SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Leveraging modern quality improvement tools to deliver excellent services

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The power of knowledge in the Customer Life Cycle and how companies can use it

ON THE FAST TRACK

One company's experience in achieving business excellence

THE BIRDS NEST STANDARDS

What they mean and how the industry may profit from them

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SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Quality has long been associated with manufacturing industries. However, a new wave of consumers are demanding quality from other vital industries and areas too. The improvement efforts within these service sectors form the core concepts of Service Quality.

The service industry is an important component of Malaysia's economy. It contributed 55% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2008 and continues to grow as the economy's top GDP driver despite the setbacks caused by the global economic crisis. The service sector also accounts for 57% of the country's total employment.

In order to provide quality service, however, organisations have to address the five dimensions of Service Quality:

1. **Tangibility**: The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.

2. **Reliability**: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

3. **Responsiveness**: The willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service.

4. **Assurance**: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to instil trust and confidence.

5. **Empathy**: The caring, individualised attention that the organisation provides to its customers.

In light of these considerations and current trends within the service industry, this issue of Standards & Quality News is dedicated to service quality and excellence. We focus on the role of Knowledge Management (KM) and Information Technology (IT) in boosting the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. We also take a look at Strategic Branding along with the introduction of the National Mark MALAYSIAN BRAND to promote local products and services. In addition, we feature a success story about a building facilities management company and its journey towards achieving Total Quality Management by adopting the Total Quality Fast Track Model, first introduced by SIRIM Berhad in 2005.

We hope that the articles herein will provide key players in the service industry some useful insights in enhancing their competitiveness towards improving the overall service sector in Malaysia.

Dr. Mohd. Azman Idris

ON THE
FAST TRACK
TO EXCELLENCE

One company's experience in achieving business excellence through hard work, determination and a commitment to great service.

Semasa Sentral Sdn Bhd (SEMASA), a wholly owned subsidiary of Malaysian Resources Corporation Berhad (MRCB), is the first non-rail related company appointed to operate, manage and maintain the first integrated station in Malaysia, i.e. the Stesen Sentral Kuala Lumpur international transportation hub.

SEMASA is a single purpose company set up solely to operate, manage and maintain Stesen Sentral Kuala Lumpur. The arrangement was concluded via the execution of the 15 year Concession Agreement between the Ministry of Transport Malaysia and SEMASA which took effect on 30 November 2000.

Today SEMASA is one of Malaysia's leading station management companies. The station receives an average of 130,000 passengers daily. In 2003, it also became the first company under the Building Services Division of MRCB to be certified to the ISO 9001:2000 quality management standard, an achievement that underscores the company's success at efficiently managing the station.

In 2005, SEMASA received the Special Category Award in the Quality Management Excellence Awards (QMEA Awards 2005) organised by the Malaysian Productivity Council (MPC) under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). 2005 was also the year in which SIRIM adopted SEMASA as a SIRIM TQM Model Company for the service sector (see figure, next page). In 2008, SEMASA was announced as the winner of the PSMB Award 2008 for Human Resource Management Excellence under the Small & Medium Enterprise category. In December 2008, SEMASA received the Best Facility Management Company in Asia-Pacific Award and the APBEST Operation Driver of the Year Award by the Asia-Pacific Business Excellence STandard (APBEST) Academy, Hong Kong.

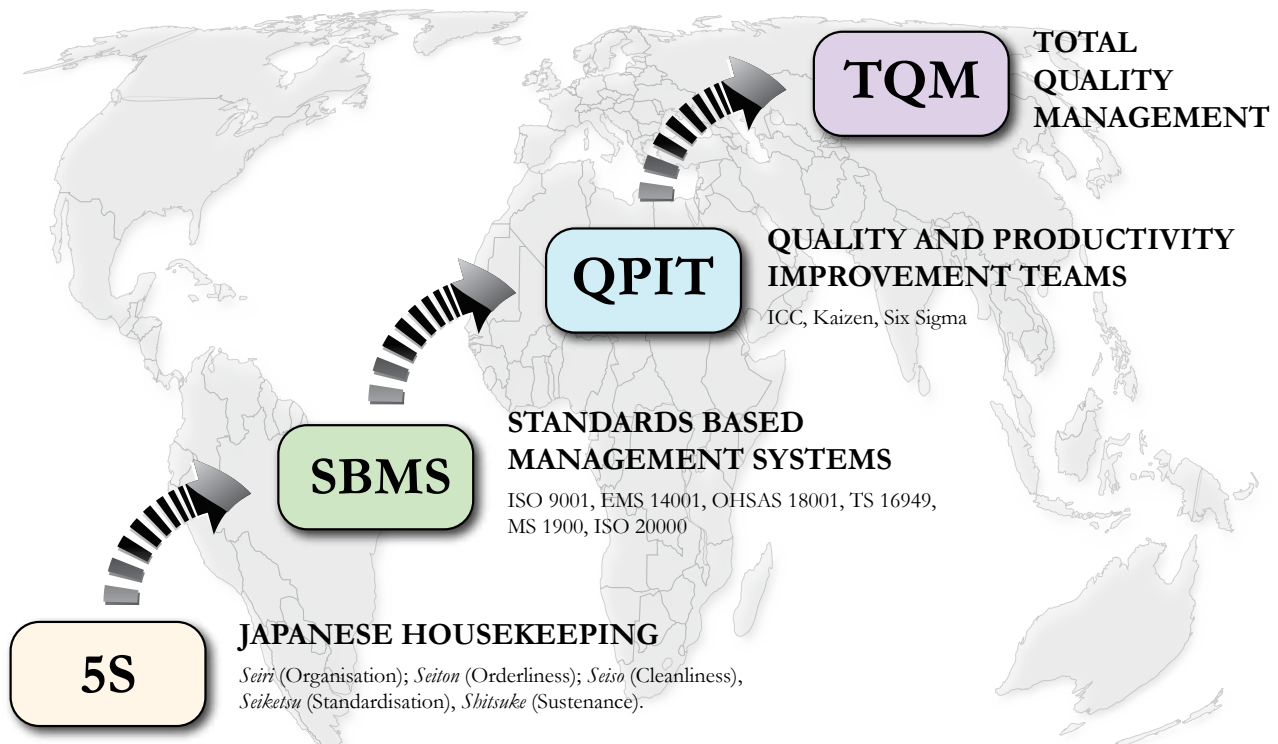All these recognitions exemplify the culture of management excellence in SEMASA. Managing an international integrated transportation hub in the city is something that has never been attempted in Malaysia before. A comparable environment to Stesen Sentral Kuala Lumpur would be the

The Stesen Sentral Kuala Lumpur international transportation hub receives an average of 130,000 passengers daily. Photo credit: Mohd Fahmi, on Flikr.

TOTAL QUALITY FAST TRACK MODEL (TQ$_{FT}$M)$_©$ 2005

Enhancing Global Competitiveness Through Quality and Best Practices

TQM
TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

QPIT
QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT TEAMS
ICC, Kaizen, Six Sigma

SBMS
STANDARDS BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
ISO 9001, EMS 14001, OHSAS 18001, TS 16949, MS 1900, ISO 20000

5S
JAPANESE HOUSEKEEPING
Seiri (Organisation); *Seiton* (Orderliness); *Seiso* (Cleanliness), *Seiketsu* (Standardisation), *Shitsuke* (Sustenance).

