

10th anniversary of Fiji Business Excellence Awards

This year the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF) is taking a trip down memory lane as it celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Fiji Business Excellence Awards (FBEAs). Since their launch in 1998 by late President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, the FBEAs have grown in stature and are now a full-fledged business excellence process for Fiji. They were conceived at the first Roundtable Conference in 1995, where it was unanimously agreed that the country required a business excellence framework if it was to be competitive in the international arena. Thus the guiding principles were formulated to enhance productivity excellence and help organizations in Fiji attain world-class quality in products and services, pay recognition to outstanding enterprises, and provide a framework for sustainable improvement through quality management.

The journey that commenced in 1998 at first attracted only two companies. Like any new venture, progress was slow as the FBEAs were viewed with skepticism. However, the modest success of the first year saw perceptions change and an increase in the number of applicants in 1999. Although the awards suffered a setback with the coup in 2000, they were down but not out and resurrected in 2001. The process regained lost momentum, and the TPAF has not looked back since.

The FBEAs provide four levels of recognition: Commitment to Business Excellence; Achievement in Business Excellence; Fiji Business Excellence Prize; and the highest level, the President's Business Excellence Award. In 2004, Vodafone Fiji Limited became the first organization to receive the coveted award from President Ratu Josefa Iloilovatu Uluivuda of the Republic of the Fiji Islands. In the same year, the TPAF received a record-breaking 20 applications from enterprises seeking recognition in the four levels. This encouraging trend continued into 2007.

This year, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the FBEAs, the TPAF has embarked on various strategies to increase the number of organizations taking part. First, the TPAF will offer Category Awards to allow applications for an award in one of seven categories of the FBEAs: Leadership and Innovation; Strategy and Planning Processes; Data, Information, and Knowledge; People; Customer and Market Focus; Processes, Products, and Services; and Organizational Performance. Applicants select the category they perceive to be their foremost strength. The FBEA Secretariat, through its evaluators, will compile a feedback report providing applicants with their strengths and opportunities for improvement in the specific category applied for. It is envisaged that the introduction of these awards will minimize entry barriers for enterprises.


The TPAF has also enhanced its training and consulting programs for heads of local organizations to encourage them to participate in the FBEAs. One successful effort was seen in the Reddy Group of Companies, the parent body of Tanoa Hotels, a local chain. It marked the beginning of its quality improvement process on 17 January 2008. As part of its entry into the FBEA program, Reddy Group Human Resources and Training Manager Naveen Lakshmaiya facilitated training programs for managers and team leaders. Managing Director Rohit Reddy



The Reddy Group Team poses for the camera after FBEA-based training

inculcated the need for committed teamwork to realize the vision of the group at the launch ceremony held at the Tanoa International Hotel in Nadi. He also highlighted the need to remain competitive in the face of adversity.

According to Lakshmaiya, Reddy Group's decision to participate was the result of the company's recognition that the FBEA framework was a holistic approach that looked at an organization in totality from leadership to organizational performance. He also stated that when the leadership of an organization was supportive of such an initiative, the organization was surely destined for success.

The first decade is complete, and the FBEA Secretariat is now looking to the future. The TPAF is confident that the FBEAs will become an essential component in the continuing evolution of Fijian organizations which allow more enterprises to take their place among the best companies in the world in terms of quality goods and services. 

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