



# ITP

# LINK

The Newsletter for Members of the Institute of Training Professionals

## 1. **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year** **Attitude towards Financial Tsunami**

*By Ms Pauline Tsang, MITP*

**A**t present, we are suffering from a significant global financial and economic downturn. The financial tsunami which first hit the financial sector in US is now spilling over into other sectors across the globe. We are all overwhelmed by a series of news: drastic deterioration of financial sector as well as retail and property sectors, trimming down of operations especially in the scope of long standing multinational business giants, political instability arising from protestors in Thai, threat attack in Mumbai of India. All these syndromes inevitably hit every one of us in many ways.

Amid the global financial turbulences, business leaders from companies have responded differently. Are we optimistic? Do we have to take immediate action to cut back in order to better shape our businesses? Or we take 'wait-and-see' attitude towards the so-called "recession". These are topics we are very much concerned.

On one hand, we hear the anger from employees of certain industries when they are being layoff. The painful decision undoubtedly has brought considerable losses to an organization from the perspective of human resources. Investment on human capital as well as other training over the years disappears in vain overnight. Commitment

for sharing business profits also appears not to be found in employees' agenda.

On the other hand, crises give rise to opportunities. Oddly, we still see certain people are optimistic and take the chance in establishing business or expanding their scope despite people are now very cautious in spending their money.

To champion the edge for building a winning organization during this difficult time, attitude becomes a factor in driving the success. Attitude drives behaviour. Probably, the power of positive attitude paves the way how we react to unexpected situation in a more rationale manner.

With China's residual economic momentum cushioning the Hong Kong slow down, we could move along within the territory and buy time in focusing our resources. People are one of our resources. To enhance our human capital in order to move faster than the other during the rebound is an edge for success. As such, we could consider strengthen the substance in training, encourage skills transfer across boundaries and nurture talents in the region. All in all, the investments in human capital will finally help an organization to become a winning team.

# **AAR – A Low-cost and Yet Highly Effective Knowledge Management (KM) Tool for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)**

*Alfred Ho, 1st Vice-chairman of ITP, was interviewed by the Hong Kong Economic Times daily in end October on the application of Knowledge Management (KM) within SME's (Small and Medium Enterprises) in Hong Kong. The interview write-up was published in a supplement for SME's on 30th October. Below is a translation and excerpt of the key points especially prepared for members' enrichment.*

KM has been a hot topic in information management in recent years. SME's are even more in need of KM in fact, according to Alfred. Unlike their larger counterparts, SME's generally lack resources, including staff manpower and each staff member tends to be loaded with multiple roles and duties. The knowledge possessed by individual staff members tend to be broader (in variety and scope) than those employed in larger organizations, where division of labor/role specialization prevails. As a result SME bosses/owners generally suffer far more and feel greater pain as a capable staff member leaves the organization. The need for practicing and taking advantage of KM therefore is far more critical for smaller organizations.

Contrary to most SME bosses/owners' belief, KM is not something reserved for larger organizations, and, Alfred said, KM is also not necessarily high-tech and expensive. There in fact exists a wide range of KM tools, many of which do not cost much other than man-time investment to implement.

One such tool is 'AAR' (stands for 'After Action Review'). First developed and applied in the training of U.S. Army, AAR, as the term implies, is a rather simple operational review process conducted after each drill. After each event, a structured

review or de-briefing session is quickly conducted, in which the following questions are discussed, lessons are learned, and improvement options are explored.

What happened?

What went wrong? How it deviated from the original plan?

Why this happened?

How can it be done better (the next time when similar situation recurs)?

SME's can easily adopt this approach in sharing/exchanging views between team leaders and their members, as well as among team members. Important to bear in mind when implementing this KM tool is to promote and maintain an open atmosphere, minimizing superior-subordinate status differences (when everyone is treated equally, and their views are equally treasured, people will feel at ease to air out their opinions). And, most important of all, is that the focus is on the issue, NOT on the person(s) responsible. In other words, this is definitely not a 'finger-pointing' exercise on anyone. The aim is to objectively analyze an incident from every angle, to identify the key contributor(s) for success, or weaknesses and mistakes committed in case of a failure, and then learn the lesson so everyone becomes wiser than before and internalize the learning



(in KM we call this 'tacit knowledge') to one's thinking that guides future behaviors.

