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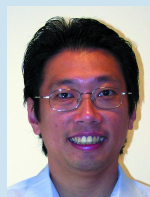
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**Developing Exceptional Engineers in a Globalised Environment***By: Engr. Yee Yew Weng, M.I.E.M., P.Eng*

It is becoming increasingly clear to many business leaders around the world that the most important ingredient for growth and success lies with human resource. The ability of companies to attract, develop and utilise talents in their organisations determines their position in a highly competitive market. It has been said that for Malaysia to compete globally, more world-class human capital is needed. The best brains have to be harnessed and developed to perform at a very high level of competency. Names of nations excelling into double digit growths need no mentioning but it is clear how efficient and superior their work force have become. Malaysia must not be left behind. The old tendency of looking the other way at sub-standard work and accepting "boleh-lah" mediocrity should be dispatched firmly into the past.

The Construction Industry in Malaysia is tough, very tough. Engineering businesses are clamoring to get a piece of the ever-reducing pie. The temptation, indeed the weight exerted by external pressures to reduce the factor of safety and cut corners bears on the engineer daily. Nevertheless, the individual engineer should be guided by the responsibility entrusted upon him, to act decently and service the community professionally. Furthermore, he is expected to continually improve and educate himself with the latest technology and knowledge from around the globe and apply such knowledge to produce better end products. Only through this healthy mindset of continual improvement and innovation can an engineer excel.

The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia has a role to play in such exigent times. It should exact the requirements of quality and standard that all engineers in the community can aspire toward – a standards flag-bearer, if you like. This is arguably the most important challenge for IEM. In this regard, the quality of training provided at seminars and workshops should be high. Trainers and speakers selected must be of outstanding caliber and recognised experts in their field. Their message should be state-of-the-art and useful to the audience. As often as possible, world class practitioners should be invited to teach, train and inspire. The Institution's platform should not be used as an opportunity to increase the stature of the speaker or to market his product. There is no room for people who may exploit the IEM stage for their own advantage, whether commercial or personal. Participants should be driven by their desire to learn and not be in attendance because of the requirements for CPD points.

On the same vein, published material by IEM should be of high quality. The recent IEM Readership Survey 2005 reported that about 75% of respondents find IEM publications "average" to "good" in terms of usefulness and relevance. This may seem to be a pat on the back for contributors and the Information and Publications Committee. However, it should be noted that less than 4% gave an "excellent" vote and more than 12% indicated "weak" to "poor". It is surely not good enough to dwell in the premise of "average". IEM membership at large looks upon IEM as the sole national learned society in the engineering field, and expects that any material published by IEM to be of high standard, reliable and suitable for guidance in their professional career. Hence, before IEM publishes any material, proper assessment by a competent party in that particular field should be carried out. In the case of Geotechnical Engineering, the competent party should be the Committee of the Geotechnical Engineering Technical Division, and for objectivity reasons, this is in preference to choosing an individual for this role. Similarly, any comments by readers to the Editor and reply by the authors should also be similarly reviewed. Personal attacks and distorted opinions have no place here.

The pursuit for high quality must be habitual in daily dealings. The incentive is the promise of progress and leadership in a shrinking global community. There is much to be done. All members need to stand up and be counted. Lend a hand in giving talks, be involved in organising committees, assist in preparing guidelines, etc.; the list goes on. Be the exception, not the norm. ■