

NATIONAL REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT

NO ROOM FOR TARDINESS

Work on human capital in order to improve a system, says new DG

By TEE LIN DEE

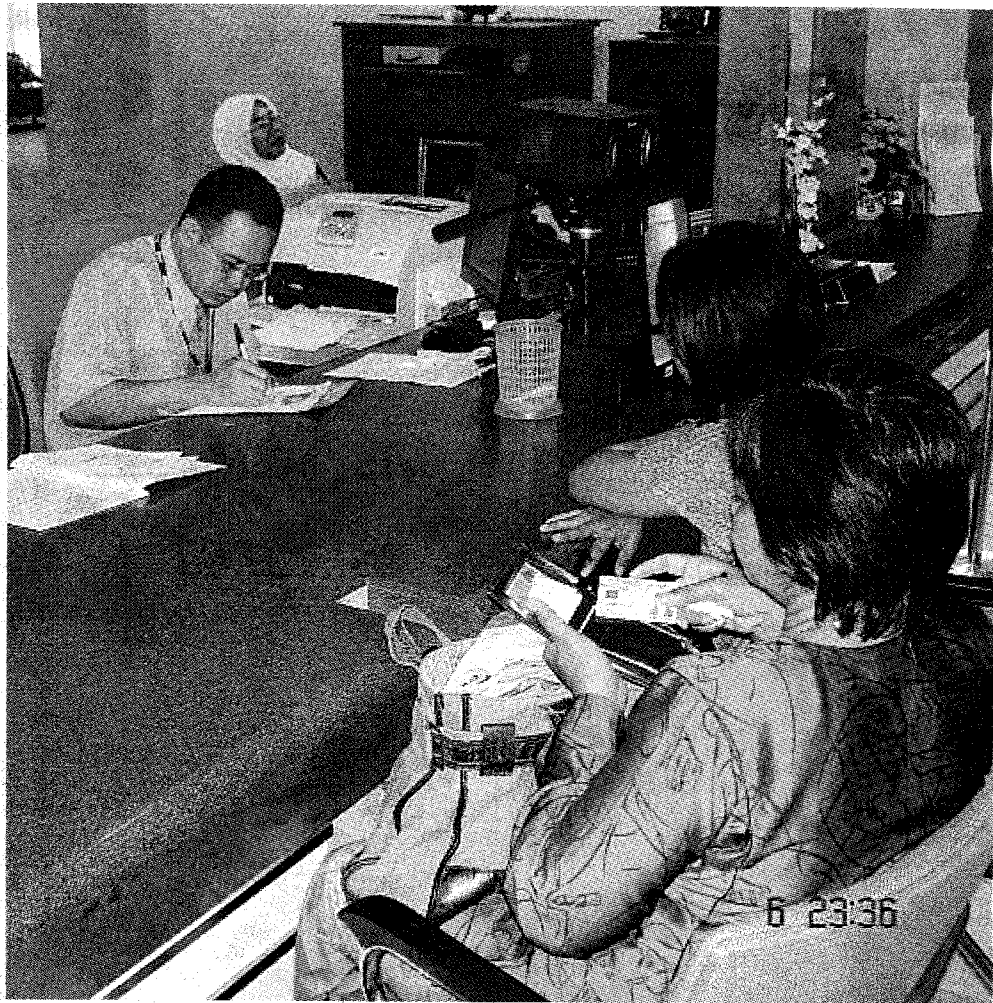
DATUK Mohd Abdul Halim Muhammad (*pic*) listened fixedly as his Head of Department (HOD) explained in detail why a member of the public made a complaint about not receiving his MyKad on time.

Slightly quaking, the young HOD admitted a blunder on his part. There had been problems with fingerprinting. Rare, but occurring, the old fingerprint didn't match the recent one, due to a stubborn graze. The public member, a young lady from Ipoh would be notified immediately.

"You will personally call her, explain what happened and when her MyKad is ready, make sure you send it to her within 24 hours," ordered Abdul Halim pointedly. "And I want to see the report on my table first thing tomorrow morning."

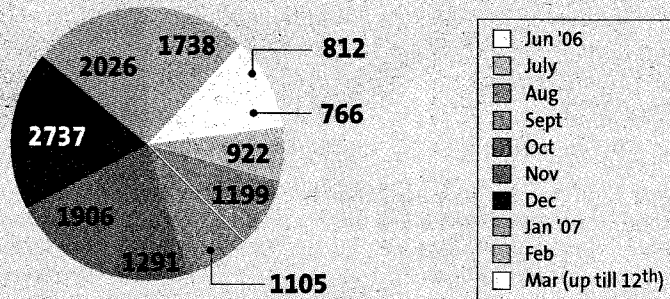
There was no more need to frighten his subordinate. The lesson had been learnt.

The new Director-General (DG) of the National Registration Department (NRD) imposes an unquestionable authority among his over 2,000 staff. Tardiness and incompetency are never tolerated. Ever since he took over the department, efficiency levels have shot up. Camaraderie and an eager sense have taken over the sluggish pace.



The public has the right to expect smiles and courtesy from counter frontliners.

