

Strategic management consultancy: focus on the service sector

On Sunday, 26 September 2010, 18 participants from 17 APO member countries flew to Tokyo to take part in a two-week training course on strategic management consultancy. They assembled at the Secretariat bright and early on Monday morning to learn about the knowledge and skills involved in integrated strategic management consultancy, with particular focus on the service sector.

The first week of the training course began with a briefing at the Secretariat, followed by lectures given by Japanese experts at the Japan Productivity Center located in Shibuya on themes such as the concepts of corporate diagnosis, innovation through scientific and engineering approaches, human resources management, and marketing. Site visits were arranged for the second week, and participants visited Kikuya Co. Ltd., Eagle Bus Co. Ltd., and Novarese, Inc.

“This has been a interesting program. It is fascinating to see how the Japanese mind works,” said Alexander V. Tan from the Philippines. “The Japanese service industry has very customer-oriented types of business models,” noted the Product Development and Technical Support Committee Director-Chairman, who participated on behalf of the Philippines Chamber of Handicraft Industry.

Nepal’s Industrial Enterprise Development Institute Division Manager Shree Ranjan Wasti was impressed by Japan’s process automation. “Everything here is automatic—ironing, cleaning, moving hangers, and packaging. In Nepal, things are done manually. The level of productivity we have seen is very high, with a focus on the employees. Companies motivate their people to reach their potential.” Commenting on factory visits, Wasti was impressed by the special provisions made for women, i.e., a daycare/play area for their children. “In my country, some companies have started childcare, but it has not become standard yet.”

“The Eagle Bus system was informative, and we can apply it to our bus systems at

home in Sri Lanka,” said Arangallage Harshana Disnath Arangalla, Biyagama Divisional Secretariat Office Human Resource Development Assistant.

The final field visit in the course was a trip to Novarese, Inc., which specializes in weddings. Education and Training Department General Manager Asuka Nagae spoke about the company’s human resources management, beginning with the education system that includes a month-long induction program for new graduates at a hotel in Nagano, central Japan: “We always make sure to tell our employees that their personal objectives are linked to our corporate objectives.” Nagae explained the company’s creative measures, assessment, healthy competition, employee recognition, and its ultimate goal to “see our customers smile.” She was showered with questions from participants before the group toured the facilities to see what was on offer.

During the tour, Vietnam Productivity Centre International Cooperation Division Project Manager Vu Tu Quan sat in the groom’s seat at a traditional Japanese matrimonial ceremony venue. About to tie the knot himself next May, Quan was delighted to be shown how to sip the traditional nuptial sake with the bride in *san-san-kudo*. “I feel very proud,” he beamed. 🍷



Malaysia’s Nor Surayya Binti Abdul Samad tries on a traditional Japanese wedding kimono during a site visit 6 October 2010. The gown weighs 5 kg. APO/Eriko Sugita