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MIQA: TREMENDOUS BENEFITS FROM INVESTORS-IN-PEOPLE

By: Yong Soo Heong

KUALA LUMPUR, June 7 (Bernama) -- People are the backbone of any economy or organisation and investing in them by imparting proven work techniques will bring about tremendous benefits, says JS Bhar, chief executive officer of the Malaysian Institute of Quality Assurance (MIQA).

Those trained to work within the parameters of proven quality techniques are not just valuable assets to the economy or organisation they belong but also for themselves, he said.

MIQA (miga@tm.net.my), whose purpose is to promote quality practices within Malaysian service and manufacturing organisations to achieve world class standards, has found a suitable framework through the Investors-In-People UK Worldwide Standard (IIP).

MIQA wants to further propel the concept of having as many world class players as possible in Malaysia through IIP, Bhar told Bernama TV today.

He said IIP was based on "developing your people towards meeting the objectives and vision of your organisation."

This would also instill greater confidence among customers because they now know that your company's services and products were based on quality undertaken by an intelligent workforce, he said.

"What it means here is moving towards the k-economy," he said, adding that IIP was an appropriate knowledge-based training programme aimed at getting employees to undertake tasks correctly while building their confidence.

This will also result in employers getting better loyalty and service from employees because IIP provides them with the right skills.

Saying that IIP has grown very fast in terms of acceptability of late, Bhar explained that the difference between IIP and the ISO 9000 quality assurance programme was that IIP stressed more on people while the ISO emphasised on work processes.

Bhar said MIQA, which has provided consultancy and training on total quality management including the ISO 9000 quality assurance programme, has proposed to the government to fund the STAR IKS management (Systems Training Advance Re-engineering) programme for 1,000 small and medium scale industries (SMIs).

This is to enable them to face challenges brought about by globalisation in 2002. Out of this number, 200 will be trained to penetrate export markets.

Such a programme, Bhar said, would benefit 100,000 employees and half a million dependants and return on investment (ROI) to the government through taxation would be substantial.

"SMIs may know how to produce something, they just sit there knowing that they are producing this thing and they make a profit."

But Bhar said they could be sitting on a goldmine by just improving their product or improving their employees' knowledge by getting them to make what the market required.

He said Malaysian SMIs may be producing quality products needed in Europe but because they did not have the right specifications in terms of adhering to certain standards like safety, they were rejected.

In terms of infrastructure, Bhar said Malaysia has some of the best amenities like having not only one but two of the world's tallest buildings standing next to each other and some of the best highways and airports.

But there is more than infrastructure to make things happen: it's the

people.

"We must now develop our people to eventually live up to the vision of our leadership which has so far been exemplary," Bhar said, adding that the government ought to consider implementing IIP within the government machinery.

For instance, Bhar said 92 percent of the British government was already IIP-certified, including the MI-5, its top intelligence organisation.

In explaining the IIP strategy, Bhar said the programme would establish a core of good practices for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

"It offers a framework for integrating human resource strategy with business strategy," he added.

The certifiable IIP allows for the improvement of performance and competitiveness through a planned approach and developing employees to meet their organisation's objectives.

"IIP will help what people can do and are motivated to do, and matches what the organisation needs them to do," said Bhar.

The IIP, which originated from the British education ministry in 1990, became a globally-recognised standard in 1994.

Bhar stressed that IIP was not about procedures but results which translated into significant commercial benefits. These include improved earnings, productivity and profitability; reduced costs and wastage; enhanced quality, improved motivation, customer satisfaction and public recognition.

He also disclosed that top job applicants in Europe these days would choose to work only in companies with IIP because they felt they could go far in such establishments.

In this regard, Bhar said IIP-certified companies usually placed the IIP insignia consisting of a laurel in their job advertisements in the hope of attracting the best talents.

It has been found that companies that implemented IIP showed above average productivity and profitability. Turnover per employee was 108 percent higher than average while profit per employee was 734 percent higher than average.

Nearly 60 companies including Malaysia Airlines, Shell, Asean Bintulu Fertilizer and Henkel Oleochemicals have registered their interest to implement IIP.

MIQA, the first organisation in Asia to become the licence holder of IIP, plans to extend it to other Asean countries, thus making Kuala Lumpur the centre of excellence in people development and quality systems.

Meanwhile, Datuk Dr Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan, Chairman of MIQA, said IIP should not be seen as a tool for training needs analysis or a human resource initiative.

"It should be seen as a business improvement system meeting international standards. Any company wanting to improve all round and at the same time obtain worldwide recognition to boost market share and image should not hesitate to commit towards getting certification to this standard," he said.

IIP's official launch here is scheduled for August. British prime minister Tony Blair, the custodian of the standard, will be invited to the launch to be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Details on IIP can be obtained from MIQA (tel 03-7569258; fax 03-7560204).

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