

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR WONG KWEI CHEONG, MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY BOARD (NPB), AT THE OPENING OF THE SEMINAR ON "JIS MARK - A KEY TO EXPORT TO JAPAN" HELD AT THE APOLLO HOTEL ON FRIDAY, 27 AUGUST '82 AT 9.00 AM

Introduction

It is a pleasure for me to officiate at the opening of this Seminar on the JIS Mark.

Singapore has a small internal market. We have to export to survive. For example, the electronics industry has an annual output exceeding S\$5 billion. More than 90 per cent of this output is for export. Similar statistics can be found for other manufactured products.

Our products have been sold successfully in the international markets. In 1981, we even managed to export to Japan close to S\$200 million worth of electronic and electrical products. Japan is a very competitive market - both in terms of quality and price. The fact that we can compete in the Japanese market is a good indication of the quality of our products.

Quality

Japanese products have captured the world markets in consumer products such as electronics, cameras and cars. How did they do it? The answer lies in aggressive marketing, backed up by quality products with innovative designs. In Singapore we have factories set up by multinational corporations from countries such as America, Germany, Dutch, Britain and Japan. The products from these factories compete just as successfully in the international markets. They manufactured quality products at competitive prices. Moreover, these products are marketed with internationally acceptable brand names like Philips, Hitachi and Siemens.

In 1981, the total output of our manufacturing industries was about S\$36 billion. Although this is small when compared to the production of factories in industrialised countries, our manufacturing industries contributed about 22.4 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP) in 1981. Our economic growth depends very much on the growth of our manufacturing industries.

This growth is ensured only when we continue to produce quality products at competitive prices. Quality control, however, is not just the function of the quality control department. It is the duty of every worker to ensure the quality of the final product. Hence, the importance of total quality control (TQC).

Total Quality Control (TQC)

The concept of TQC is not well understood. Simply put TQC is like driving down a road with many traffic lights. If all the drivers and pedestrians obey the traffic rules, accidents can be avoided, and traffic jams reduced. A reckless driver who speeds through a red traffic signal, not only puts himself in danger, but may cause accidents to others and bring traffic to a halt.

Likewise in a factory, quality rules should be clearly explained, and strictly observed by all workers. The flow of products down a production line is like the flow of vehicles down a road. Once quality rules are followed, defectives will be reduced and output increased. TQC leads to higher productivity.

TQC is a way of life practised by most successful factories in one form or another. Some manufacturers prefer to introduce TQC concepts in stages. The fish skeleton is usually used to illustrate TQC concepts - the fish head represents quality, the bones represent the various TQC stages and the tail represents productivity. For example, the introduction of QC circles may be one of the TQC stages. Other stages would include training and quality control systems. Each TQC stage should lead to better quality products and therefore higher productivity.

QR Movement

In this sense, TQC is a continuous process. Each additional bone added to the fish skeleton represents a further step in our quest for higher productivity. It is in this spirit that the

National Productivity Council has launched the quality and reliability (QR) movement. SISIR will assist companies to set up quality control systems. MPB will concentrate on the introduction of QC circles. Companies are encouraged to set up TQC systems according to their needs in improving the quality and reliability of their products.

One of the objectives of the QR movement is to encourage companies to qualify for internationally acceptable quality standards. The Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) Mark is one such standard. So far Yokogawa Electric is the only company in Singapore that has been awarded the JIS Mark. This Seminar has been organised to assist more companies to apply for the JIS Mark. SISIR will be able to provide technical support to companies in need of such assistance.

Conclusion

SISIR can also assist Singapore companies to qualify for the quality standards of Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Sweden. Local manufacturers should consider setting up TQC systems as a first step in meeting the quality standards of these countries. This is the best way to ensure the continuous success of their exports.

On this note, it is my pleasure to declare this Seminar open.

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