SIRIM Berhad's "Total Quality Fast Track Model" accelerated SEMASA's culture or management excellence.

Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), especially since the station is viewed as the landside / airside connection to the airport.

Under the Concession Agreement with the Ministry of Transport Malaysia, SEMASA retains the rights to maintain the public areas in the station, the rail operators' areas and the external perimeter of the station. This will ensure consistency and a high level of service performance pursuant to the Facilities Management Agreement (FMA) executed with each rail operator: Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB), Rangkaian Aliran Perkhidmatan Integrasi Deras (RapidKL) and Express Rail Link Sdn. Bhd. (ERL). SEMASA is privileged to be given the confidence to generate revenue from commercial activities in the facility from the retail areas, the office spaces, car parks, advertising space and ancillary rights.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Ever since 2001, SEMASA has provided integrated building facilities management services of the highest quality. It achieves excellence through the following core activities:

1) Station Management & Operation

2) Project Management

3) Quality Operational & Service Monitoring Performance

4) Maintenance Operation Management Service

Based on these four core activities, SEMASA provides the following specific services to the station:

- Mechanical and Electrical services
- Cleaning Services
- Landscaping Services (internal and external)
- Pest Control Services
- Business and Commercial services
- Marketing and Public Relations (PR)
- Security (Auxiliary Police services), safety and health
- Event Management
- Traffic Management
- Customer Service

The above services are either directly provided by SEMASA's workforce or outsourced to external contractors, Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) suppliers and approved suppliers.

For services provided by SEMASA's workforce, stringent work procedures have to be adhered to ensure consistent, quality service to the customer. The quality of services by outsourced contractors and suppliers are monitored through service contracts, performance evaluations and periodic sub committee meetings through which the company evaluates, selects and appoints contractors and suppliers. Among the measures the company has taken to ensure the quality of service provided are daily service monitoring mechanisms, daily reporting and monthly meetings with outsourced partners. Communication channels are kept open to encourage feedback and the exchange of important information.

The company's COO aims to create a high performance team supported by the strong, positive work culture in SEMASA that values each

employee's contribution and allows them to use their individual talents and skills to the fullest.

In ensuring the fulfilment of the needs of the customers and stakeholders, the COO spearheads the team in determining and reviewing requirements and expectations. Together with the team, the COO established the company's direction towards the company's vision in being a world-class transportation hub management company that exceeds customer expectations.

Through strategic planning, the COO analyses the company's operational and financial performance and also sets and monitors key performance indicators (KPIs) and measurable quality objectives of the company.

With a simple vision and a clear policy on corporate quality and core values, SEMASA aims to provide professional management services that go beyond expectations. While managing Stesen Sentral Kuala Lumpur will remain its core business, SEMASA aims to expand its clientele and build its reputation as Malaysia's top provider of excellent and efficient building and facilities management services.

In an effort to further strengthen its service quality performance, SEMASA will adopt MRCB values in its work culture.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

SEMASA has always maintained two way communication among its teams and an Open Door policy practiced by the senior management. The workforce is free to air their ideas and views, and the management remains customer centric and sensitive to the needs of employees to support the company's vision and goals.

The top management of SEMASA encourages staff to proactively seek customer feedback to gauge their perception of the company. Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted bi-annually to obtain feedback as to whether the company's services meets customer

SEMASA SENTRAL SDN BHD: THE BEST IN ASIA PACIFIC

The APBEST Award gave Semasa Sentral Sdn Bhd a good chance to reflect upon its achievements. Through the successful implementation of programmes in people, quality and workout management, the company demonstrated outstanding achievements in Business Excellence. The organisation was evaluated according to seven dimensions known as the "Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA)" criteria:-

No.	MBNQA Criteria
M1	Leadership
M2	Strategic Planning
M3	Customer & Market Focus
M4	Measurement, Analysis & Knowledge Management
M5	Human Resource Focus
M6	Process Management
M7	Business Results

These criteria promote quality awareness and recognise the quality and performance achievements of the organisation. They also publicise successful performance strategies which ensure business excellence.

SEMASA receiving the APBEST Award 2008.

The APBEST Award provides the following benefits:-

- Improves business from top to bottom
- Provides a focused, systematic and structured approach to enhancing customer's satisfaction
- Reduces or eliminate problems
- Enhances quality in operating systems
- Meets customer expectations

- Motivates and improves morale throughout the workforce
- Encourages a proactive, prevention-orientated culture
- Enhances communication
- Increases processes
- Educates everyone from top to bottom
- Improves customer/supplier relationships, both internally and externally
- Enhances competitiveness

requirements. Customer complaints are taken seriously by the top management and a procedure for handling complaints was established to ensure that complaints are recorded, investigated and acted upon to prevent recurrence. In addition, knowledge is transformed to and from customers through customer satisfaction surveys, meetings and other platforms such as discussions. SEMASA also identifies best practices through benchmarking, seminars, QMEA competitions and other avenues in which information is shared through discussions and presentations, meetings and training.

SEMASA adopts a culture of innovation and continuous improvement through total quality management with its workforce. The company has a systematic approach towards ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for innovation in the company. It has conducted initiatives such as the Innovative and Creative Circle (ICC), 5S program, ISO internal audits, total productive maintenance, benchmarking visits and TQM activities.

These activities act as a platform to enable SEMASA to review its mission, objectives and targets. The ICC teams carry out the ICC projects demonstrate the importance of the culture of innovation and continuous improvement that SEMASA adopts including the emphasis on involving outsourced service contractors in such projects. SEMASA has used the ICC methodology for service improvement since 2003 and has implemented a total of 23 ICC projects in the company to date.

To guide the organisation's overall improvement, SEMASA utilises the ISO 9001:2000, Total Quality Management and Quality Management Excellence award criteria. Since 2003, the ISO 9001 Quality Management System has helped the company in implementing performance improvement processes through the establishment of measurable quality objectives for every department within the organisation.

WE CARE, WE DELIVER
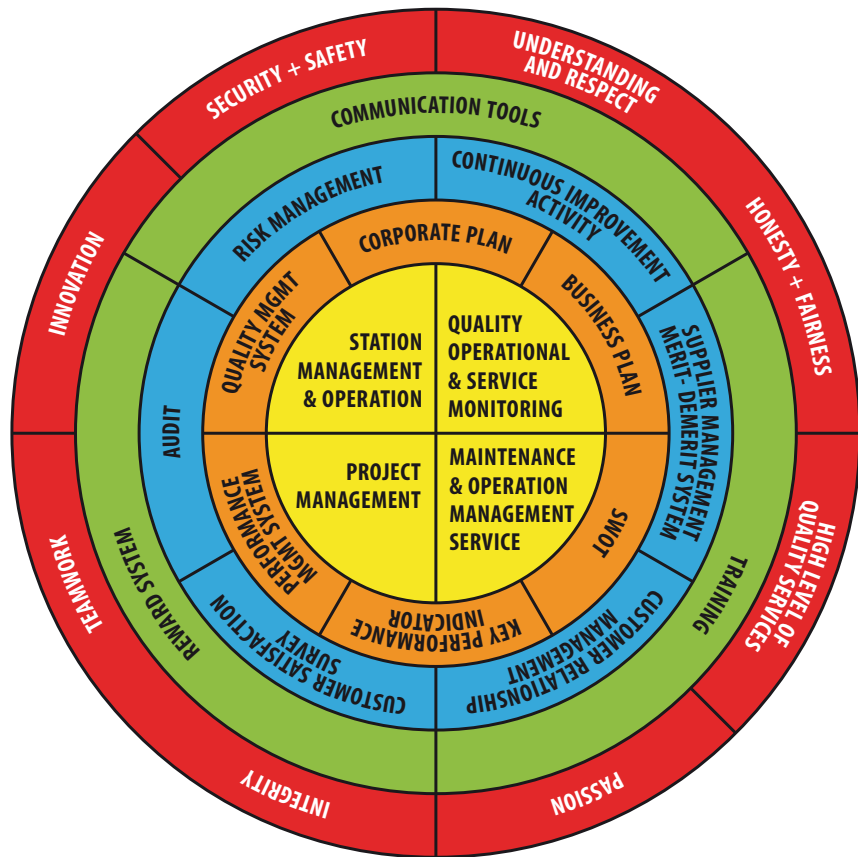
SEMASA's "We Care, We Deliver" model for delivering service excellence.

