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Ketua Setiausaha Negara mengingatkan kepada bakal-bakal graduan, khasnya graduan Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) supaya memilih suatu kerjaya yang sesuai dengan matlamat kehidupan, kelayakan akademik, dan nilai-nilai peribadi seseorang graduan. Walau bagaimanapun setiap kerjaya yang dipilih seseorang itu perlulah menguasai aspek- aspek pengurusan sumber manusia dan organisasi.

Seterusnya penguasaan ini hendaklah diperkukuhkan oleh nilai-nilai dan amalan etika yang positif.

Terlebih dahulu saya mengucapkan ribuan terima kasih kepada pihak penganjur Pesta Kerjaya dan Pendidikan 1993, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia kerana sudi memberi kesempatan kepada saya untuk berucap di majlis ini.

Sebagai rakyat Malaysia, kita harus berbangga dan bersyukur di atas pencapaian negara semenjak kemerdekaan.

Negara kita adalah stabil, berkembang dengan pesat dari segi ekonomi dan menjadi lebih mantap dari segi sosial dan kualiti hidup. Peningkatan pertumbuhan negara yang menghala ke arah mencapai tahap negara maju telah menempatkan negara sebagai model kejayaan sebuah negara yang sedang membangun.

Kecapaian ini, adalah hasil daripada gagasan yang jelas, wacana yang kukuh dan daya usaha yang gigih serta pengembelian usaha perkhidmatan awam dan swasta.

Penghasilan pencapaian ini telah membuka luas ruang-ruang kerjaya kepada bakal graduan UTM.

The Malaysian work environment is a very challenging one. With the globalisation of the world economy, nations are becoming more integrated with increased flows of trade, capital and labour as well as technology, knowledge and information. The overwhelming development in the communication and transport technology is aiding the process of transformation into a global borderless economy. To find niches in the functioning of the global economy that transcends national borders, one must seek to be competitive. Every Malaysian individual and industry must strive together to build this competitiveness. The new frontier of competitiveness means that individuals, and companies must learn to be innovative and find new solutions.

The existing economics and trade blocs are bringing about shifts in the relative competitiveness of industries of various nations. The implication is that nations must be able to adapt quickly and accurately to the global requirements in order to survive. Today, competitiveness has shifted towards a knowledge-based economy. In the industrialised world, analysis indicates that only 15% of the active population physically touches a product. The other 85% are adding value through the creation, the management and the transfer of information. As a result, the human dimension of competitiveness has become a key success factor in a modern economy.

This means that brain-power, skill and information including the knowledge of what to do and how to do it are very important apart from technology and capital. With the knowledge that you have acquired, you will be part of the driving force in the stride to move forward our nation. But let me remind you that with tremendous and rapid changes in the global economy, the knowledge you have acquired if not constantly upgraded will fast become outdated. Therefore, you must always be prepared to upgrade your knowledge and skills. You must always be ready to learn new things and not necessarily limited to your own fields. The circumstances we are in today demand a multi-skilled workforce.

In our quest to be a fully developed nation we are stressing on quality consciousness, excellence and

exemplary work ethic. Related to this, is the concept of excellence in the implementation process which is the cornerstone to competitiveness. Emphasis on total quality, speed, mass customisation and excellent service are more than just passing fads. They outline a new competitive philosophy that "doing things right is no less important than doing the right thing." In line with this, the implementation of the Excellent Work Culture Movement stresses that Malaysians should be hardworking and disciplined. Every job should be performed with the objective to improve quality in order to achieve excellence. This culture applies to all employees regardless of where they work.

Malaysian graduates should be prepared to work in an environment which is highly competitive where your performance will be judged by the output and profit. This will require certain qualities and values such as hardwork, integrity, creativity, spirit of working together as a team, discipline and an attitude to constantly improve performance. It is very important for workers to adopt positive attitudes and values in order to increase performance and quality of service and output.

The choice of career is a function of 3 main influences:

(i) Your primary goals in life. What is it that you would like to be. Whatever it is you have to bear in mind that ambition is hard work but ambition also lubricates the mind. Ralph Waldo Emerson, once said "Hitch your wagon to the stars". For the future of our country, not failure, but to aim low, is a crime because, if you think you are a second class citizen, then you are. Thus one's goals in life will determine the kind of career we would pursue;

(ii) Academic qualifications. In this regard, the preferred line of action is to choose a job appropriate to the qualification. In other words if one has an engineering degree then choose a job that requires the application of engineering knowledge. It is also possible to engage in careers that are academic qualification related and is of great benefits to the nation. Therefore it is alright if an engineer decides to become a seller of computers for instance provided he does an excellent job in providing the technical know-how necessary to the job.

(iii) Personality Traits. Researches have shown that where there is an overlap between what you like and what you do there is usually high job satisfaction.

Your choice of careers in relation to your personality traits would depend on whether:-

(i) you like working with others and is a creator (creator and innovator);

(ii) you possess analytical and logical skills in gathering and using information (analyst);

(iii) you are able to decide and provide directive well (leader and advisor);

(iv) you are able to organise yourself and others (organizer).

Thus given the environment, armed with your goals, qualification and personality one should be able to find a niche somewhere. This is not confined to Malaysia alone.

Increasingly, there is a growing global work force.

Fundamental shift is underway on how and where work gets done. The key to this change and the emergence of a global work force implies talent and capabilities of accomplishing just about anything should be prepared to move internationally. Thus the focus of our job career is not just nationally but also internationally.

Nevertheless, whatever career we choose invariably we will have to learn how to manage. Management has been defined as the process of achieving organisational goals through planning, organising, leading, integrating and controlling. In carrying out these functions, managers get things done through other people. They make decisions, allocate resources, and direct the activities of others to attain

organisational goals.

