information on best practices among organizations;
- Serve as a working tool for understanding and managing performance; and
- Guide strategic planning and opportunities for learning.

The key criteria embedded in the business excellence framework are also designed to help organizations deliver continuously higher value for customers and other stakeholders, upgrade overall organizational capabilities and effectiveness, and improve enterprise and individual learning outcomes.

All business excellence frameworks encompass the following set of interrelated core values and key criteria for high-performing organizations:

- Visionary leadership;
- Customer-driven excellence;
- Organizational and individual learning;
- Valuing the workforce and business partners;
- Agility and flexibility;
- Focus on strategy;
- Encouraging innovation and creativity;
- Management by facts and data;

- Corporate governance and social responsibility;
- Focus on business results and creating value; and
- Process-driven systems perspective.

“The aim of the business excellence framework and the application process is to create an environment for sustainable continuous improvement.”

A recent APO multicountry study mission to Australia on Business Excellence met at the conclusion of the week and summarized the findings and observations. The collective observations correlated closely with the key business excellence framework criteria above. Several participants noted the apparent strong inspirational leadership at all levels in the Australian enterprises visited. This was visible leadership by example through the implementation of a clear vision and mission. The desirability of a value-based culture to underpin strong leadership was also mentioned. In addition, the importance of communication and the methods for communicating messages at all levels of the organizations were noted.

Developing a corporate culture of continuous improvement was a common theme in all the Australian enterprises. Inspirational leadership and sound governance provided accountability and responsibility throughout the organizations. It was apparent that a focus on strategy was part of the planning process, and the need for organizational alignment for better results had been recognized. Enthusiasm was apparent, and the challenge to “just start” on the business excellence and quality journey was a message that many visitors received positively.


Customer retention was considered vital in the Australian enterprises visited, and the management of customer feedback played a major role in informing management of customer satisfaction levels. Supply chain management was seen as utilizing business partnerships to deliver better customer service. The measurement of processes and results in many instances was demonstrated by the use of data and

data analysis. Obtaining timely and accurate data is vital to managing and improving processes. The use of statistical process control to assist in benchmarking exercises and improve system organization was considered essential.

A human resources focus was evident in the enterprises visited in Australia. The importance of knowledge and experience, and the commitment to “experience excellence” and build on creativity and innovation were seen as the key to excellence. An emphasis on work-life balance for better workforce morale was evident. Most organizations expressed the importance of internal harmony, of winning the hearts and minds of the workforce, and the utilization of imagination instead of memory. Building the skills and competence of all staff and encouraging teamwork showed how people are valued. Many representatives of the enterprises visited pointed out that it was essential to recognize different perspectives but to have a common vision.

The importance of business process management in breaking down silos and managing the business better was highlighted, because quality improvement is a moving target driven by increasingly higher customer expectations. Several noted the reality that the journey to business excellence and continuous improvement never ends. Benchmarking as an essential learning tool for continuous process improvement was pointed out consistently throughout the visit. Business

results should be seen as the outputs and they demonstrate whether an enterprise is being managed effectively. Practical productivity improvement starts at the enterprise level and should be encouraged to “spread like a virus” throughout the whole organization and to suppliers, vendors, and customers.

By utilizing the business excellence framework in a systematic way, enterprises can take advantage of a proven set of criteria to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in a way that is understood by both management and the workforce. The aim of the business excellence framework and the application process is to create an environment for sustainable continuous improvement. Winning an award or being recognized is not the key driver for most enterprises. Increased productivity is. 