The company uses the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology as a standard approach for process design, evaluation, and improvement. When planning new services or improving services, the model has helped to identify key processes and requirements and defined measures to ensure requirements are met. The PDCA process is then engaged to address the identified risks.

SEMASA also promotes a culture of performance improvement and organisational learning through the continued focus on strategic goals and breakthrough performance by using customer feedback and benchmarks to determine if performance meets expected levels.

SEMASA's performance measurement system is used to systematically evaluate and measure key processes and to prioritise improvement opportunities. The company's management reviews KPI and quality achievement indicators on a scheduled basis and communicates performance to all subsidiaries. In addition, the top management systematically identifies, educates, and disseminates information related to performance improvement initiatives through:

- the Strategic Planning Process (SPP)

- committees and task forces like the ICC groups, 5S team, and health and safety

- the system-wide Quality Council and quality management review processes; and

- meetings at the management and operation levels.

SEMASA actively supports and strengthens its key communities through measurable quality objectives that are decided and agreed upon by both parties. S&Q

KNOWLEDGE

IS

POWER

The role of knowledge in the Customer Life Cycle and how organisations can profit from it.

by Mohd. Hasnol Ahmad (mdhasnol@sirim.my)
Quality and Enterprise Management Centre

According to the management process guru and statistician W. Edwards Deming, "Quality in a product or service is not what the supplier puts in, but what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for."

This single, succinct truth summarises the need for organisations to focus on fulfilling customer requirements while attaining Customer Service Satisfaction. In this context, satisfaction refers to each and every step that occurs during the business interaction between an organisation and its customers.

A consistent Customer Service Life Cycle is necessary to ensure that long-term relationships are established and maintained across the customer base. This article will discuss how knowledge can play a role to boost the effectiveness of this model.

THE CUSTOMER LIFE CYCLE

The Customer Service Life Cycle is a framework that points to the interactions and relationships between sellers and customers from the initial stages of formulating customer awareness to the end of a customer base as depicted in the figure on the next page.

While the business sector may have a different framework model, it is more or less derived from the same generic Customer Life Cycle model. Although this model is focused on being customer-centric, businesses need to ensure that there is a repetitive purchase and that customers remain advocates of the service sold. The first and foremost objective of this model is to build a solid customer loyalty platform, after which profitability will presumably follow.

But how does one relate the Customer Life Cycle model to services that are purchased once-in-a-lifetime (e.g., wedding planning)? What if the service is not an everyday necessity (e.g., home renovation)?

The Customer Life Cycle

REACH

ACQUIRE

CONVERT

RETAIN

LOYALTY
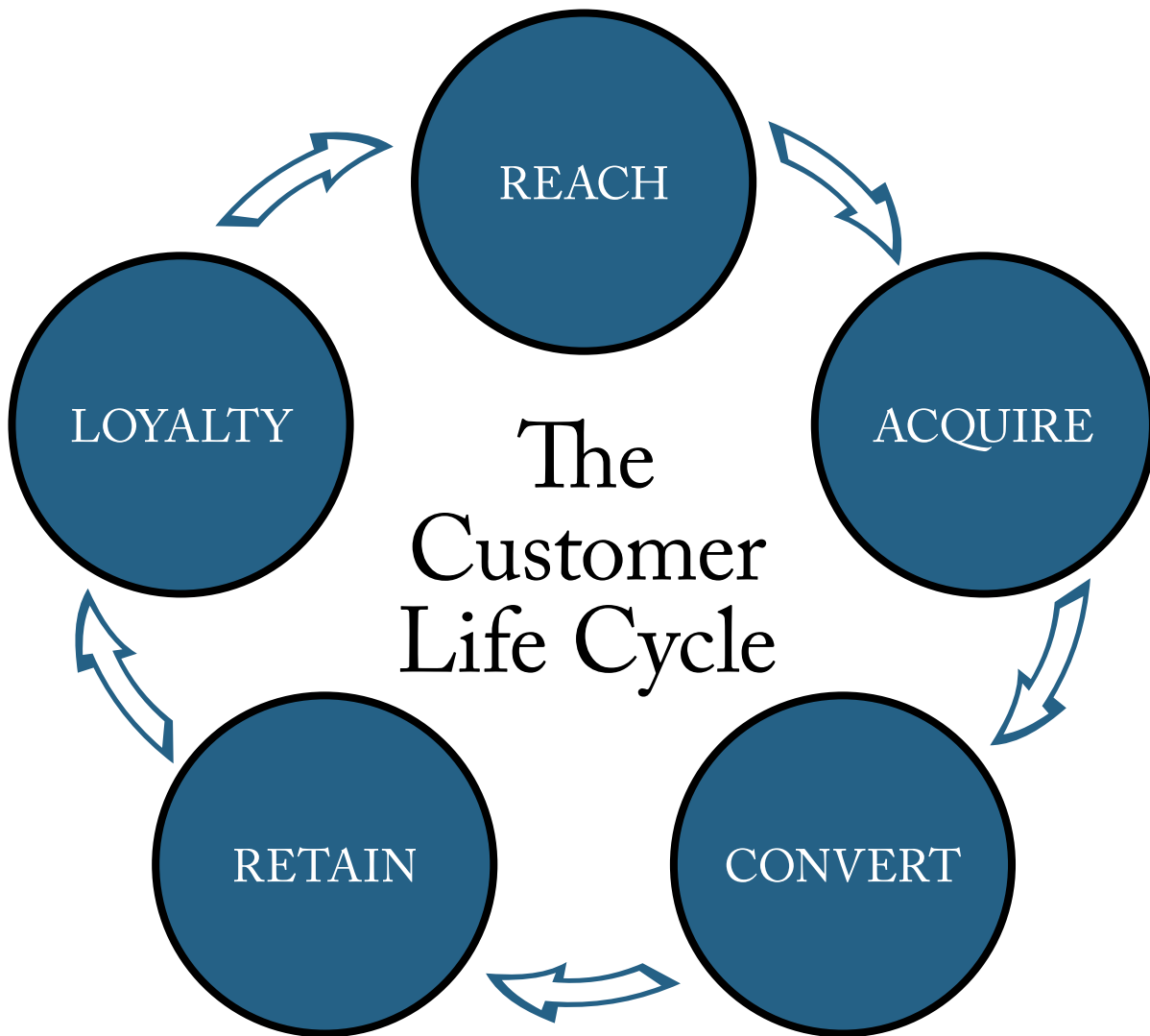
And, even if the services are of an everyday necessity, how does a business keep itself abreast of ever-burgeoning competition? Or, aptly stated, how does a business retain and profit from its business?