To further take advantage of the AAR process, it would be advisable to document and properly store the 'proceedings' of the discussions for future reference. Alfred cited the evidence of his consulting practice as a real-life example. An AAR session is conducted once the result of a job proposal, whether successful or not, is known. All staff members and associates involved in producing the proposal are invited to attend. The findings and opinions (accounting for the

case's success or failure, and how it can be done better the next time) are recorded, classified and filed accordingly for future reference. This not only enhances the chance of winning projects but also makes it far easier and quicker to produce future proposals for jobs of similar nature.

AAR is amongst the least costly (in terms of time and other resources) and yet the most effective means for starting on the KM journey for SME's. For further enquiry or exchange, please write to Alfred Ho via email: [alfredho@consultant.com](mailto:alfredho@consultant.com).



***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year***

# A Quick Chat with MK Lui

By Ms Angie Yu, MITP

MK Lui, who has been in the HR field for over 20 years, is now working as the Training Head of a major local bank. I am happy to share with our fellow members here through the insights of an experienced training practitioner.

It is not easy to arrange a chat with MK especially at this very moment – a busy, hectic time when the world is hard hit by the Financial Tsunami. While talking about immediate job prospect in this field, he said, “Relatively speaking, it has not been so badly affected because lifelong learning is still very much alive and essential in a knowledge-based economy like ours. However, nowadays experienced training practitioners have faced much bigger challenges and expectations i.e. how to manage and deliver fine quality, relevant and practical training services to their users within a much tighter budget and manning. We must be more pro-active and responsive to market changes and corporate strategies, while being innovative in providing value-added, cost-effective training for the organization. Trainers need the courage to stand up and get beyond our comfort zone.”

“If you are seriously thinking of joining this profession”, he suggested that one should first be properly equipped and

positive-minded particularly in the current economic downturn. He added, “I am cautiously optimistic to the future of training professionals. However, there is no short-cut as a good trainer should possess certain personal abilities and qualities: Enjoy learning and be knowledgeable, good presentation / communication skill, EQ (emotional quotient) plus appropriate educational credentials (such as a degree in business, social science, arts, humanities). While for those aspiring to move up the training management ladder, one has to acquire leadership / management abilities with business insights. Besides, it would be helpful for newcomers to join HR-related professional bodies and relevant activities (e.g. seminars, conferences etc.) for enhancing exposures and networking purpose.

The interview is brief but fruitful. Thanks to MK for sharing. These days everyone has a pretty tight work schedule. It is important for us, as training professionals, to inject more energy to our colleagues, so that all can work smarter to help our company achieve its business goals. Rather than thinking about the threat, we should be more positive. It is also time for us to add value by helping our company and our colleagues to go through this rather difficult time.

***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year***

# ITP Delegation's Visit to HAECO – 16 October 2008

*By Mr. Alfred Ho, FITP*

Thanks to the Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company Ltd. ITP was granted the rare opportunity of touring round its Tseung Kwan O training centre and given a thorough presentation on the very comprehensive technical training system of the company.

The following account records the key points picked up in the course of the visit:

The technical training centre (hereafter called 'the Centre') of HAECO is currently manned by 49 full-time staff. Training is continuously being provided throughout the year. On an average day, there will be 150-180 people going through training of different sort within the custom-built facilities in Tseung Kwan O and the Chek Lap Kok. For a workforce of some 4,500 (three-quarter of which are technical personnel) the statistics are really impressive: 800 courses totaling 2,500 class-days and 40,000 trainee-days per annum.

Headquartered in Hong Kong, HAECO has provided comprehensive aeronautical engineering and maintenance services to airlines and operators for over 50 years. It is the only full service provider offering comprehensive line to heavy maintenance packages including aircraft component overhaul support and aircraft recovery

service. Due to the stringent requirements imposed by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) for up keeping with the introduction of new aircraft models and on-going enhancement by aircraft manufacturers all over the world, the company stresses much on continuous staff training. Technical staff at HAECO have to continuously engage themselves in various learning activities to meet the CAD requirements. Attending specific training courses at the centre is just one of the means for achieving learning. The whole company is in fact taken as a big training centre (the big "Shao Lin Temple"), and all technical staff have to keep logs of self-learning that they pick up every work day. Gaining licenses of competence/practice through taking formal training and informal/on-the-job learning and then passing the relevant tests are the key means for gaining promotion in the company. As a result, continuous learning is a key element of the company's culture.

