



Talent takes centre stage

THE global tech-based economies' battle cry for talents is fierce as organisations compete to emerge stronger post-pandemic.

Talents with in-demand skill sets can do wonders with an idea, vision or product and leaders know this only too well.

The competition to win them to one's side away from the rival is as serious as the challenge to create a rich environment where they want to stay.

What do we really mean by talent? I'd like to think of it as a person with fresh perspectives and diverse experience, to create, innovate and accelerate either the simplest of things, or the hardest of matters.

They bring what a company and country needs to stay competitive and adapt to changing conditions.

Whether it manifests in the form of creativity, scientific know-how, entrepreneurial instincts, or any other realm of expertise, good talent has the remarkable ability to shape the paths of sectors, societies and nations.

It serves as the driving force for innovation, progress and excellence in virtually every facet of human endeavour.

Malaysia has never lacked exceptional talents.

We see it in P. Ramlee putting our country on the region's cinematic map, Loke Chin Fatt for his iconic yee sang celebrated by all the races and Sivasangari Subramaniam who won two squash gold medals in the recent Asian Games.

Our nation has always had a unique position not only for our rich cultural diversity, but also our strategic location between two of the most important shipping routes in Asia — the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea.

Our beautiful, sunny weather paired with exotic islands and the scrumptious food we all know and love, are just some of the many cherries on the cake to attract the best and brightest. But that's a story for another day.

Talent as a game-changer

How can we attract the right talent for the purpose of nation-building? This may seem like a trick question,

but it's not. Unfortunately, retaining good talent has been an issue for many organisations in the world.

While some may continuously flock to Silicon Valley, known for its concentration of high-tech companies and innovation, it is vital that we begin looking at what sort of talent we want to attract into Malaysia, and why.

Competitive edge: The right talent brings a competitive edge. Skilled and motivated employees will outperform competitors, innovate and help the organisation stay ahead in the market.

Innovation: Talented individuals often bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the table. They drive creativity and contribute to the development of new products, services, and solutions.

Leadership Development: Identifying and attracting top talent can help organisations develop future leaders from within. Investing in the growth and development of employees can build a strong leadership pipeline.

Adaptability: In a rapidly changing business environment, having a team of adaptable and talented individuals is crucial. They are more likely to learn new skills and adapt to changing roles or technologies.

Company Culture: Attracting the right talent can contribute positively to company culture. They can set a high standard for professionalism, work ethic and collaboration, which can influence the behaviour and val-



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ues of the entire organisation.

The government has a huge role to play in procuring this kind of talent.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's Madani Framework is a step in the right direction, showing his commitment to embrace inclusivity and development strategies to make Malaysia an influential talent hub.

Likewise, businesses can strongly impact talent development. By recognising the value of human capital and investing in their growth, employees are almost guaranteed to excel.

Education hub with global perspective

One of the more interesting topics arising from Malaysia's aim to become a talent hub for the Asian region was, where would these talents come from?

I'm inclined to think that there are many budding entrepreneurs and innovators sitting in classrooms and lecture halls as we speak.

It is undeniable that our education system, whilst has much to improve, can still become the top destination for many across the world.

Times Higher Education revealed earlier this year that overseas applica-

tions to Malaysian universities had surged post-Covid, which only proved what we already know.

Many students from abroad come to Malaysia for higher education. Here they find a good quality of life, safe streets, a supportive environment, universities of high reputation and competitive programme fees among others.

Upon graduation, they are better equipped to lead fulfilling lives, contribute to their communities, and participate in the development of a prosperous and harmonious society.

So can we rival other nations? We most definitely can.

Moving on from education to what these talented minds can create has never been far from astounding. And most innovations and groundbreaking discoveries stem from one main thing: research and development.

The beauty of R&D

Every Fortune 500 company has its roots deep in R&D. However, not many talk about R&D because innovation is the secret sauce that will differentiate one company's product with another.

It's no longer an extension to business but an essential pillar of operations to seek knowledge to develop, design, and enhance products, services, technologies, or processes.

At TM R&D, we look to improve the lives of people by coming up with solutions to achieve three main objectives – how to save an organisation money, how to help one make new money and lastly, how to marry both to be deployed in a sustainable way.

It can be how we reduce wastes of scarce and limited resources such as non-revenue water leakages, improve the effective use of a fleet workforce or connect our disconnected forests by building safe corridors for animals through digital technology.

None of our solutions or innovations would have been possible without the right talent and minds that work together in harmony.

It is time for Malaysia to capitalise on how much we have to offer and make Malaysia a talent hub to drive high quality FDIs.

Behind every great company, is its people.