A KNOWLEDGE-DRIVEN CUSTOMER LIFE CYCLE

The predicament laid out in the preceding section is a matter of subjective discussion. Of course the model may differ from one organisation to another. The array of arguments range from different services on offer, different service types on offer, different sectors and industries and of course different markets to cater to. But overall, the problems are real. The goals and objectives are real. Every business must profit. Every service must sell. Every customer counts. Every

business must have a secret weapon to leverage itself against the rest.

In order to sell, businesses must know what makes customers "tick". They need to know what makes customers commit to a purchase and then stay loyal to the business. They need that relevant knowledge about customers. Hence, they need to gather and analyse knowledge about customers perhaps to either monitor buying habits, detect unsuspected purchase patterns or similar behaviours. Knowledge can thus contribute greatly to the efficacy of the Customer Life Cycle.

Knowledge is essential in sales and businesses. Companies need information to ensure they fulfill the market's needs. They need to get a pool of knowledge and share it. They need to utilise the knowledge and information and maneuver

through it as opportunities to be gained.

Knowledge initiatives can be applied to each and every step of the Customer Life Cycle:

Reach

While businesses have services out there to be marketed and sold, it means zilch if nobody knows they exist. People need to be made aware of a service's existence.

Today, there is a wide availability of mass media ranging from billboards to broadcast media to the internet and mobile devices. Businesses need to thoroughly understand what market sector they want to serve. Although the safe option is to expand market appeal to the absolute masses, this may not be suitable for every service

type. Businesses should therefore emphasize market research initially and get their hands on valuable research data.

Businesses also need to be aware of conditions that may indirectly affect their trade such as statutory and legal requirements as well as government policies. Most of all, relevant information needs to be shared throughout the information chain so that it can be utilised for effective marketing purposes. Information must be made available and relevant in real time. Although this task may seem arduous, this information can be made explicit through technology. Automated tools and software are available to monitor the market, analyse and recognise patterns and customer needs. At best, technology can enhance the collection of this information to be analyzed and shared. Once this phase has been finalized, then the service on offer can be streamlined to a more direct market and a more effective marketing strategy.

Acquire

While the Reach phase is focused on awareness and market research, the Acquire phase is focused on the interaction between the business and prospective customers as interested participants that are almost willing to buy the services at hand. There needs to be sufficient avenues of contact for customers and businesses to interact. There are a wide variety of interaction tools to capture feedback such as feedback forms, mobile devices and entertainment devices, but the main agenda here is to make the interested parties more interested.

"Businesses need to play an active role in ensuring that interested customers are motivated to become paying customers."

Customers must be enticed and made interested. There is a level of opinions and tacit requirements still to be captured from these prospective customers. Here, businesses need to play an active role in ensuring that interested customers are motivated to become paying customers. They need to be absolutely sure what the deciding factors are that make customers want to commit and buy. And this means good, plain old interaction, because businesses need to look honest and interested. This interaction can come in a form of a normal phone conversation, web interactivity or simply the much favored web-based messenger. Either way, the tacit information should be captured, explicitly stored to not only assist them in the Convert stage later on, but also in future Reach initiatives.

Convert

Conversion is simply the point when prospective customers become paying customers. There would be an initial garnering of interest. They interact with the businesses, then they commit to the purchase. Although easier said than done, this intricate process needs to be continuously monitored and analyzed.

For example: a company can make as many as 100 sales calls a day, and yet only 1% of these contacts will be interested in the service offered, and fewer still will be committed to a purchase. Although this predicament cannot be controlled, what can be controlled and monitored is their purchasing pattern. Patterns of purchase can be observed by the automated tracking of customer buying or by manually going through each and every customer order. Businesses should not only observe buying patterns within the internal scope, but also other variables such as customer demographic changes, customer demand trends and factors that shape the customer's buying decisions. Although the list need not be exhaustive, the knowledge of such customer domains remains essential as not only will it help businesses understand the purchasing customers' market better, the knowledge will also assist them in better preparing future projections in terms of shaping the market.

Retain

This refers to the stage of repeated customer purchases. Though encouraging, businesses have a tendency to overlook this crucial phase as they go all out in the Acquire and Convert stages

It's not enough to just make lots of phone calls in a quest for more business. Instead, organisations need to make an effort to better understand the purchasing patterns of their customers.

without putting in as much effort in maintaining current customers. Businesses should in fact establish a sort of relationship with customers in terms of trust and process. This means businesses must know what keeps the customer satisfied.

Other than mandatory factors such as delivery and quality, businesses should go the extra mile to find out how they can make the customer's service experience exhilarating, purposeful and satisfying. They should not only be aware of their own products and services, but also of what is happening in the market overall. Customers might decide to jump over to a competitor because of better pricing, services or mouth-watering offers on the table. It might even be a simple geographical or convenience consideration that makes the customer switch.

Businesses must take the extra initiative to maintain their customer base (while also looking for new ones) because customer ownership is much more effective then customer acquisition.

Loyalty

This final process converts returning purchase customers into loyal advocates. They can only see a single alternative when purchasing a specific service and businesses should try and mould this mindset into their customer base. It is not enough to ensure that the customer base remains intact. They need to ensure that their customers are staunchly loyal, and although branding does come into play, excellent interaction and experience needs to be present and consistent at all times.

Businesses must go the extra mile to find out how customers become comfortable when buying services. This might be through better communication, more employee training to boost product knowledge, customer incentives, flexibility or by adding the human touch without relying too much on technology. Simply knowing customers by name can make the relationship more natural.

The list is long but the benefits are explicit and favourable. Customers

tend to buy more from businesses that they are loyal to, and will recommend it to others who are willing to try new things.

Businesses really need to go the extra mile and extract as much information as possible in order to generate knowledge and share it within the business organisation. The services offered to the market may not be sufficient enough to pull the crowd, and there is always the risk of customers abandoning the business since a customer today may not necessarily be a customer tomorrow.

Businesses need to be knowledge-driven in order to improve the total customer experience. S&Q

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TOWARDS

GLOBAL MALAYSIAN BRANDS

Want to go global? If so, the National Mark of the MALAYSIAN BRAND may be just what you need.

What's in a brand? Everything. Especially if it's your own.

This was the basic premise behind the Malaysian government's initiative through the National SME Development Council to formulate a branding strategy for products and services with the objective of promoting and reinforcing the value of individual brands and enhancing the visibility of these brands both locally and globally.

Tasked with implementing this strategy, SME Corporation Malaysia and SIRIM QAS International mooted the idea of a "Malaysian Brand" Mark that would inspire confidence in consumers and businesses the world over. It stemmed from a singular vision to promote and reinforce the values of individual brands from Malaysia, thus paving the way forward for Malaysian companies into global markets.

Through the efforts of these two prominent government organisations, the MALAYSIAN BRAND Certification Scheme was born.

THE MALAYSIAN BRAND CERTIFICATION SCHEME

The MALAYSIAN BRAND Certification Scheme helps brand owners from both the manufacturing and service sectors to meet global requirements while providing them with tangible commercial benefits worldwide. Developed based on requirements accepted worldwide, the assessment criteria adopt a comprehensive and holistic approach towards management excellence that combines:

- Quality Management System requirements

- Local and global customer needs

- Product and service quality

- Financial capability

- Corporate social responsibility

- Marketing and branding strategy

The criteria for acceptance can also serve as part of the company's business management tools.