Richard Barton is the Managing Director of Business Improvement Advisory Services. Previously he was the Business Process & Quality Management Executive for IBM in Australia and New Zealand. Prior to that he was General Manager of the Australian Quality Council. He is a Senior Member of the American Society for Quality, and a Fellow of World Confederation of Productivity Science. He has had a long and close association with the APO since 1992.



p-TIPS

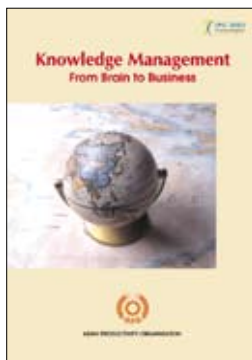
- Retail stores, especially SMEs, cannot afford to lose even a single customer in this era of stiff competition. It doesn't take a lot of cash or high-tech gizmos to create a pleasant atmosphere in which shoppers are happy to spend time and their hard-earned money. Shari Waters, consultant at <http://www.retail.about.com/>, suggests that retailers look around their stores and see if any of the following may be turning customers off and pushing them into the doors of competitors or onto ultraconvenient Web e-tailer sites.
- 1) Dirty bathrooms. Restrooms, even if not for public use, must be sparkling and well supplied with soap, trash bins, and paper products. Daily cleaning is a must.
- 2) Messy dressing rooms. Tidy away hangers, tags, and packaging after each customer's use.
- 3) Loud music. Relaxing music contributes to a good retail atmosphere, but when too loud or inappropriate can ruin it.
- 4) Handwritten signs. Printed signs are easier to read and look much more professional. Use or borrow a computer and experiment with fonts and sizes that complement your store.
- 5) Stained floor or ceiling tiles. Regular cleaning, by the owner/employees or a contracted service, keeps stores looking fresh and attractive.

Retail therapy (Top 10 ways to turn off customers)

- Replace stained carpets or tiles as soon as possible.
- 6) Burned-out or poor lighting. Replaced burned-out bulbs immediately and ensure that customer areas have sufficient light. Some customers' eyes may be aging or less than perfect. It's certain that what they can't see, they won't buy.
- 7) Offensive odors. If you're operating a feed store or garden center, shoppers accept the smell of fertilizers. Some odors even invite purchases. But avoid strong smells (even of perfume) that may offend and use natural neutralizers if necessary.
- 8) Crowded aisles. Allow adequate space for customers to move and keep walkways clear. Being cramped is a turn-off; so is not being able to spot a wanted item hidden under others or the fear of injury from falling merchandise.
- 9) Disorganized checkout counters. Keeping the checkout area neat increases customer confidence and discourages theft.
- 10) Lack of shopping carts/baskets. Your store may be too small for carts, but every retailer needs baskets with handles that leave hands free to examine more items and encourage multiple purchases. Make sure that enough are available.



New APO publication



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FROM BRAIN TO BUSINESS

APO 110 pp. 2007

ISBN: 92-833-2376-9 (hard copy)

ISBN: 92-833-7062-7 (e-edition)

Knowledge management (KM) has been identified as the key to future growth for all businesses. By leveraging corporate knowledge, an organization can significantly increase its efficiency and effectiveness. Knowledge managed effectively has the potential to increase productivity and contribute to improvements in quality, cost, and delivery. KM is how organizations create, capture, and reuse knowledge to achieve organizational objectives and create value for others. The KM concept has steadily gained acceptance in APO member countries, and the number of companies and organizations that adopt and integrate KM practices into their existing management and operations systems continues to rise.

Recognizing the importance of KM to member countries, the APO has organized several projects on the theme. The International Productivity Conference 2007 (IPC 2007) on Knowledge Management—From Brain to Business, jointly organized by the APO and the Thailand Productivity Institute in Bangkok, Thailand, 18–19 January this year, was a major KM promotion project showcasing outstanding KM applications by globally renowned enterprise from Asia, Europe, and the USA.

