

RSOG Seminar: Diversity AND Inclusion : Heading Towards Sustainable Diversity Management and Diversity Training

With

**Professor Samuel van den Bergh
Zurich University of Applied Sciences**

When : 28 November 2012
Where : Razak School of Government
Who : Professor Samuel van den Bergh

About The Seminar

In today's competitive and diverse global marketplace, organizations must embrace diversity and inclusion - in how they think, act and innovate. Diversity and inclusion could be defined as bringing together people of different ethnic backgrounds, religions and age groups into a cohesive and productive unit. By adapting these two concepts, high-performance employees, who could play an active role in the success of an organization, could be identified. It is therefore important for organizations to put in place policies and practices to build a successful and harmonious workplace. Malaysia's multi-racial community clearly indicates the need for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Hence, the seminar could provide some practical examples on how multicultural and transcultural business situations could be practiced through suitable interventions in the Malaysian context. The seminar could also shed some lights on the future of diversity and some of the best practices that will allow diversity to play a more strategic role in cultivating sustainable growth in an organization.

Summary

The seminar by Prof. van den Bergh focused on several issues related to the concept of diversity and inclusion in the organization. Prof. van den Bergh shared his perspectives and insights regarding the future of diversity and best practices that will allow diversity to play a more strategic role in cultivating sustainable growth in an organization.

He further noted that a diverse workforce combines workers from different backgrounds and experiences that together breed a more creative, innovative and productive workforce. In a way, diversity is the key ingredient to growing strong and inclusive economy. Businesses and organizations that embrace diversity have a more solid footing in the marketplace than others.

Prof. van den Bergh emphasised that the goal of all diversity and inclusion initiatives should be able to create supportive workplaces for everyone's success. Diversity should be embraced and integrated with organizational goals and objectives to achieve success in global context. Prof. van den Bergh stressed the importance of organizations to appreciate diversity and include elements of diversity as an integral part of the management practices to enable full engagement and development of all employees.

As a conclusion, he mentioned that diversity and inclusion is important to develop awareness and understanding and move from the concept of tolerating to appreciating differences; a mindset that can be embraced by any culture. Modern diversity and inclusion programs need to be built on similar elements and beliefs systems that can be applied to all the various workforce cultures that are emerging within the global organization.

Issues Raised:

- 1 It is important for an organization to create a working culture that includes everyone regardless of visible characteristics such as race, religion, age, disability and invisible characteristics such as beliefs, allegiances, and values.
- 2 A sustainable diversity management includes maximizing the benefits of diversity, recognises and prevents exclusion, disintegration, and segregation, and is actively including diverse input and appreciating diverse values.
- 3 Diversity is an important part of an organization. For example, diversity does not automatically increase business success; however, it needs to be integrated into other best practices to fully utilize its potential as value-added element in an organization. On the other hand, the absence of diversity will progressively cripple an organization and fall behind other competitors.

About the Speaker

Prof. Samuel van den Bergh is the founder of the Centre for Cross-cultural Competence which is part of the School of Communication at Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur, Switzerland. He is also the founder of van den Bergh Thiagi Associates GmbH,

which specializes in cross-cultural communication, teambuilding and diversity management. He has trained many organisations on subjects such as "Leading Across Diversity and Cultures" and "Managing Multicultural Teams". His research areas include cross-cultural competence, cross-cultural and diversity management and cross-cultural team building.

Contact

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