



## Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

Name of publication: Ceylon Today (31 DECEMBER 2015, Sri Lanka)

Page: <http://www.ceylontoday.lk/22-113686-news-detail-hnbs-short-road-to-success.html>

### HNB’s short road to success

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Ceylontoday, 2015-12-31 02:00:00

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The awards ceremony was held at the BMICH, with Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as chief guest, with the participation of over 100 reputed companies and organizations. The National Productivity Awards was organized by the National Productivity Secretariat of the Public Administration and Management Ministry under the direction of Public Administration, Local Government and Democratic Governance Ministry.

The journey for transformational improvements in productivity at HNB began in 2012 during the bank's Strategic Planning Sessions where it was recognized that real efficiencies were hidden within the traditional banking channels, systems and processes. Consequently it was decided to challenge the business model and processes to realize quantum improvements in productivity and efficiency. The initiative started by establishing an Operational Excellence committee in 2012, followed by forming a Process Improvement and Change Management (PICM) unit in 2013. A decision was made to approach this transformation with internal resourcing without the services of external consultants initially, said HNB Chief Operating Officer Dilshan Rodrigo. He further said, 'We realized the importance of developing a unique strategy in line with our reading of the future. The need to be ahead of the competition instead of following the competition was to be the key imperative for building competitive advantage. We identified three strategy pillars as the cornerstones – developing a Sales Culture, driving Operational Excellence and aggressively deploying Digital Banking Solutions. The strategy was backed by freezing entry level recruitments in the last three years, curtailing branch expansions whilst doubling our investments in technology.

The strategy's essence was to reorient branches as customer sales and service centres whilst creating centres of excellence for Credit and General Operations, to improve the direct to indirect staff ratio with quantum improvements in productivity. The Centres of Excellence to benefit from standardization, specialization and faster turnaround times. The introduction of relevant technology across all areas was considered a key priority.

On winning the award, Rodrigo said, "I am delighted by the recognition afforded to HNB in the productivity improvements sphere and have no doubt will spur the team to reach greater heights in the future. I am thankful to the management teams across all functions and staff for supporting bold changes to their business models, proactively engaging with the PICM team to make quantum improvements in service and efficiencies. We are at the beginning of an exciting journey ahead."