The Centre supports the three comprehensive staff development schemes of HAECO: the 1-year long Aircraft Maintenance Craftsman Trainee Scheme; the 2-year long Aircraft Technician Trainee Scheme; and the 3-year long Aircraft Engineer Trainee Scheme.





Mr. KH Lui, Training Manager of HAECO's Training Centre introducing his company's comprehensive trainee schemes to the ITP delegation.

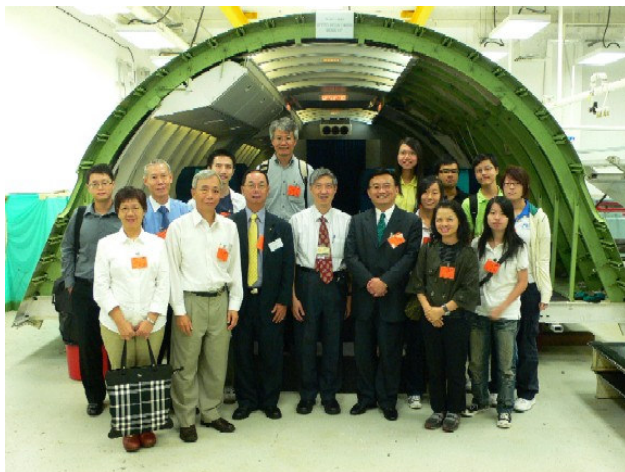
To support staff's learning needs, besides organizing formal courses and conducting induction programs, the above-mentioned three trainee schemes, and other specialized training, the Centre also supports eLearning via the company's intranet system. Staff can access training information (e.g. time-table of courses), request for learning publications, recap general orientation material, and log in eLearning programs to learn, in office, at



Fred Kwan, Chairman of ITP was much absorbed by the sophisticated facilities as the ITP delegation was being led through the Centre's training floors.

home, and even on the move.

The company also allocates resources on soft skill training for supervisory and management-level staff. That part however is not the responsibility of the Centre but the Human Resource Department's. Training is mainly outsourced to external training consultants, and about 30 courses are organized annually.



ITP delegation (part of) taking a shot in front of a real Boeing jet fuselage with soft furnishing taken off.



ITP Chairman Fred Kwan resenting a pendant to Mr. Lui, with General Manager Dr. Denny Chow accompanying.

Besides conducting training programs for its own staff, the HAECO training centre also acts as the computer-based assessment/testing centre for the Civil Aviation Department (CAD).

Having had the briefing on the company's training and its major technical development schemes the ITP delegation was led through the Centre, where members had the opportunity of seeing and touching some of the knocked down key compartments and components of airline jets of different made

used for training purpose. The Q&A session was "held" on site as members saw anything interesting and wanted to know more.

Finally in acknowledgement of the time and efforts that Mr. KH Lui, the Training Manager, and his staff had put in making the visit so informative and interesting, in the tradition of the Institute, Chairman Fred Kwan presented the Institute's pendant to Mr. Lui amidst the hot clapping of hands by members.



***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year***



# ITP Autumn Hiking to Tap Mun

*Reported by Mr. Sam Ying, FITP*

Led by Tommy Choy and Sunny Chan, a group of 20 members and guests of ITP took a trip to Tap Mun on 16 Nov 2008. Small groups started respectively from Diamond Hill, Tai Mong Chai, Pat Tam Chung and Siu Sai Wan, all ended at the Wong Shek Pier sharply at 10:20 to catch the 10:30 ferry to Tap Mun. On such a sunny day, with gentle breeze from the sea, it was a perfect time for hiking.

Tap Mun is a small island in the Northeast of New Territories, famous for its coastal and rock features. The island is about 25 minutes by ferry from the Wong Shek Pier. On arrival at Tap Mun, team captains showed us the way to the Tin Hau Temple. Disappointingly, the temple was under renovation where the main objects have been removed. Though there was not much to see, Tommy had attempted to decipher the decorative components over the façade of the temple.

