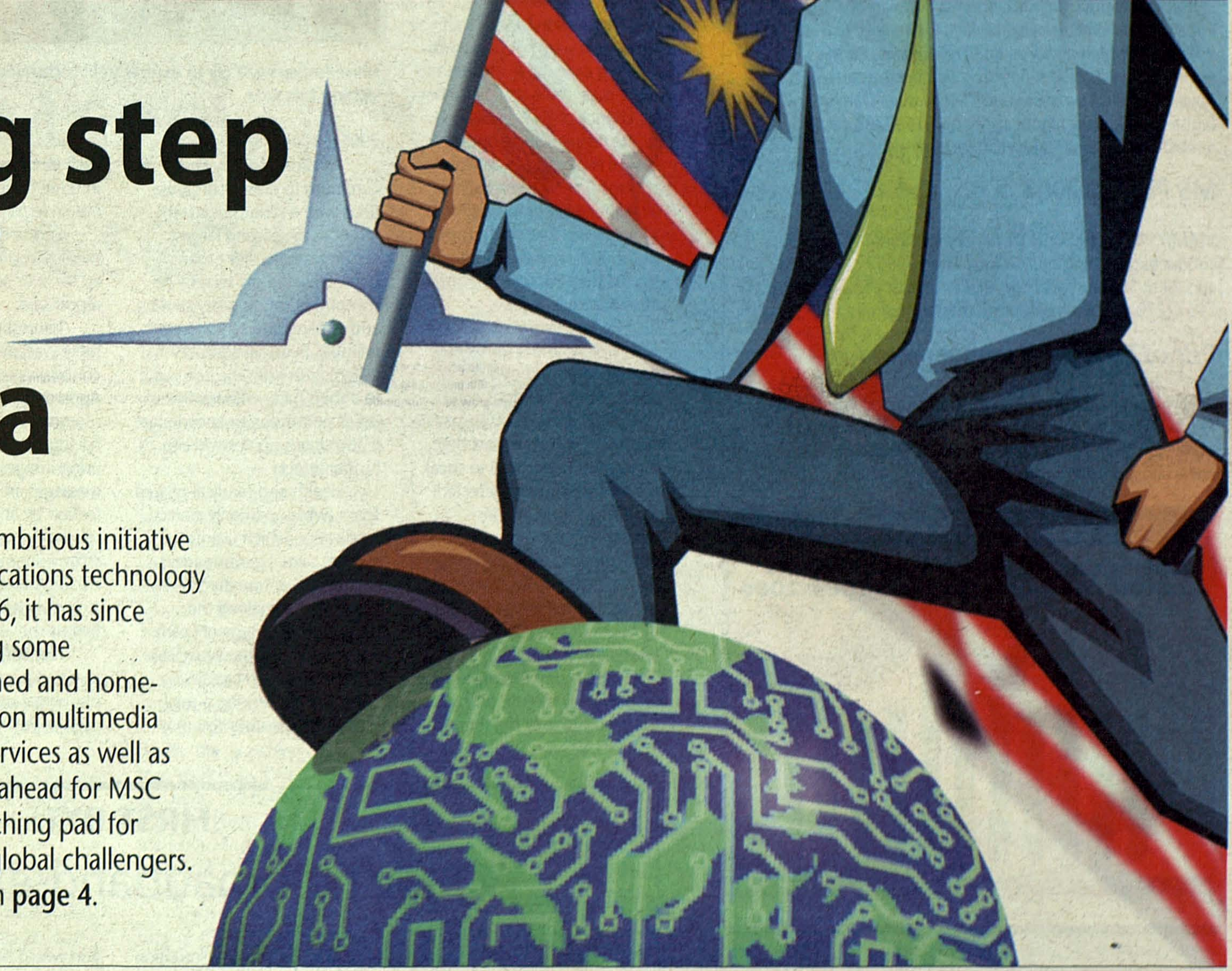


Next big step for MSC Malaysia

MSC Malaysia is the country's most ambitious initiative yet for the information and communications technology (ICT) industry. Conceptualised in 1996, it has since grown into a thriving ICT hub hosting some 1,800 multinationals and foreign-owned and home-grown Malaysian companies focused on multimedia and communications solutions and services as well as research and development. The road ahead for MSC Malaysia is to realise its role as a launching pad for home-grown companies to become global challengers. And it must succeed. Find out how on **page 4**.



