Get rid of arrogance and ignorance, M’sian firms told

Talent nurturer Kim says the two hinder corporate growth

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian companies have the ability to climb up to greater heights should they eradicate arrogance and ignorance in the corporate culture, said talent nurturer Samuel Hungsoo Kim.

In a brief, he described ignorance as “you don’t know what you should know and you don’t know what you don’t know,” noting that arrogance is “when you act like you know it all despite that you don’t know it.”

Kim, who is the co-founder and president of Center for Asia Leadership initiatives (CALI) noted that managing ignorance and arrogance in companies would result in a higher chance of identifying business opportunities.

Speaking about talents in Malaysia, Kim, who has been empowering talents in over 32 countries observed that corporate mindset in the country was shifting away from “true leadership” given Malaysia’s resources of a strategic geographical location and an English speaking society.

“Firstly, they (talents) don’t see opportunities and don’t do anything about it. Secondly, they see the opportunity but they still do nothing. Thirdly, they see the opportunity but there is a delayed response. Lastly, they see the opportunity but they give a wrong response,” Kim told StarBiz on the sidelines of the 2nd Asia Leadership Forum held in Kuala Lumpur.

The forum was organised by CALI in collaboration with Sunway University, Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, Star Media Group and industry partner Maybank.

Leadership forum: [from left] Patel, Yoda, Born, Kim, Hartley and Kogan at the forum. Kim says managing ignorance and arrogance in companies would result in a higher chance of identifying business opportunities.

It invited Harvard Teaching Fellows and professors, namely, American secretaries of state project research director Dr Eugene B. Kogan, Centre for public leadership former scholar Justin R. Hartley, Clinked co-founder Junko Yoda, Centre for public leadership co-director Dana Born and Dent Education co-founder Rajan Patel.

Meanwhile, Kim believes that exercising leadership in the 21st century is about learning because identifying opportunities and challenges become easier.

Citing an example of Nokia’s decline in the mobile device industry, Kim pointed out that complacency, internal politicking and scapegoating caused the company’s downfall.

In 2013, Nokia’s global market share plummeted to 3% from 49.4% in 2007.

To be an effective leader, one must learn the art to negotiate by either creating joint gains empathetically, using power to exploit the opponent’s vulnerabilities, shaping the decision of others and the ability to turn uncertainty to your advantage, said Dr Eugene.

“Secrets are essential for negotiation. One huge challenge you will face is to know the secrets behind the negotiating table in terms of the other party’s constraints.

“It is in your interest to help the other party solve the challenges to negotiate sustainably although trust is required to talk about the constraints,” he disclosed.