24 hour-completed MyKad applications in Putrajaya



Notes:
 - Total number of MyKad issued so far stands at 20.38 million.
 - Total number of MyKad applications received in 2006 was 1,593,306.
 - This year, there were a total of 147,193 and 135,731 MyKad applications received in January and February respectively.

An example would be people who choose to marry outside Malaysian borders. Without a Malaysian marriage registration, the Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) does not recognise that union. And therefore when the man fathers a child, the child is considered illegitimate. For the public who are unaware of this ruling, feathers get ruffled when they approach the NRD counter.

So intent is the DG on being in sync with happenings on the ground that he holds four meetings yearly to meet his staff from all over Malaysia without the presence of their superiors.

"The first year I did it, I was inundated with hundreds of questions. It is the ground staff which give you a real scenario of what happens everyday at the counter."

Jainisah is quick to add, "This is not a fault-finding session. By finding out loopholes, we are able to improve our system."

Keeping the staff busy

Realising that boredom and the staid routine of work may hinder progress, the DG ensures his staff are preoccupied at all times. Every month, departmental activities are aplenty. They consist of Best Counter Service, Best Office Cheer, Cleanest Toilet, JPN Idol, Nasyid Contests and even Teh Tarik outings.

In 2005, not more than 50 employees participated in the departments' activities. In the year that Abdul Halim took over, 600 enthusiastic staff showed up in full force.

Motivation levels are high for enticing prizes, like haj packages. In fact, Jainisah and her team constantly conduct checks on their tele-counter frontliners all year round, feigning a wide variety of people, to ensure calls are handled correctly.

"We make this into a competition - Best Telephone Service - and name a winner to further encourage professionalism and good manners," she says.

It's all in a day's work for the determined DG, who aims to produce well-rounded staff. "I want to cut out the unnecessary protocol in work," he says matter-of-factly. "That's the way we move ahead."

Hitting the productive button

"Go to any management textbook, and they'll tell you the two vital things to improve a system. One would be improving systems and procedures, and two would be working on the human capital. It is the latter that I concentrate on in this department," says the DG.

"It is the human factor that's the tough bit," says Jainisah Mohd Noor, NRD's Public Relations Officer. "We actually come up with our own workshop modules and training courses to suit our staff requirements."

"Training courses are a big part of my department, besides the welfare and social activities we get ourselves involved in. The logic is simple. Your office is your second home, you need to build loyalty among your employees, you need to change their mindset to love the department. Only when are they proud of their workplace will they contribute better," she said.

"Some people change 20% while some make 50% turns. The older generation are so set in their ways, it's difficult trying to rewire their mindset, but nevertheless I'm still trying. It is the new staff and the young ones that I target immediately. I speak to each one of them, right down to my drivers, telling them my expectations and the fast culture I want."

Results are showing, for staff lingering after office hours are a common occurrence in the NRD.

"It's nothing new when I'm told that my staff are working late," says Abdul Halim.

Meetings that tell all

"Whatever complaints we get, every article that gets reported in the press, whether positive or negative is reported to me," says Abdul Halim vehemently.

Common complaints are made into reference cases where a bound copy is given to staff who need a quick revision on FAQs.

"It is our policy to answer all queries - we receive some 9,000 of it yearly, most of which are questions about procedures. We acknowledge receipt of mail within 24 hours and replies (that do not include investigation) are made in two weeks.

"I take it very seriously if a complaint made is our fault. I personally ensure that the problem is rectified right to the doorstep of the complainant," says the DG who has little patience with mistakes.

"Those that give us dissatisfactory remarks are the ones that get reported in the newspapers," laughs Abdul Halim. "Normally, it is because they don't get what they want."

SUMMARISED LIST OF SERVICES OFFERED BY JPN

Services	Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-time Identification Card (IC) applications IC applications for new immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application forms can be obtained at NRD counters. Both applicant and sponsor must be present at the NRD counter with completed form and supporting documents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement card application for lost ICs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant must get it done at the NRD counter but no form-filling will be required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms are only available at NRD counters and websites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant must be present with completed forms and supporting documents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications for verification of Malaysian citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms are available in NRD and state counters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriage registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms are available in NRD and state counters.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of marriage solemnised overseas in accordance with foreign laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant is required to be present at the NRD counter/ Consular Office/Malaysian Embassy together with supporting document.

Practices for Best Counter Service

- Dos**
- Always prioritise customers.
 - To serve with honour, competence and warmth.
 - To always smile and demonstrate good manners.
 - To serve with speed and efficiency.
 - To be always dressed in a neat and clean manner.
 - To maintain a straight body posture
 - To ensure the cleanliness around.
 - To look customers in the eye when speaking.
 - To ensure safety of all documents handed.
- Don'ts**
- To watch one's temperament in the event of a difficult customer.
 - No eating, drinking and smoking at the counter.
 - Not to be engage in small chatter, reading magazines or other idle practices.
 - No leaving the counter without a replacement.
 - No answering of hand-phones or replying SMSes when dealing with a customer.
 - No scolding or raising one's voice to a customer.
 - To not assume one's duty as a burden.