This new publication, *Knowledge Management from Brain to Business*, documents the proceedings of IPC 2007 and is comprised of opening addresses, speaker presentations, summaries of two knowledge-sharing sessions, and free-ranging panel discussions held at the end of each conference day. The speaker presentations contained are:

- Strategy as Distributed Phronesis: Knowledge Creation for the Common Good, by Dr. Ikujiro Nonaka, professor emeritus, Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy, Japan;
- Collaborative Enterprise-wide Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Learning—Taking Knowledge Sharing to the Next Level, by Knowledge Transfer Manager Martha Seng, Buckman Laboratories (Asia) Pte. Ltd., Singapore;
- Connecting Strategy and Operations through Knowledge Management—The Tata Group Experience, by Head, RFID Solutions, T.S. Rangarajan, Tata Consultancy Services, India;
- Innovation and Intellectual Capital Management Set the Agenda, by Managing Director Rory L. Chase, Teleos, UK;
- From Knowledge Management to Operational Excellence, by Senior Manager Dirk Ramhorst, Siemens IT Solutions and Services, Germany; and
- Integration of Knowledge Management and Learning for Innovation, by President Chaovalit Ekabut, Siam Pulp and Paper Public Co., Ltd., Thailand.

Each presentation includes the accompanying figures used in the original presentations as well as summaries of the major points. The summaries of the knowledge-sharing sessions, an innovative feature of IPC 2007, and additional questions and answers after the sessions, add depth to the key points of the presentations. This book will be of interest to anyone interested in learning the latest concepts in KM, successful examples of KM application, and methods for KM measurement.

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



“Combine nursing homes with nursery schools. Bring very old and very young together: they interest one another.”

John Cage

“If you see a snake, just kill it—don’t appoint a committee on snakes.”

H. Ross Perot

“All our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike and yet it is the most precious thing we have.”

Albert Einstein

“It takes time to succeed because success is merely the natural reward of taking time to do anything well.”

Joseph Ross

“Adventures happen only to those incapable of planning an expedition.”

Richard Evans Schultes

“So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent.”

Henry George

“There are two types of people—those who come into a room and say, ‘Well, here I am!’ and those who come in and say, ‘Ah, there you are.’”

Frederick L. Collins

“Teamwork is so important that it is virtually impossible for you to reach the heights of your capabilities or make the money that you want without becoming very good at it.”

Brian Tracy

“If I had my life to live over, I would perhaps have more actual troubles but I’d have fewer imaginary ones.”

Don Herold

— Asia and Europe build eco-innovation bridges —

In April 2007 an APO fact-finding mission visited the Swedish Industry Association (SINF) in Stockholm and discussed ways of working together to create synergy in areas of common interest. The SINF, a national organization of small and medium-sized Swedish industries, expressed great interest in the APO's Green Productivity (GP) Program, an innovative productivity concept that allows companies to achieve greater competitiveness while simultaneously addressing environmental concerns. Sweden, one of the most environmentally conscious nations in Europe, can benefit from the APO's expertise in GP, while APO member countries can learn from the state-of-the-art technologies, activities, and initiatives of eco-innovation practiced in Europe.

The APO therefore organized a study meeting on Eco-innovation held in Stockholm, Sweden, 3–7 September, in collaboration with the SINF. It was incorporated into the SINF's second annual conference on the Sustainability of the Planet (SOP), which was held 4–6 September. Thirteen participants representing 13 countries attended the meeting along with Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto of the Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo, as an APO resource speaker.

The study meeting began with Prof. Yamamoto's presentation on the Environment and Eco-innovation. He introduced the concept of eco-innovation as the optimal way to minimize environmental risks based on technological advances. Prof. Yamamoto also provided participants with Japanese examples of eco-design initiatives as a way to overcome the obstacles of dematerialization, i.e., using fewer resources, while describing some eco-materials. He pointed out that, "Policies should promote material efficiency and high resource productivity in the fight against pollution and environmental degradation, as well as resource depletion." His presentation was followed by two Swedish speakers, Dr. Sven-Olof Ryding and Peter Nohrstedt from the Swedish Environmental Management Council, who spoke on Swedish experiences with product-related supply chain information and on eco-innovation and green purchasing, respectively.

After the independent APO workshop on the first day, participants then took part in the SINF forum and workshops of the SOP conference for the following two days along with 110 experts from 40 different countries. Prof.