"This unique mark developed by the SME Corporation and

SIRIM will cause a dramatic shift in the way we and rest of the world see Malaysian brands in the near future," says YBhg Dato' Hafsah Hashim, CEO of SME Corporation Malaysia.

"The scheme will undoubtedly provide significant benefits to Malaysian companies."

The idea is that the MALAYSIAN BRAND mark will stand for quality, excellence and distinction among local products and services. It is not only designed for global recognition, but is also intended to promote and enhance the domestic acceptance of Malaysian products among Malaysian businesses and consumers. The criteria for acceptance can also serve as part of the company's business management tools to improve its performance.

BENEFITS OF MALAYSIAN BRAND CERTIFICATION

The MALAYSIAN BRAND certification provides a wide spectrum of benefits to organisations who seek global recognition of their brands. Organisations certified under this scheme will be entitled to the following incentives:

1) SME Corp. will bear 50-percent of the total cost imposed by SIRIM QAS for acquiring the National Mark Certification;

2) SME Corp. will reimburse certified companies up to RM 100,000 for costs incurred involving marketing, advertising, product packaging and promotional material purposes. This incentive is applicable within 2 years following the National Mark Certification (subject to funds availability);

3) Facilitation of companies' access to on-going local and international trade promotion and advertising and promotion (A&P) activities organised by the Malaysian External Trade Organization (MATRADE);

4) Special access passes to MICCI-SME Corp. Malaysia mentoring programmes to facilitate qualifying SMEs to participate in the global market place directly or to become suppliers to internationally diverse corporations; and

5) Invitations to specific training opportunities organised by SME Corp. Malaysia and its partners.

With a brand that is over 100 years old, "Coca Cola" is arguably the most popular carbonated beverage in the world today. Over ten variations of the beverage are sold in over 200 countries around the world today. But although the brand is an international one with localised icons and endorsements in every part of the world, the "Coca Cola" culture and heritage is very much American. Malaysian Brands should aspire to the same by becoming globally recognised companies with strong homegrown roots.

Slowly but surely, SMEs are beginning to appreciate the value of a strong brand in crowded marketplaces. But like all else in business, building a brand requires strategy, planning and execution.

by Sulaiman bin Arshad
Quality and Enterprise Management Centre

The terms 'brand' and 'branding' are integral to a business success. But what exactly do they mean? Does your business have a brand, and does it need one?

Branding gets right to the core of your business value, and is about discovering and communicating the essence of your business and what it delivers to your customers. In effect, your brand creates your business's reputation and its personality. A strong brand can make your business stand out from the crowd, particularly in competitive markets.

Branding is a way of clearly highlighting what makes your product or service different to – or more attractive than – your competitor's. A brand is much deeper than just your company logo. You should define a brand as a set of associations that an existing or potential customer has of a company, product, service or individual. These associations can be the result of your own efforts and actively promoted through marketing and corporate identity.

The intelligent use of design, advertising, marketing, service proposition, and corporate culture can all help to generate associations in people's minds that will benefit your business.

Branding is your attempt to harness these associations to help your business perform better. Any organisation can benefit enormously by creating an accurate brand, i.e one that represents their true values. Therefore, it is important to always be clear about what you stand for.

WHO OWNS A BRAND?

The interpretation of a brand lies somewhere between art and science. It is a set of beliefs. It is a set of expectations. It is a culture that is celebrated and lived in real terms by the people who work with the brand every day inside the company. It is also a culture to be associated with by people who build relationships with the brand in the world at a large.

The mistake many people make is that they believe a brand is made up from advertising or packaging. While that might have been true in the old world, in the new world, there are a million different ways to experience a brand. There are billions of ways to advertise a product and market a brand, and a fragmented media world is making it more and more difficult to build a strategic brand in business.

A brand is best thought of as a culture. Brands are not human-like and they do not have a life of their own outside the consumer's mind. They are instruments; a means to achieve an end. Brands arouse emotions when they are perceived as a source of something beneficial, and positive emotions are a direct result of this anticipation. The various symbolisations of Brands have little impact on their own. Rather, their importance is mainly as identifiers of sources of already attributed and anticipated benefits.

WHAT IS A BRAND?

Many think of a brand in terms of its logo, symbol, name, font, mark or emblem. But these are all merely outward representations of the brand. The brand itself is a mixture of:

- A company

- Its products and/or services

- Rational features

- Emotional fixtures

- Brand/product positioning

- Brand communication

- Brand management

A good and appealing brand will help differentiate the company

from its competitors. Developing this brand requires a sound brand strategy. An appealing consumer brand will ease the company's road to the market. It will provide return on investments (ROI) through sustained profit and may even help extend the product life cycle.

BENEFITS OF STRONG BRAND

Strong brands can help sustain a business's shelf life. A good and appealing brand shields the business's market share by raising a barrier against competitors. Consumers will have greater trust and confidence in the company. Newly-introduced products or services are more likely to be purchased by existing consumers. A sound brand paves the way for businesses to move into new markets as it has a proven and respected track record in other markets.

A good and well planned brand creates positive thoughts in consumers' minds when they see or hear the company's message. This in turn provides the company with cost efficiencies and sustainable profits as the brand attracts consumers, generates economies of scale, lowers unit costs, increases profit margins and builds customer loyalty.

In order to build a brand, industries must identify a team of brand managers to assist them through the intricate process of conceptualising and designing the brand. Successful branding is about promoting your strengths. The company needs to be sure that it can always deliver on its promises by using these strengths, sometimes referred to as 'brand values'.

Companies can start by thinking about what their business is good at and what they believe in as a business. Every business wants to be a customer's first choice. Building and managing a brand can play a part in making that happen. S&Q

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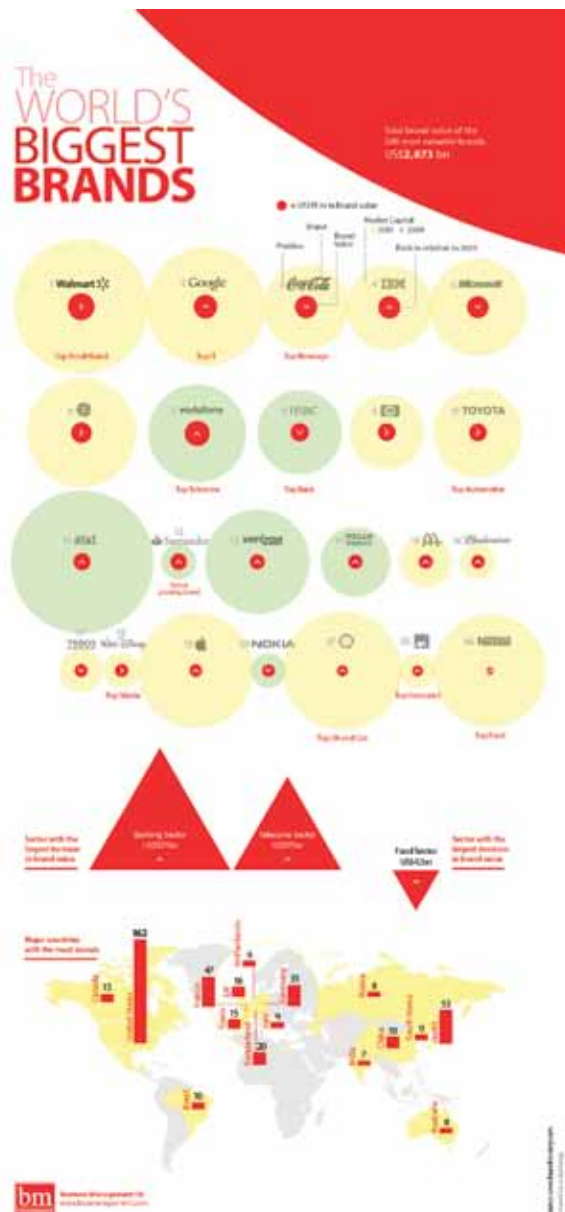
The World's Biggest Brands. Infographic by GDS Digital, on Flikr.

