

**ADDRESS BY HON D. GOKHOOL,
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE
AND RESEARCH**

**EXECUTIVE HALF-DAY TRAINING
COURSE
ON
PROJECT AND PROGRAMME
MANAGEMENT**

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2009

AT

09 00 hrs

RGSC Auditorium, Belle Village

Mr. Tan Chee Peng, Chief Executive Officer, Team SYNthesis
(Mauritius & Africa Ltd)

Mr. Ragen, Permanent Secretary

Chief Executives and Senior Officials of my Ministry and Parastatal
bodies operating under the aegis of my Ministry

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all!

Let me thank you all for your presence on a Saturday morning.

Let me also thank Mr. Tan Chee Peng has gracefully agreed to be our
resource person for this workshop. We are indeed thankful to Mr TAN
Chee Peng for such a honourable gesture.

As you are all aware, our Ministry is a new Ministry and has been
assigned with important responsibilities, of repositioning the
Manufacturing/Industrial sector in a new, globally competitive
environment, and STI will have to play a key role in the transformation
that our economy and society is undergoing.

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Innovate

If we all agree that we are now in a new situation , and there are new public expectations, we have no choice than adjust. We have to go beyond just doing things right; we also have to ensure that the things we are doing are the right things .And ensure that we do them right not once but all the time.

In any case we cannot try and solve to-day's problems with yesterday's mindsets. We have to innovate .We have to learn, unlearn and relearn as stated by Alvin Toffler. We have to go for higher levels of performance and we have to emerge from the lot.

The more so since we are in a sector where we have to report regularly how well we are performing. We cannot accept to remain in our comfort zones.

We have to acquire new knowledge ,new tools and techniques for improving our performance. Above all, we have to adopt new attitudes. We can do all that by opening ourselves to new learning experiences.

Workshop

This workshop is a great opportunity for us to become exposed to one of the most powerful management concepts : Project Management

Project Management has gained importance in all progressive countries over the past years, mainly because of profound changes in the workplace.

CEOs and business leaders of internationally flourishing companies, public administrators have unanimously recognised the invaluable contribution of effective project management towards their organisational success. According to them, higher levels of performance, productivity (and profitability) through seamless execution of strategies is the best way to assure the creation of long-term value for shareholders (stakeholders).

However, experience has indicated that brilliantly formulated strategies that are not effectively executed result in loss to shareholders or stakeholders.

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Awareness

This awareness of the critical importance of project management has is also of direct relevance and importance to public organisations. The public sector is often portrayed as being good in policy formulation but weak in implementation . Just like the private sector, if not more, mastering project management techniques is of more relevance to the public sector. I understand that regular refresher courses on project management are provided through the Ministry of Civil Service for the benefit of public officials.

Every officer in this room today is concerned with project management. We are called upon to execute projects, events, activities every day. How well we deliver on these is crucial to the success of our organisations. We can come forward with live examples from all the institutions present today.

For instance how well a Fair has been planned, organised and monitored, will impact on its outcome, customer relationship, on participation in subsequent Fairs organised by that same organisation and so on and so forth. The repercussions of good - and less good - project management are far and wide. Our brand image is often at stake. We must strive, with our existing resources and constraints, to fulfil and

delight our customers. This is not only an economic imperative but also an ethical and moral obligation.

All of us here have some knowledge of project management – whether it be theoretical or on-the-job or both. Understanding the key concepts of project management, learning about common pitfalls, sharing experience on managing projects under different circumstances will only make us better and more confident in what we do.

Project Managers

The current budget configuration is such that heads of organisations and senior staff are all now required to become project managers. We are asked to do more with less. To achieve set targets in all transparency. And undergo the test of scrutiny and accountability.

This is the mindset that we have to adopt and adapt to throughout government and the public sector. *Given the severe pressure on the public finances, clearly the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service is a matter of strategic national importance.*

The accountability dimension in the MTEF (Medium term expenditure framework) and the PBB (programme based budgeting) strategy which is now adopted by the Ministry of Finance leaves no room for

amateurish execution of projects. Monitoring has become an in-built mechanism in the system. Missed deadlines, overwhelming number of changes, cost over-runs or unsatisfactory project execution have to be explained. Above all, targets and performance indicators which have been set and are open to public scrutiny.

Ministers will have to stand up in the National Assembly next week and explain the reasons for non-attainment of performance targets by their Ministry. All this put us all under pressure to achieve our goals, to meet our set targets, to implement our projects and programmes effectively – and thus, to manage our projects and programmes professionally.

I have no doubt that the experience that Mr. Tan Chee Peng will share with us today will be immensely valuable. Mr. TAN Chee Peng is an international strategic services consultant specialised in business-IT planning, programme management and business process automation and has delivered countless project management conferences and seminars across the world.

Insight

This morning's discussion, I am sure, will provide interesting insight for professionals that are either new to project management or who wish to refresh their knowledge of project management best practices.

At the same time, his visit has provided an opportunity for heads of organisations and Ministry officials to sit together and discuss about this crucial issue which is managing projects. Political heads rely on public officers to carry out their political programmes. It is also our responsibility to provide these officers with the means and the competencies to deliver these tasks.

Since I assumed office at the Ministry of Industry, Science and Research, I have endeavoured to change the mindset of the staff. We have worked on a staff development plan, incorporating both technical and non-technical training, at all levels. We are improving on our existing Quality Management System by integrating an Environmental Management System, which will recognise us as the first environmentally-friendly organisation in the public sector.

The key to understanding what we are really trying to do can be thought of as a parallel to what is happening in industry. There is a move away from mass production to customised goods and services. In exactly the same way, our customers require a different approach to service delivery. They do not want services handed down over in a paternalistic way, but rather they are looking for more personalised and tailor-made services. Ensuring a high standard of customer service and providing a competitive and conducive environment for businesses should be our

driving factors. Such transformation is being seen more and more across the public sector.

The emergence of private radios places greater pressure on public officers with regard to service delivery. Which I believe is a good thing. All this is required in the movement towards changing mindset and working habits. Instead of sitting in an ivory tower, taking his good time to handle our work, not feeling accountable and answerable to anybody, public officers need to adopt a different approach imbued with professionalism, pro-activeness, innovation, proximity and above all, accountability.

We are all constantly challenged to translate strategies into reality and the stakes of not doing so are extremely high. An organization's level of excellence in project management is important to senior management that is focused on ensuring that value creating strategies are implemented. When resources have been reduced but goals remain, we must be creative, inventive and innovative to realize our dreams. We must certainly attain higher levels of efficiency as we strive to achieve more with less. This half day workshop is one way of helping you in meeting this challenge.

I wish you well in your deliberations. And I am now happy to declare this training workshop open.

Thank you for your attention