

By : TAN SRI MOHD. SIDEK BIN HJ. HASSAN
KETUA SETIAUSAHA NEGARA
Venue : PUSAT KONVESYEN ANTARABANGSA PUTRAJAYA
Date : 17/02/2008
Title : SEMINAR MASTERCLASS PLACE BRANDING (opening address)

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, dan Salam Sejahtera

Y. Bhg. Dato' Ahmad Fuad Ismail
Ketua Setiausaha
Kementerian Perumahan Dan Kerajaan Tempatan

Y. Bhg. Dato' Zool Azha Yusof
Ketua Pengarah Tanah dan Galian

Datuk-Datuk Bandar,

Yang DiPertua-Yang DiPertua Pihak Berkuasa Tempatan,

Dif-dif jemputan,

Tuan-Tuan dan Puan-Puan yang dihormati sekalian.

Terlebih dahulu marilah kita bersama-sama memanjatkan kesyukuran ke hadrat Allah SWT kerana dengan limpah kurniaNya kita dapat bersama-sama pada pagi ini. Saya mengambil kesempatan ini untuk merakamkan ucapan penghargaan kepada Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (KPKT) serta Yayasan Kajian dan Strategi Melayu (YKSM) kerana telah menjemput saya untuk menyampaikan ucapan dan seterusnya merasmikan Seminar Masterclass Place Branding pada pagi ini. Hadirin yang dihormati sekalian,

2. Allow me to now continue my address in English for the benefit of our foreign guests and facilitators. All the more so, since this seminar is conducted in English.

3. Mr. Sicco Van Gelder, welcome to Malaysia again. I trust your travel from Amsterdam was pleasant and I wish you an enjoyable stay in Malaysia. It gets better every time you visit us here, I can assure you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Last month, the Public Service of Malaysia issued a document entitled "Public Service Commitments 2008, Towards a Customer Centric Malaysian Public Service". This document, the result of collaboration and input from Secretaries-General, Directors-General, and senior public officials, encapsulates a set of promises the Public Service is readily making to the public for the first time in its efforts to improving the Public delivery system.

5. One of the core commitments we made for 2008 is to improve the service delivery at our Local Authorities and Land Offices. Why you might ask? Simply because our Local Authorities are the nucleus of our society. They determine the standards of living and quality of life of the place we each choose for ourselves and our families.

6. Today Malaysia ranks well when compared to others in the region. For instance,

- In the 2007 World Competitiveness ranking, out of 55 countries, we are ranked 8th;
- We ranked 6th on Government efficiency;
- On Business efficiency, we are ranked 4th;

- On Infrastructure development, we ranked 10th;
- In the World Bank's "Doing Business 2008" Malaysia ranked 24th out of 178 countries on the ease of doing business.

This is 21st Century Malaysia, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. Given these achievements and rankings globally, in 21st Century Malaysia, we should not be getting complaints of broken street lights and uncollected rubbish. We cannot be smelling of clogged drains and tolerating broken pavement tiles, potholes or even non responsive Local Authority staff.

8. With the literacy rate and the resources that this country is blessed with, these amenities should now be taken for granted, to be expected. Anything less is a broken promise to our achievements to date. There must not and cannot be a reason for these complaints. Yet we read of it in Letters to Editors and e-mails. We must search our hearts and ask why is this still happening in 21st Century Malaysia? Why haven't we moved up the value chain of service delivery at our Local Authorities?

9. Allow me to put these propositions before you. What makes a business tick? How do we choose our holiday spots? What do we consider when choosing a place to call our home? Indeed, what are the criteria of a place that will be the choice of our children's education and our own healthcare service preference?

10. Do we answer the following questions for our customers before they are even asked by them?

- Does this place fit with my needs?
- Am I proud of this place?
- Can I afford this place?
- Are the public amenities to the standards I aspire for myself, my children and grand children?
- Is this place safe as home for me?
- Does this place provide me with a source of income to support and fend for my family?

11. These questions come from the heart strings of every one of us, because when it affects you individually, you will make sure the answers to all these questions are certainly no less than a "YES".

12. Successful cities are associated with a specific quality, promise, attribute or feature. These simple principles can have a significant impact on people's decision to stay in place, visit it, buy its products or services, locate its business there or otherwise.

13. It is the duty and responsibility of our Local Authorities, regardless of whether they are big or small, to deliver the features and the attributes for the place you run. When we operate from a principle of "we should treat others the way we want to be treated", that in itself develops the competitive advantage due to our cities, districts, towns, and municipalities. The difference, say between Ipoh and Manjong! WE CAN MAKE THAT DIFFERENCE.

14. This is what makes a place different to the one next to it. These are the criteria that will determine what sort of tourists and investors we attract to our Country. They go beyond the hard developments to the softer amenities and service and quality delivered on promises made.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

15. The Local Authorities is the nucleus of the society it serves. Sometimes it may be a fair reminder to

return to basics and ask questions of the nucleus concept in societal development. We need Local Authorities that serve 21st Century Malaysia. Local Authorities form the very essence of service delivery, where the rubber meets the road. You are the front face of the public service and you bear the duty of carrying that brand effectively.

16. It is towards this end that Public Service of Malaysia has today introduced, for the first time in Malaysia, the ethos of place branding. Place branding takes us back to the basics of:

- Reputation is what we build by how we run the place;
- Delivery standards is derived from the promises we deliver to our stakeholders;

and

- Consistency is service delivery efficiency

17. In essence, the reputation and brand of each of our places is built based on its relevance to the customers it serves.

18. It is in this context that we are engaging all Local Authorities at city, district and municipality levels to essentially deliver one message - "Deliver on our promises, and deliver them with consistency".

19. It is in this context too that we spelled out in the Public Service Commitments 2008 the absolute need for the Heads of our Local Authorities and Land offices to engage and consult stakeholders and stop frustrating them. We need to sell solutions and not products. Each solution must be tailor made to suit the times. Heads of Local Authorities must train their staff to engage at this level. The traditional benevolent civil servant of "I know what is good for you", no longer works.

20. Success is jointly driven by all parties who claim that success. For a place, it has to be by those who claim a stake and interest in that place.

21. The Seminar for the next two days will touch on these basic principles. It will bring about appreciation and understanding of going back to basics to deliver the very the essence of efficient service:

- i. Partnership and collaboration in service delivery ;
- ii. Effective communication comes from effective information gathering, failing which will compromise the reputation of our Local Authorities. Thus the places we manage;
- iii. Appreciate the far reaching effects of perception when not managed well;

and

- iv. Formulate, execute and monitor action plans.

22. The knowledge acquired today must be honed further through on-the-job training. Both YKSM and KPKT will formulate follow through plans to ensure each of our place be it cities, municipalities, towns are run with the one brand promise of "One Service, One Delivery, No Wrong Door".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. Once again may I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Yayasan Kajian & Strategi Melayu for organising this Seminar.

24. Mr. Van Gelder, our gratitude for being here this weekend to share your knowledge, expertise and experiences on the subject matter. My gratitude also to all the facilitators and speakers participating in this Seminar.

Hadirin yang dihormati sekalian,

25. Akhir kata, dengan lafaz Bismillahir rahmanir rahim, sukacita saya merasmikan Seminar Masterclass Place Branding.

Sekian,
Wabillahittaufik walhidayah,
Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.