Sweden's environment-conscious ABB hosts meeting participants

Yamamoto and one participant each from Japan and the Philippines, Naoki Arai and Dr. Antonio Pineda, respectively, took part in the forum discussions by speaking as panel experts and were actively involved in the discussions on how to create incentives for funding organizations.

A site visit was made to the world-leading Swedish engineering company ABB in Vasteras, near Stockholm. ABB is one of the world's leading power and automation companies, operating in about 100 countries. Participants were briefed on ABB's environment- and energy-conscious technologies by in-house ABB engineers and a contracted consultant. "The ABB group company aims to contribute to economic growth, environmental stewardship, and societal development through industrial innovation and technology," explained Managing Director Wernoe, electronic consultant for ABB.

The combination of innovation with a sustainability aspect will ultimately benefit all, as noted by Executive Consultant Krisada Ruangchotevit of Siam Cement, Thailand, who gave a presentation on his business perspective during the wrap-up session of the meeting. The other meeting participants agreed with his assertion that, "It is indispensable to have commitment and acceptance from top and middle management to promote ecologically sustainable procurement within the framework of corporate policy." ☺

Dawn of a new DON Program (Continued from page 1)

The second coordination meetings for finalizing reports will be held 12–15 November in Bangladesh for cluster A countries, and 17–20 December in India for cluster B. Soon after the meeting in India, the four chief experts and the Secretariat will convene to compare and compile the outcomes of the survey for the 15 member countries and use it to formulate future DON Implementation activities. Mah Lok Abdullah stressed the importance of a

commitment to sustaining the project, saying that, "This survey should not be an end, but a beginning of the capacity-building activities. NPOs' and stakeholders' commitment is very important in ensuring that the planned programs of the APO are effective and impactful." The results of the need-assessment survey will be presented at the Forum on Development of NPOs scheduled to be held in Iran early next year. ☺

Greening rice bowls

"Nothing is better than rice for your health," was the strong belief of most Koreans prior to the rapid westernization of the nation's diet accompanied by the diversification of food choices. Although their dietary habits have changed, rice remains the staple food for many Koreans and the major source of income for farmers, as is in many other Asian countries. However, excessive use of agricultural chemicals to achieve self-sufficiency in rice has been the cause of environmental pollution and the production of unhealthy rice in many areas. This is why ecofriendly paddy farming methods are now being developed in advanced rice-growing regions.

Twenty participants from nine Asian countries gathered in Japan to share their perspectives on this issue in the multicountry observational study mission on Green Technologies and Practices in Paddy Farming organized by the APO in collaboration with the Japan Association for International Collaboration of Agriculture and Forestry (JAICAF), 24–31 August. As a participant from the Republic of Korea, I was impressed with the completeness of the program, designed to be undertaken in stages to maximize participants' understanding. The study mission comprised informative presentations by resource speakers, sufficient time for interaction among participants and country paper presentations, and a three-day site visit to five venues in Saitama and Nagano prefectures.

Participants had different views on effective green technologies. Some organic paddy farming practices were not deemed applicable in developing countries. The lower productivity of some organic methods, coupled with higher costs of production inputs, must be ruled out in countries where the quantity of production is given priority over quality. A niche market for expensive organic rice does not exist in those countries. Although rice produced organically is profitable in Japan and the Republic of Korea due to its high sales price, this is not the case in most other Asian countries. Participants concluded from the Japanese model that organic paddy farming can be productive and it may be



Sun Jung Park's (left) group summarizing green paddy farming innovations

possible to adapt the methods in developing countries with appropriate farming techniques, well-designed national policies, and the commitment of both consumers and producers to living more organically.