SIRIM's Quality and Enterprise Management Centre is dedicated towards helping small and medium enterprises realise their branding goals. We achieve this through a combination of consulting and training services designed to help entrepreneurs sustain their brands globally. These services include:

- Business and Brand Consultation (walk-in or written enquiries)

- Short courses on branding, with a focus on:

  » Identifying The Importance of Strategic Brand Business

  » Brand Design, Decision and Process

  » Brand Values and Positioning

  » Brand Equity and Management

For more details please contact the Business and Brand Consulting Section:

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THE BIRDS NEST STANDARDS

An overview of Malaysian standards related to edible birds nests

The swiftlet ranching industry has grown tremendously in Malaysia over the last few years. According to statistics from the Department of Veterinary Services at the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry, Malaysia can expect to be home to about 100,000 swiftlet farms by 2020 capable of producing 500 tonnes of birdnests. This will be worth RM5 billion in the world market.

In view of this rapidly developing market, SIRIM on behalf of STANDARDS MALAYSIA has developed three Malaysian Standards as guidelines for the benefit of swiftlet bird's nest entrepreneurs. These Malaysian Standards will help traders and swiftlet bird's nest farm owners to venture into this field in a more systematic and organised manner. In addition, these standards will also lead to improvements in the quality of these products, an especially important factor in an industry where high quality is such a powerful selling proposition. High-quality bird's nests can retail for as much as USD2,000 per kilogramme.

The Malaysian Standards being developed are as follows:

MS 2273, GOOD ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PRACTICE: EDIBLE-BIRDNESTS SWIFTLET RANCHING PREMISES

This Malaysian Standard prescribes the requirements in ranching practices of edible swiftlet bird's nests. It relates to the establishment of good animal husbandry practices for continuous improvement and the sustainable production of its produce, whilst ensuring the health, safety and comfort to both the operators and the birds with no degradation to the natural environment.

MS 2333, GOOD MANUFACTURING PRACTICE (GMP): FOR PROCESSING RAW-UNCLEAN AND RAW–CLEAN EDIBLE-BIRDNESTS (EBN)

This Malaysian Standard provides guidelines for EBN processors for the production of quality and safe EBN for human consumption. It also covers specifications for raw-unclean EBN during sorting, grading and packaging of raw-unclean EBN.

This standard also includes the production of raw-clean EBN from the receipt of raw-unclean EBN to sorting, soaking, picking, removal of impurities, moulding, drying, grading and packaging of quality and safe raw-clean EBN.

MS 2334, EDIBLE-BIRDSNEST (EBN) - SPECIFICATION

This Malaysian Standard prescribes the requirements for the grading of raw-unclean EBN and raw-clean EBN.

The development of these standards is definitely a step forward in the management of edible bird's nests since there was no such standard previously. It will undoubtedly prove useful to different stakeholders involved in the industry and serve to raise the level of business overall. **SQ**

MALAYSIAN STANDARDS

EUROCODE
Concrete Building Structures
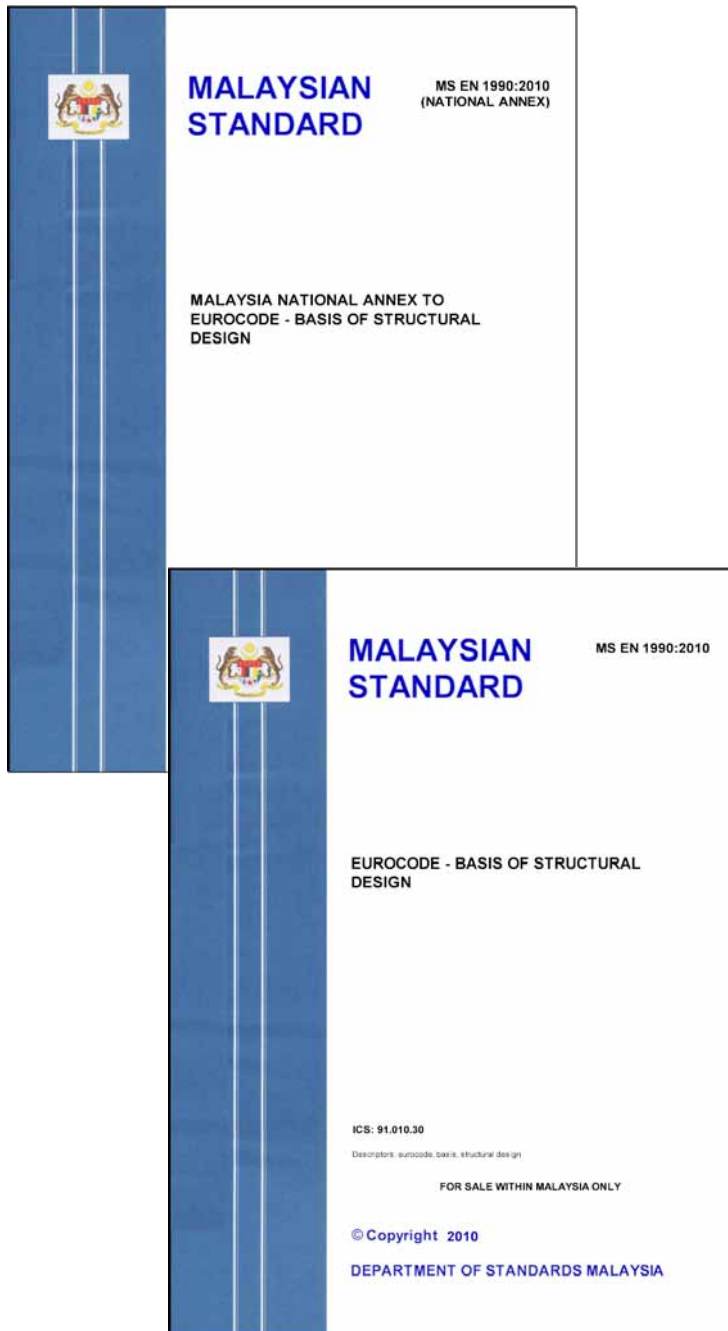
✍ Historically, the design of concrete building structures in Malaysia was primarily based on British Standards. However, these British Standards have been replaced by the Eurocodes. Since Malaysia's direction in the design of concrete structure is also to follow the Eurocodes, these standards are critical for users to prepare themselves towards the new direction.

