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Power and Energy

By: Engr. Mah Soo, *FIEM, P. Eng.*

There is a perception that engineers seems to be always busy, spending most of their 'time' and 'energy' carrying out mundane engineering tasks detailed by their 'bosses', yet they do not have much 'power' to decide on the final outcome. Whether this is a fact or myth is debatable depending on who is involved in the discussion.

Although the terms 'time', 'energy' and 'power' are inter-related in a technical sense through the definition 'Energy Equals Power Multiplied by Time', it might offer a myopic meaning to many. Perhaps a broader view of energy could be 'the ability to produce useful work', whether from natural or human resources, is more relevant.

The recent price hikes and security supply of fossil fuels and food supplies have raised grave concern among the global community. Such reactions, as reported in the mass media, have spurred the governments of the day to institute some drastic stop-gap measures. Though such happenings have long been anticipated and discussed, it is the timing and quantum that brings home the reality and impact.

The 'Electricity Summit 2008' was jointly hosted by Suruhanjaya Tenaga (ST) and the Energy Council of Malaysia (ECOM) on 17-18 June 2008 with the theme of 'Setting and Managing New Directions for the Electricity Supply Industry'. With the Public Forum on IEM's Position Paper on Energy Efficiency held on 24 June 2008, these events are apt, timely and relevant in the present challenging times.

Many solutions have been proposed during the Electricity Summit 2008, but it takes determination, commitment and financial resources to see them through as, according to a Chinese proverb, 'Beneficial medicine is bitter in your mouth'.

Hence, it is about time that IEM believes in its own capabilities, and with the full support of its members, I am sure that it can rise to the occasion to offer constructive and viable solutions to address some of these serious problems as their 'contribution to national service'.

IEM can do so through its strong collaborations with related government ministries and agencies such as ST and Pusat Tenaga Malaysia (PTM). The effort could start off with a press statement on IEM's Position Papers, and awareness programs on energy conservation and energy efficiency which can generate results and bring benefits to all, both engineers and the general public alike.

It takes effort to tap into the maximum 'apparent power' available in IEM and transform it into 'useful or real power' and with minimum 'reactive power'. I am confident that with the will and support from all its members, we can definitely succeed with the 'Malaysia Boleh!' spirit. ■