Building MSC brand and talent pool

MSC Malaysia's International Advisory Panel (IAP) meeting concluded last week at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre. Thirty-five panel members from the world's leading information and communications technology companies and organisations were present to share their ideas on how Malaysia could advance more in the knowledge economy and become an ICT hub for the global market. The IAP panel members interviewed are generally satisfied with the progress of MSC Malaysia, but many think that the country's ICT mission is far from over, and there are still many aspects that need to be looked into to make sure that the initiative stays on the right track. *TECH&U* reports.

■ **Dennis Roberson, vice provost, new initiatives research professor of computer science, Illinois Institute of Technology**

THE MSC Malaysia initiative has so far progressed as planned, but moving ahead, some of the plans may need to be modified. The world is changing, so the plan needs to be modified to meet the future needs of the nation and the world. Malaysia needs to look at the infrastructure issues, wireless broadband, Web 2.0, greater push in intellectual property and better formation in capital structure.



■ **Gilbert Amelio, chairman and chief executive officer, Jazz Technologies Inc**

I'VE been in the panel from the very beginning and what impresses me is that the people I've worked with here don't pretend that there's nothing left to do. As long as they keep that attitude, they will continue to make progress.

For MSC Malaysia to become global, efforts are needed to build an infrastructure that extends beyond the borders of Malaysia. Globalising is not just about exporting products, but also about changing the way you do your business so it matches with what goes on in the rest of the world.

Building a brand name for Malaysia as a technology hub is also vital. Many companies overseas still do not know much about Malaysia as an ICT hub. People who have been here for the past 20 years like me know what the country is capable of. But out there, a lot of people still see Malaysia as a distant land that they know nothing about. Hence, you have to build the brand and take it to the world.



■ **Simon Dale, senior vice president and chief technology officer, SAP Asia-Pacific/Japan**

THE investments made by the local Government and its commitment to ensure MSC Malaysia is successful imply that it is heading in the right direction. But the challenge is to ensure the creation of the companies within MSC Malaysia will grow

globally. This is not an easy task.

For example, SAP, which is a 36-year-old company, has been really successful for the last 15 years and brand recognition in six to seven years. People need to be significantly patient to make it to the global level. The other thing is, MSC Malaysia and MDeC (Multimedia Development Corporation) have not "shouted" their success loud enough. There is a need to focus more on MSC Malaysia branding and marketing on the global level.

And although MSC Malaysia has attracted a lot of companies worldwide to invest here, including SAP, the main challenge is finding talent.

■ **Susan E. Sheskey, chief information officer, Dell Inc**

DELL has been in Malaysia for 12 years and we think the opportunities here are boundless. The MSC Malaysia initiative has brought about a better understanding of the importance of technology, and the Government has played its role effectively in creating a business-friendly environment.

As a country that strives to become a technology hub, Malaysia has proven its strength in people, economy and willingness to adapt to changes and adopt technologies. But there is a need for it to keep on developing its skilled workers to support and attract investors.

The technology industry evolves very rapidly, so there's a requirement to continue to reinvest in the development of skills. It can be viewed as a one-time investment, but one that is evolving.

To face challenges from countries in the region that have a similar technology initiative, Malaysia can always differentiate itself with the talent it has, its technology and infrastructure, and more importantly, by creating a business climate that welcomes global businesses.



■ **Mahmoud Bouneb, executive general manager, Al Jazeera Children's Channel**

ONE of the key areas of development that has been seriously discussed and pushed by the Government over the past year is the content industry. In this respect, Malaysia needs to build a content industry which caters to both the local and global markets.

After building a remarkable and impressive infrastructure and network, what needs to be done next is to put in the content. To do this, MSC Malaysia needs to attract projects and investments from outside or even go on joint ventures. The content industry today has no nationality. I believe Malaysia can succeed in this area as it has the talent, know-how and network.

■ **Frederic Rose, president, Alcatel-Lucent Asia-Pacific**

THE fact that the initiative is today in its 10th year is something interesting. I can't think of many programmes in Asia that have lasted 10 years. We have seen many announcements made by governments that create programmes to do this or that, but three or four years later, how many are still around?

MSC Malaysia is not a two- or three-year programme. This is a long-term vision. The Malaysian Government understands this is not something you can do in one election cycle. This is a generational investment – how do you go from one generation to the next. There are very few countries that I can think of that has made this kind of long-term commitment and reaffirmed it over the years. I believe MSC Malaysia is the right vision.

Moving ahead, the thing it should do is to provide employment opportunities, the best brains coming into the workforce to up-skill, help them start their company, join a startup, come back to Malaysia and do something to kickstart this new economy.