Generally, we can identify three sets of skills that managers need to display in carrying out their functions.

These are technical, human and conceptual skills. Technical skills refer to the manager's ability to apply specialised knowledge or expertise. Human skills or interpersonal skills enable him to communicate and motivate his subordinates. As for conceptual skill, they relate to his problem-solving ability. The degree to which managers display these three types of skills will determine whether an organisation is well-managed or otherwise.

The Effective manager plays many roles, including the responsibility of motivating and training of subordinates; maintaining an effective network of contacts with key persons in the environment; monitoring, analysing and disseminating information; managing conflicts; and initiating and promoting change and innovation. He is also responsible for representing the organisation as spokesman and negotiator.

In the private sector where the principal objective is profitability, the management of highly successful companies invariably focus on the aspects of strategic planning, human resource development, productivity and quality and information technology. Consequently, such organisations are driven by sound management practices such as cost consciousness, timeliness in the delivery of products and services, and effective inventory management. In addition, they place a very high premium on innovation and creativity.

Many globally successful companies portray these qualities. A good example is Sony which has built its reputation in the consumer electronics business through understanding technological and marketing innovativeness.

In Malaysia, Sime Darby has transformed itself from a plantation based business to a highly diversified conglomerate of international standing through strategic diversification.

Just as there are clear indicators of well-managed organisations, it is also possible to pick out the characteristics of poorly managed organisations in both the private and public sectors. In the private sector, this translates into companies doing very little or no strategic planning; having high operating costs; producing goods and services that do not meet customer requirements; having no proper financial controls; having a demotivated work force; and also lacking in the capacity to manage new technology.

The impact of all these will eventually result in low profitability and very poor returns to shareholders. In extreme cases, such companies may even go bankrupt.

In the public sector where profitability is not the bottom line, poor management also results in negative consequences. Delays in project implementation; cost overruns; low quality in service delivery; poor inventory and asset management are symptoms of poor management. These are manifested by long queues at departments providing counter services and delays in the issuance of licences.

It is evident that good management skills play a critical role in organisational performance. However, the development of management skills alone is insufficient. It is also essential that equal emphasis be given to the inculcation of positive and ethical values. Graduates who do not practise good values, however skillful they may be, can still adversely affect organisational performance. For public sector organisations, unethical management practices can undermine the critical public trusteeship role they are required to play. As for private companies, such employee can cause huge financial losses and an erosion in shareholders' confidence. It is, therefore, of critical importance that organisations in the public and private sectors and institutions involved in the training and employment of graduates pay more attention to the inculcation of positive and ethical values in these potential employees. The key values which should form an integral component of good management are integrity, discipline and accountability.

All graduates should always display integrity in all their interactions. All work that is done must be

undertaken with honesty, sincerity and not with self-interest. Discipline is a key trait that we must strive for. It should not just imply obedience to organisational rules and regulations, but the training of oneself to control one's habits, actions and desires.

Employees must not only discharge their duties in an efficient and effective manner within the parameters of their delegated authority but must at all times be committed to learn, develop and improve their knowledge and skills in the quest for managerial excellence.

Accountability is another important value which should be inculcated in all employees. Accountability means the obligation to give answers and explanations concerning one's actions and performance to those with a right to require such answers and explanations. One of the key functions of management should be to create and sustain an ethos of accountability.

Thus all those looking for a career must strive to develop a strategic mindset that enables both the development of managerial skills, as well as positive values. Such a strategic mindset can only be developed if the Malaysian graduates commit themselves to life-long learning. This learning paradigm must necessarily focus on areas such as strategic intent, productivity and quality, human resource development, information technology, innovation, and values development. Organisations with employees having these qualities will invariably achieve excellence.

In all careers, be it national or international, public or private as an employer, it is essential that we must develop an organizational culture as the basic pattern of attitudes, beliefs and values that underlie the organization's operations. An organization's culture consists of the shared assumptions that members of the organization hold. This culture can be manifested in many ways including:-

- (i) observed behavioral regularities when people interact;
- (ii) the norms that evolve, such as a fair day's work for a fair day's pay;
- (iii) a dominant value espoused, such as product quality;
- (iv) the philosophy that guides the organization's policy towards employees and customers;
- (v) the rules of the game for getting along in the organizations; and
- (vi) the feeling or climate that is conveyed in the organization, and the way in which members of the organization interact with customers or other outsiders.

With high growth achieved during the last five years we are experiencing labour shortages, particularly at the technical level. Among non-technical graduates, the economic and law graduates have a good prospect in that, they can fit in more easily into any organizational level or function which is non-technical. Some of you may want to be on your own - to be entrepreneurs. Many of our experts now prefer to be in the corporate sector rather than venturing into business or industry on their own. If you choose this line, you must be aware that the risk is higher and therefore you must equip yourselves adequately and be prepared to face all kinds of pressures. Many entrepreneurs are not successful either because they are over ambitious or they enter into fields which they are not familiar with.

Therefore, before venturing into any field you must get some on-the-job experience and master the nitty-gritty of the trade. You should not be an arm chair critic who is defined as one who usually has a plan to do something with somebody else's money. You must also learn to be prudent. The best way to go into business is with high hopes and low overhead.

What I have highlighted to you are just some pointers to be used as guidance in pursuit of your future career based on my experience as the head of the civil service and my interaction with the private sector both at national and international level.

Akhir kata, sekali lagi saya ingin mengambil peluang ini untuk mengucapkan terima kasih pada pihak penganjur yang telah sudi menjemput saya hadir di majlis ini. Pada para graduan sekalian yang tidak lama lagi akan mula mencari kerjaya sendiri saya ingin mengucapkan selamat maju jaya semoga beroleh kecemerlangan dalam segala usaha.