Leaving the temple, the group followed the paved footpath heading towards the seaside. The walk was an easy one, only at a “half-star” difficulty level as described in the ITP Circular. In less than an hour, we first arrived at the hilltop. Commanding a panoramic view of the Northeast ocean from this low-lying hilltop area, we were

but only a hundred meters above sea level. Surprising enough, there were many holidaymakers setting up their overnight camps there. From the knoll, looking down towards the rubble beach, there is the icon of Tap Mun, the Piling Stones, which consist of two monolithic rectangular stone blocks, one sitting on top of the other.

With a view to take a closer look of the Piling Stones, and instead of rock-climbing straightly down the hill, the group opted to take the side route round the hill. Zigzagging down the grassy and slick slope to the rubble beach was quite an exciting part of the journey. Inching slowly and carefully, all members had finally managed to reach the rubble beach, and the more energetic ones continued to walk closer to the Piling Stones. At this moment, photographers, at least ten among the group, started to take pictures.

Feeling a bit hungry then, the group was looking for a restaurant in the “town centre”. There was one seafood restaurant, and perhaps the only one on the island that opened on demand. With shrimps and crabs, chicken and vegetable, the food quality was in line with the décor of the restaurant.





# Somewhere between home and work--Starbucks

By Ms Angela Lee, AMITP

Imagine that at the busy and perhaps stressful time of a day, having the opportunity sitting in a relaxed atmosphere, holding a cup of aromatic coffee or ice tea, and sipping gently the carefully prepared beverage, isn't it a good way to enjoy quality work life?

In the afternoon of 17 July 2008, we, a team of 16 members had been offered a valuable opportunity to visit the Training Department of Starbucks in Wanchai. We were warmly welcomed by their staff, Karen, Vivian and Mark who always put big smiles on their faces.

For the first half of the experience sharing session, Vivian demonstrated to us how to savor coffee in 4 simple yet essential steps:

1st step: smell it,

2nd step: sip it,

3rd step: drink it,

and the 4th step is to share with others how you feel after drinking it, thus adding funs and bonding the relationship with others.

Then, Karen led us to go through a wonderful journey about their staff development programme by introducing the unique Starbucks' Passport, which they called "The Green Apron Book". Every new "partner"<sup>1</sup>,

no matter full-time or part-time, will be given this Passport upon joining Starbucks. To my understanding, it seems like a Starbucks' Bible that states the everlasting 5 mottos for being a partner:

Be Welcoming – offer everyone a sense of belonging;

Be Genuine – correct, discover and respond;

Be Knowledgeable – love what you do, share it with others;

Be Considerate – take care of yourself, each other & our environment; and

Be Involved – in the store, in the company, in the community.

How are the partners trained or motivated to behave and to serve according to the above 5 mottos? I appreciate that they make use of the power of "Peer's Acknowledgement". For example, if I feel that Karen has done something which is "Welcoming", I will write her a "Welcoming" bookmark explaining the reason of my doing so. If Karen has collected a full set of bookmarks for the 5 mottos, she can bring them to the HR Department in exchange for a lovely pin to be fixed on a desktop certificate. Then, at the end of a year, the HR Department will review how many pins that Karen has obtained and she will then receive some kind of commendation from the top management in an award ceremony.

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<sup>1</sup> Starbucks quotes every staff member as "partner".

According to Karen, apart from attending classroom training, the partners mainly receive their on-job-training at designated branches. The branch managers are responsible to train up the new partners with practical skills, knowledge, and attitude in a real environment.

Following the interesting sharing session hosted by Karen, Vivian and Mark conducted

mini-tours for us to two adjacent branches of Starbucks in Wanchai. While we were chatting with the branch managers, their partners served us with colourful ice soba, a drink that adds colours to this hot summer afternoon.

It was an unforgettable visit because of the hospitality of the 'Partners', and the devotion of the staff of the Training Department.

(Related pictures of this visit can be found at Photo Gallery of ITP's website.)



***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year***

***ITP LINK Editor: Sunny Chan***

**培訓專業學會**

**Web Site : [www.itp.org.hk](http://www.itp.org.hk)**

**INSTITUTE OF TRAINING PROFESSIONALS**

**香港九龍亞皆老街 107 號皆旺商業大廈 2507 室**

**Rm. 2507, Richmond Commercial Building, 107 Argyle Street, Mongkok, Hong Kong.**

**Phone: 2393 3377 Fax: 2309 2799 [www.itp.org.hk](http://www.itp.org.hk) Email: [info@itp.org.hk](mailto:info@itp.org.hk)**