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Towards the 21st Century

by
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Last week I was fortunate enough to have Khun Kasame Chatikavanij as a guest speaker at the HRI seminar on "Strategic Thinking and Action." It was especially an honor since Khun Kasame rarely accepts such invitations. Khun Kasame is also sometimes referred to as "Super K" because of his outstanding contribution to the state enterprises with which he has worked.

Many of our younger readers will not be aware that 30 years ago electricity black-outs were common in Thailand, and Khun Kasame, in his capacity as the first governor of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), was the man most responsible for overcoming the problem. Still today the corporate culture at EGAT has Khun Kasame's dynamic stamp on it.

Everyone at the seminar listened with great interest as he expounded on his management philosophy. He openly admitted that, despite the fact that he has no formal training in human resources management, many of his achievements are attributable to the spirit of team work and understanding that he was able to achieve with his subordinates. Provided we can learn from Khun Kasame's example we may, perhaps in a more modest way, accomplish as much ourselves.

In my opinion, Khun Kasame's philosophy stresses the importance of putting the results first, knowing your project in detail, and not allowing problems to divert you from your course. I call this "management without fear". In Thailand we have very capable managers but they often lack the ability to make decisions and see things through.

To summarise Khun Kasame's many qualities I would say that he is:

- a leader with vision
- decisive
- a good listener
- good at working with subordinates, and
- a good team player able to create a team spirit.

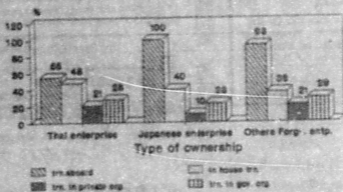
What with the seminar and all, the HRI had another busy week. We also held a joint workshop with the Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, to address the demand for skills in specific sectors such as engineering, telecommunications, shipping and chemicals, on which our future competitive edge may depend. The private sector was also well represented at the workshop and together we asked how we should ensure that there are enough people with the right skills to man these technology intensive industries. Here the government has a vital role to play as facilitator and organiser of private sector initiatives. Among other things we all agreed that in the future we would need more skilled people and fewer semi-skilled ones and that training would therefore take longer, anything up to 12 years. We also thought the definition of "skilled" should be broadened to include commitment to quality and customer satisfaction as well as intellectual problem solving skills and initiatives.

I also delivered a speech to the Thai Canadian Chamber of Commerce on the subject of Competitiveness and Human Resources in which I said that our future ability to compete in international markets will depend on complementary human resources policies and initiatives from both government and private enterprise.

Next week I'm off to Brussels to interview Professor Hammer, the well-known re-engineering guru, and I'll let you know what we talked about. Professor Hammer will be visiting Bangkok in person in February 1995, so we might hear more from him then too.

See you next week!

Thai engr. & technician's training in machinery & electronic industry



Source: Dr. Aekshana Chinnatsyirangsan, NIDA, 1994

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