I believe that the advanced green technologies we examined in Japan, a country that has achieved optimum production as well as high quality in organic paddy farming, will be widely disseminated in participants' countries. Personally, I would also like to introduce innovative technologies developed in the Republic of Korea to other APO member countries. I would also like to thank the APO and JAICAF for their excellent coordination of the best agricultural study project I have attended. ☺

Contributed by Manager Sun Jung Park of Saemaul Undong Central Training Institute, Republic of Korea

Measuring project impact

Thirteen representatives from the NPOs of 10 member countries put their heads together during the workshop on Training Evaluation: Review Meeting, held in Singapore, 13–15 August. The review meeting was summoned to address the concerns expressed regarding the evaluation of APO projects, which were raised at the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) and Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs (WSM) held this year, in Mongolia and Bali, respectively. Delegates at both the GBM and WSM pointed out the need to evaluate and analyze the impact and effectiveness of APO training courses and projects more rigorously. This meeting was specially convened to review the present practices and methodology of APO evaluations and develop a practical, workable framework for monitoring and measuring the impact of projects.

The workshop started with an analysis of the current modality of APO project evaluation. Participants agreed that the scope should be expanded beyond simply obtaining participants' impressions of the project. At present, the evaluation report prepared by the Secretariat focuses on the efficiency of the training or project implementation. Project participants are required to fill out an evaluation sheet asking about their level of satisfaction, which is measured in terms of logistical arrangements, time management, selection of topics, quality of resource persons, and arrangements for site visits, among others.

The meeting spent the majority of time on answering the question of how the lessons learned can be conveyed and how the knowledge and skills derived from projects are transformed into increases in competence, organizational profitability, and competitiveness. Participants subsequently established a recommended framework for APO project evaluation. The framework includes pre- and postproject components along with the current onsite evaluation format for multicountry projects. For individual-country projects, the emphasis should be placed on measuring the results and impact on the performance of participants' organizations. The framework also answers the questions of "for who, what, and when" in the measurement process.

Close cooperation between the APO and NPOs will be the key to the successful application of the suggested methods since the pre- and postproject evaluations should be conducted by the hosting NPOs. NPOs will also be requested to interact with the beneficiary organizations of the project to report the outcomes. As the roles and responsibilities of NPOs increase, concerns over the shortage of staff and resources to perform the tasks were raised. "The APO should provide resources and technical support to build up the capacity of those NPOs requiring assistance," suggested the resource speakers at the review meeting. ☺



p-Experts deputed by the APO

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Associate Professor **Sumiko Ebisuno**, Department of Management and Economics, Kaetsu University, Japan, 17–19 July, and Associate Professor **Dr. Angelique Wei Ming Chan**, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, and Associate Professor **Dr. Priscilla Dawn Lilly Allen**, Louisiana State University School of Social Work, USA, 17–20 July, were deputed as resource persons for the study meeting on Productivity in Aging Societies.

INDIA

Director **Gerald A. Herrmann**, Organic Services GmbH, Germany, 23–25 July, and **Dr. Alberta Velimirov**, Forschungs Institut für Biologischen Landbau, Austria, Consultant for Organic Agriculture **Dr. Tej Partap**, India, and Director **Dr. DBT Wijeratne**, Ministry of Agriculture Development and Agrarian Services, Sri Lanka, 23–27 July, were deputed as resource speakers for the study meeting on Organic Agriculture for Promoting Green Productivity and Agribusiness Exports.

INDONESIA

Senior Research Consultant **Hidayat**, Lembaga Produktivitas Nasional, Indonesia, Secretary to the Governor **Kusum Dssanayake**, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Associate Professor **Buarat Srinil**, Faculty of Commerce, Thammasat University, Thailand, Senior Consultant **Azlan Bin Kassim**, NPC, Malaysia, Associate Professor **Chiungfeng Ko**, Department of Accounting, Soochow University, ROC, General Manager **Achyut Raj Sharma**, NPEDC, Nepal, **Dr. Moon-Kyum Kim**, Department of Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Soongsil University, ROK, Manager **Raja Hassanien Javed**, Financial Services, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, Pakistan, President and Chief Operating Officer **Benel Dela Paz Laguna**,

Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation, Philippines, Vice Chairman **Thi Hong Thuy Nguyen**, Auditing Department, Accounting and Auditing Faculty, National Economics University, Vietnam, Senior Expert **Hassan Zibaee Farimani**, Macroeconomic Bureau, Management and Planning Organisation, Iran, General Manager-Business Development and Lending **Uday Raj Sen**, Credit Corporation (Fiji) Limited, were deputed as national experts at the coordination meeting for research on Financing for SMEs, 19–21 June 2007.