✍Therefore Malaysia has published the following new Malaysian Standards on concrete building structures which are adopted from Eurocodes and this is the first series of such standards published together with the National Annex. These MS EN shall be read together with their National Annex

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MS EN 1990:2010 - RM120
EUROCODE - BASIS OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN

MS EN 1990:2010 (NATIONAL ANNEX) - RM20
MALAYSIA NATIONAL ANNEX TO EUROCODE - BASIS OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN

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MS EN 1991-1-1:2010 - RM50
EUROCODE 1: ACTIONS ON STRUCTURES - PART 1-1: GENERAL ACTIONS - DENSITIES, SELF-WEIGHT, IMPOSED LOADS FOR BUILDINGS

MS EN 1991-1-1:2010 (NATIONAL ANNEX) - RM20
MALAYSIA NATIONAL ANNEX TO EUROCODE 1: ACTIONS ON STRUCTURES - PART 1-1: GENERAL ACTIONS - DENSITIES, SELF-WEIGHT, IMPOSED LOADS FOR BUILDINGS

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MS EN 1992-1-1:2010 - RM230
EUROCODE 2: DESIGN OF CONCRETE STRUCTURES - PART 1-1: GENERAL RULES AND RULES FOR BUILDINGS

MS EN 1992-1-1:2010 (NATIONAL ANNEX) - RM30
MALAYSIA NATIONAL ANNEX TO EUROCODE 2: DESIGN OF CONCRETE STRUCTURES - PART 1-1: GENERAL RULES AND RULES FOR BUILDINGS

SIRIM Berhad
...Your Partner to Global Trade

MALAYSIAN STANDARD — MS EN 1990:2010 (NATIONAL ANNEX)

MALAYSIA NATIONAL ANNEX TO EUROCODE - BASIS OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN

MALAYSIAN STANDARD — MS EN 1990:2010

EUROCODE - BASIS OF STRUCTURAL DESIGN

ICS: 91.010.30

Descriptors: eurocode, basis, structural design

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DEPARTMENT OF STANDARDS MALAYSIA

LOCAL EXPERTISE,
GLOBAL RECOGNITION

As IQNet celebrates its 20th birthday, SIRIM QAS International reflects upon its many benefits

IQNet celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2010. As a partner of the international network of certification bodies, SIRIM QAS International can testify to its many benefits for both local companies and multinational organisations alike.

Formed in Switzerland in 1990, IQNet currently has 36 partners around the world – 6 in America, 6 in the Asia Pacific region and 24 in Europe. These 36 partner organisations in turn have over 200 subsidiaries and branches, which in many cases extend beyond their national borders. Collectively, IQNet as an organisation has a 30% share of the global management system certification market, with more than 310,000 certificates issued by its partners. SIRIM QAS International was accepted as a partner of this esteemed group of certification bodies in October 2006.

One of the aims of IQNet is to have a global presence through its network of like-minded and credible partners. In regions of the world where it is felt that IQNet is inadequately represented, the organisation proactively identifies potential partners and invites them to become members of the network.

Acceptance into IQNet is not guaranteed, of course – the applicant organisation will have to pass some very stringent guidelines before being approved as a member. Once it does pass, however, it will become part of a very elite club of certification agencies.

GLOBAL POSITIONING

The main aims of IQNet are to recognise and promote certificates issued by IQNet partners, to provide assessment and certification services to global customers and to meet customer needs by offering innovative, value-adding services. These aims have been translated into tangible, collaborative arrangements which benefit all the partners.

The benefits that SIRIM QAS International derives from its membership in IQNet accrue from these aims. Through its membership, the company's certificates are readily accepted by all of its partners. Given the global footprint of IQNet, this would mean acceptance of SIRIM QAS International's certificates in markets in almost every region of the world.

An obligation of every IQNet member is to issue an IQNet certificate for every ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certificate which the partner issues under its own name. The IQNet certificate which SIRIM QAS International issues with every ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certificate is widely recognised in all regions of the world where IQNet partners are active. Effectively, IQNet membership facilitates and enhances global acceptance of SIRIM QAS International's certificates.

Because of this global acceptance, IQNet has become the preferred provider for world-wide certification services and assessments, with a focus on management systems. Through its partners, IQNet has global resources and capabilities, with over 17,000 auditors and technical experts at its disposal, hence its tag-line "Local expertise, global recognition".

Membership of IQNet makes SIRIM QAS International a global certification body. Through IQNet, the company can serve multinationals that wish to deal with a single certification body for the provision of certification services to their operations around the world.

Because of its membership in IQNet, SIRIM QAS International's certificates are readily accepted by all of its partners. Given the global footprint of IQNet, this would mean acceptance of SIRIM QAS International's certificates in markets in almost every region of the world. IQNet members are obligated to issue ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certificates which partners issue under their own names.

Working with its partners, SIRIM QAS International will be able to meet such customer demands.

Another facility available is the IQNet co-certification programme. What this means is that under the IQNet arrangement, SIRIM QAS International can issue an IQNet certificate to an organisation based on the audit report and local certificate issued by another partner organisation. In a recent instance, the Malaysia-based operations of a multinational organisation certified by SIRIM QAS International was issued with a certificate by FCAV, the IQNet partner in Brazil. The issuance of that certificate was based on the audit report and certificate issued by SIRIM QAS International.

Another mechanism for cooperation is the provision of joint auditing services. In this case, two or more partners may collaborate in the audit and certification of a single client. One partner will be appointed as overall leader and, generally, that partner's procedures are used. Each partner is responsible for its own certification decision.

If a client of SIRIM QAS International intends to enter a market where only a partner's certificate is recognised, the partner is obliged to issue a "letter of equivalence" if so requested. SIRIM QAS International has issued several of these "letters of equivalence" to companies located in Spain and certified by AENOR, the Spanish member in IQNet to facilitate the acceptance of their certificates and products covered under them in Malaysia.

If a client requires a SIRIM QAS International certificate for an entity in another country, and if that entity is not certified by the partner in that country, the IQNet arrangement offers two solutions to clients, both of which are recognised:

• Outsourcing of the entire audit to the partner; or

• Using auditors from the partner to support SIRIM QAS auditors in the audit of the organisation

In this regard, SIRIM QAS International has supported audits of clients certified by SQS of Switzerland in Singapore, and Certiquality (CISQ) of Italy in Malaysia.

The international reputation and high competence of IQNet makes it an exceptionally reliable and useful partner to have. Clients of IQNet benefit from the innovative products and services that the organisation offers through its partners. SIRIM QAS International sees its membership of IQNet as a mutually beneficial relationship, and is committed to working towards enhancing IQNet's presence in this part of the world while benefiting from the organisation's global network to provide services to the company's clients in all parts of the world. SQ

DO YOU KNOW...?

ALL ABOUT THE MOLE

One of the base quantities of the International System of Units, the SI, is "amount of substance". Its unit, the "mole" is mainly used by chemists.

"Amount of substance" is a quantity proportional to the number of entities N in a sample. The proportionality constant is the same for all substances and is the reciprocal of the Avogadro constant, N_A.

At present, the mole is defined as the amount of substance of a system which contains as many elementary entities as there are atoms in 0.012 kilogram of carbon-12, where the carbon-12 atoms are unbound, at rest and in their ground state. When the mole is used, the elementary entities must be specified and may be atoms, molecules, ions, electrons, other particles, or specified groups of such particles.

