

KM to improve service-sector productivity

The father of knowledge management (KM) Peter Drucker once stated that, “In postcapitalism, power comes from transmitting information to make it productive, not from hiding it.” Realizing that economic structures are shifting from primary commodities and goods-based production toward knowledge-intensive services, the APO has undertaken several KM projects. It has also developed an APO KM framework for SMEs. Efforts are ongoing to refine that framework for the service sector, which accounts for the largest share of the economy in the majority of member countries. A study meeting on KM in the Service Sector in Malaysia, 15–18 June, was therefore held to raise the overall productivity and performance of the service sector through the application of KM.

The four resource speakers included Monash University, Australia, Senior Lecturer Dr. Henry Linger and MPC Senior Director Ab. Rahim Yusuff. Dr. Linger outlined KM in the service sector with examples from Australia. Yusuff spoke on the significance of the service sector and KM in Malaysia. KDi Asia Director Praba Nair, Singapore, introduced the APO’s KM framework approach and explained how service excellence and innovation could be enhanced with KM. He stated that, “KM practice can lead service efficiency to service excellence.” Knowledge Management Division Chief Charity L. Tan, Department of Health, the Philippines, agreed, noting that, “The APO KM framework is

very well crafted and comprehensive and should be of enormous assistance to organizations starting their own KM or which have already launched KM programs.”

“Knowledge is the key strategic asset to be managed,” said Young International Group CEO Ronald Young, of the UK, in his presentation on knowledge assets in both tacit and explicit forms. He stressed the necessity of establishing a platform to convert from the tacit to the explicit by mentoring and discussion. The healthcare industry KM case study he presented was appreciated by many participants as a clear blueprint showing how KM can be implemented in service enterprises.

Participants lauded APO efforts to develop a simple KM framework to encourage member countries to implement the concept. They discussed details of the four accelerators that help to propel organizational KM initiatives: leadership; people; process; and technology. Managing Director George Wong, Hoclink Systems and Services Pvt. Ltd., Singapore, said, “The study meeting helped me understand how KM should be implemented in organizations to complete initiatives undertaken over the years. This will enhance productivity and quality in line with innovative thrusts in the knowledge-based economy.” 