President and CEO **Fione Tan**, OneNet.com Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia, 30–31 July, and Professor **Dr. Subhash Wadhwa**, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, and Management Consultant **Dr. Soichiro Nagashima**, Japan, 30 July–3 August, were deputed as resource persons for the seminar on Good Management Practices in Agro-based Rural SMEs.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Managing Director **Victor M. Cintron**, Rim of World Officer, USA, Lead Auditor **Geok Boon Chua**, and Lead Auditor, Senior Trainer, and Senior Consultant **Lee Ying Chien**, Independent European Certification (M) Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia, were deputed as chief resource person and resource person for the training course on ISO22000—Food Safety Management and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), 9–13 July.

SINGAPORE

CEO **Charles Dagher**, Dagher Consulting Group (Lanka) Pvt. Ltd., Sri Lanka, was deputed as resource person for the TES on Industrial Engineering for the Garment Industry, 7–13 July.

People Development Manager **Sarah Elizabeth Balchford Francis**, Pacific Brands, Australia, was deputed as expert for the TES on Singapore Quality Award for Business Excellence Programme, 9–13 July.

THAILAND

President **Kousuke Ueda**, TransScope Laboratory, Inc., Japan, and Environmental Consultant **Dr. Suporn Koottatep**, Norway, were deputed as experts for the seminar on the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle), 23–27 July.

WEB-BASED

Mumbai SBU Head **Rahul Datar**, Environmental Management Centre, India, was deputed as resource person for the e-learning on Green Productivity and Integrated Management Systems (ISO19001, ISO14001, OHSAS 18001), 9–12 July, 30 July–2 August, and 20–23 August.

JMS Development Section Management Consultant

Program calendar

December

Cambodia

Demonstration Company Project: Follow-up Workshop for Executives and Managers, 10–13 December 2007.

Japan

Multicountry Observational Study Mission on the Toyota Production System (TPS), 3–14 December 2007.

Workshop on Integrated Community Development for the Mekong Region: Regional Development through Rural Industrialization and Networking among Stakeholders, 11–14 December 2007.

Seminar on Modern Quality Control and Inspection Systems for Food Products, 13–20 December 2007.

Study Meeting on Global Leadership Development, 17–20 December 2007.

Malaysia

Training Course on the Food Safety Management System (ISO22000:2005) for Auditors/Lead Auditors, 5–11 December 2007.

Southeast Asian Regional Conference on Agricultural Value Chain Financing, 12–14 December 2007.

Sri Lanka

Forum on Labor-Management Cooperation, 4–7 December 2007.

Switzerland

Study Mission to Nonmember Countries on Quality and Innovation, 3–7 December 2007.

Thailand

Workshop on the Promotion of Community Productivity: One Village, One Product Movement, 17–21 December 2007.

Vietnam

Seminar on Knowledge Management, 10–14 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.

Hisazumi Matsuzaki, JMS Department, ChuSanRen, Japan, and President **Dr. Makoto Kawada**, Meijo Process Management Institute Co., Ltd., Japan, were deputed as resource speakers for the e-learning course on the Toyota Production System, 23–25 July, 29–31 August, and 12–14 September.

APO/NPO update

Acting Director of Administration and Finance Department in APO Secretariat

Dr. A.K.P. Mochtan, Senior Program Officer in the Industry Department, was appointed as Acting Director of the Administration and Finance Department w.e.f. 1 September, 2007.

New APO Alternate Director and Liaison Officer for Nepal

Dr. Ram Deo Singh, General Manager, National Productivity and Economic Development Center Ltd., was appointed APO Alternate Director and Liaison Officer for Nepal w.e.f. 12 September 2007.