In the near future, the mole may be redefined independent of the kilogram.
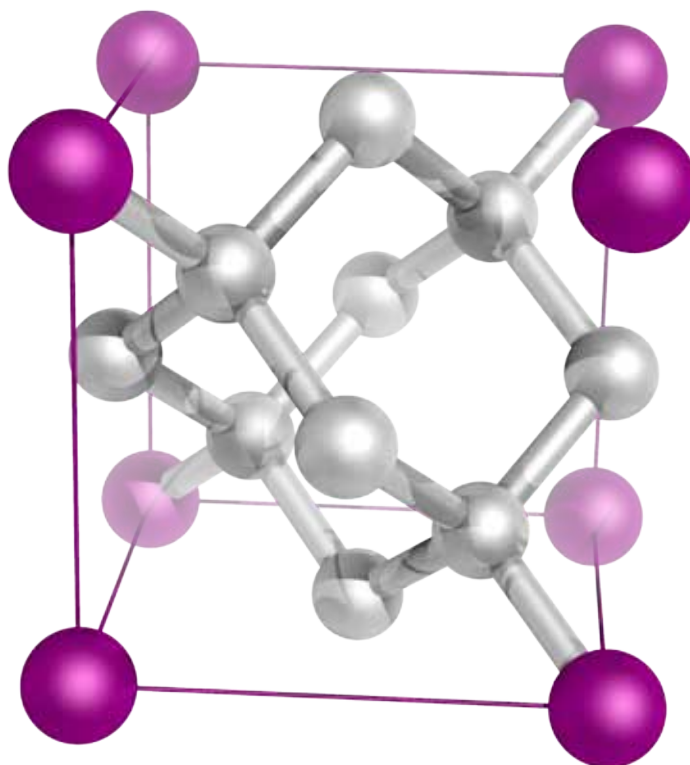
1 mole of carbon lattice diamond contains 6.022 141 79 (30) x 10^{23} exact duplicates with a relative standard uncertainty of 5 x 10^{-8}. Infographic by YassineMrabet.

HOW BIG IS THE MOLE?

The numerical value of the Avogadro constant (N_A) expressed in the unit mol^{-1} is simply the number of atoms in 12 g of carbon-12. The present best estimate of the Avogadro constant is:

$$N_A = 6.022\ 141\ 79\ (30) \times 10^{23}\ mol^{-1}$$

with a relative standard uncertainty of 5 x 10^{-8}

This number means that one mole of a drug molecule is

602,214,179,000,000,000,000,000

identical copies of that molecule.

If we are counting coins at the rate of one coin per second, it would take us twenty thousand million million years to reach this Avogadro number.

The National Metrology Laboratory (NML) was appointed as the National Measurement Standards Laboratory under the National Measurement System Act 2007 (Act 675) with the responsibility for the establishment of national measurement standards and provision of measurement traceability. NML is a signatory to the CIPM-MRA since 4 October 2001. It is also the Custodian of Weights and Measures under the Weights and Measures Act 1972 (Act 71).

WHO'S WHO
IN STANDARDS & QUALITY

SIRIM

Tn. Hj. Abdul Aziz b. Long became Senior General Manager of the **Standards Research and Management Centre** at the Standards and Quality Division of SIRIM Berhad on 1 February 2010.

Dr. Hj. Mohd. Azman b. Idris is Senior General Manager of the **Quality and Enterprise Management Centre** in the Standards and Quality Division of SIRIM Berhad.

En. Azim Ng Abdullah became Vice President of the **Standards and Quality Division** of SIRIM Berhad on 1 June 2010.

En. Abdul Rashid b. Zainal Abidin is Senior General Manager of the **National Metrology Laboratory** in the Standards and Quality Division of SIRIM Berhad.

Pn. Khalidah bt. Mustafa became Managing Director of **SIRIM QAS International Sdn. Bhd.** on 1 February 2010.

Pn. Nurfadhilah bt. Muhammad became Senior General Manager of the **Testing Services Department** at SIRIM QAS International Sdn. Bhd. on 2 May 2010.

En. Parama Iswara Subramaniam is Senior General Manager of the **Management Systems Certification Department** at SIRIM QAS International Sdn. Bhd.

Tn. Hj. Basori b. Selamat became Senior General Manager of the **Product Certification Department** at SIRIM QAS International Sdn. Bhd. on 2 May 2010.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPDATES ON SIRIM QAS INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION

PLEASE REFER TO THESE WEBSITES FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON PRODUCT AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATIONS.

www.malaysiancertified.com.my
www.sirim-qas.com.my

Contact: Azlina Dzulkifli / Shuana Mohd Aris

Phone: +603 5544 6809 / 6822

E–mail: azlinad@sirim.my *or* shuana@sirim.my

UPDATES ON MALAYSIAN STANDARDS (MS)

THESE WEBSITES CONTAIN UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON MALAYSIAN STANDARDS (MS)

MS Development Structure:

http://smsonline.sirim.my
http://smsonline.sirim.my/FMainISC.jsp
http://smsonline.sirim.my/FMainISC_ENC.jsp

Industry Standards Committees (ISCs) managed by SIRIM Berhad. Currently, there are 23 ISCs ranging from ISC A on Agriculture to ISC Z on Environmental Management. You can also find the list of the Technical Committees (TCs) and Working Groups (WGs) established under each of the ISCs. Just click on each of the committees to get the information on their scope and member organisations as well as the list of MS developed by the committee.

Also available here is information on Standards Writing Organisations (SWO), the organisations appointed by SIRIM Berhad to undertake and manage standards development within a specific scope.

All the information you need about the stages of MS development, from request until final publication.

MS Development Process

http://www.sirim.my/std_dev/ms_flow/processflow.htm

Be among the first to get the latest information on the newly approved Malaysian Standards with this list of recently approved MS.

Recently approved MS:

http://www.sirim.my/std_dev/latest.doc

Approved MS, projects and drafts for public comment:

http://www.sirim.my/std_dev/h4_01.htm

Get the list of MS approved by the Minister, the list of projects approved by Industry Standards Committees (ISC) for development of MS and draft MS available for public comment. Draft MS for public comment can be downloaded from this page at no charge. Additionally, draft MS which are adopted in total from International Standards are available at the charges indicated. Hardcopies of these draft standards can also be obtained from:

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40911 Shah Alam, Selangor.
(Attn: Standards Research and Management Centre)
Tel: 603 – 5544 6366; Fax: 603 – 5510 6389
E-mail: std_develop@sirim.my

MS Online
http://www.msonline.gov.my

The MS Online system provides users with an easy and secure way to view, purchase and download full MS texts online. Payments may be made by credit card. The system also features advanced functions and allows you to search by MS number, Title, Subject, Year and or by keywords.

The temperature is rising and so is our determination.

There is worldwide consensus that developed countries need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to counter global warming. Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is an opportunity for developed countries to achieve their GHG reduction obligations in meeting their commitments under the Kyoto protocol. Now, SIRIM QAS International can help Malaysian and international companies achieve sustainable development and market carbon credits as an additional revenue generating product. Every CDM project needs to comply with the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) eligibility criteria and that's where we come in.

SIRIM QAS International is now ready to **validate, verify** and **certify** your CDM project. Contact us now.

☎ (603) 5544 6402/6403

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SIRIM QAS INTERNATIONAL

WE

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- Electrical and Electronic Products Testing
- Radio Frequency (RF) and Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) Testing
- Chemical and Consumer Products Testing
- Fire Protection Testing
- Issuance of IECEE-CB Test Reports

AND IF IT MAKES IT THROUGH, WE PASS IT

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