Teach productivity early

This is an excerpt of an article originally published in the online Learning Post (www.bangkokpost.com/education/index.htm), an associate publication of the English-language daily The Bangkok Post, on 12 June, written by Weena Noppakunthong. We thank the Learning Post for permission to excerpt it here. Since 2005, the Thailand Productivity Institute has been making efforts to take the productivity message into schools, and the productivity youth camp organized at the Erawan National Park in Kanchanaburi province for 80 students from 10 schools, 31 May–2 June, is an innovative recent example of those efforts.

Cooking up productivity

Although there are gazillions of activities at the camp, a group cooking activity is representative of the camp's goals. The overall idea in the activity is that students must imagine that they are in the service sector, preparing a high-quality meal at the lowest cost to keep their customers (in this case, their teachers) satisfied. They also need to prepare timely meals so as not to keep the customers waiting. The task forces students to become organized to complete assigned tasks as efficiently as possible.

To achieve the goal, students follow the Plan, Do, Check, and Act (PDCA) concept, which is a step-by-step approach to problem solving that helps to increase individual and group efficiency. Each team of students must prepare two edible (but not necessarily delicious) meals. As in every household, there's a problem deciding what to cook, and if there are no budding chefs among the group, the resulting dish might be a disaster for the taste buds. After settling on what dish to prepare, students decide on the ingredients, which they must "buy" at a make-believe auction, using points earned in games played earlier in the day as imaginary money. The ingredients range from garlic to fresh cabbages.

Planning is now crucial. Students must buy the correct ingredients, at the best prices, and in the right amounts. They must also buy everything at once; there won't be a second opportunity. The "do" step in the PDCA cycle requires students to cook the meal while frequently "checking" the quality and taste. If the meal is not to their liking, the group must "act" to improve it by adding additional ingredients, such as sugar, fish sauce, and so forth. That completes the four steps of the cycle. Additionally, however, students are required to reflect on whether they have been efficient in producing the meal. These are the same steps every business must take to become successful and to remain competitive. The four-step PDCA process is intended to address normal problems of everyday life too.

Underlying lessons

The cooking activity also teaches many important lessons in a subliminal manner. They include lessons about safety, morality, the environment, and even ethics. For example, while cooking with hot oil, operating a burning stove, and using sharp knives, issues of safety should be of paramount importance. Similarly, every member of the group must do her or his fair share of the work, and the group must properly dispose of any waste to help protect the environment. Moreover, good planning helps to reduce waste to an absolute minimum in the first place. The activities teach students to get in the habit of being efficient: avoid wasted efforts of having to make many return trips to get forgotten ingredients, separate needed from not needed materials, move foods and spices



Young campers in Erawan National Park post-PDCA cycle (photo courtesy of FTPI)

close to the stove, and generally to be pragmatic. These may be considered common sense, but they are quite often not practiced in people's personal lives, in school, or in the workplace.

Bonding with nature

Besides the games and activities, there was time reserved for the 15- and 16-year-olds to bond with nature during their hour-long climb to the different levels of the Erawan waterfall to have a refreshing dip in the cool water. Even the enjoyment of the waterfall has an underlying purpose: students who frequently bond with nature develop a greater tendency to love, share, and protect it for future generations. Accordingly, later in life when today's students are corporate presidents or factory managers, they will think twice about emitting hazardous materials into the rivers or odious gases into the atmosphere. This, of course, will make whichever industry they work for more productive.

How will I improve?

Following the experiences of the camp, Akkhanont Pradab, from Rajavinit Bangkheng School, says he has learned to manage his personal life and to make clear plans before undertaking any task or activity. "By coming here," he said, "I learned a systematic method of approaching activities and problems, starting in my personal life, with my friends, and in my workgroup." Similarly, Praew says she has learned to plan her time better. "After learning about productivity, I can improve my life by planning my agenda daily and using my time effectively," she says. Praew is a high achiever. Now that she has learned how to apply principles of efficiency and productivity to her social and academic life, she feels she can do even more.