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NEWSLETTER

National Productivity and Competitiveness Council

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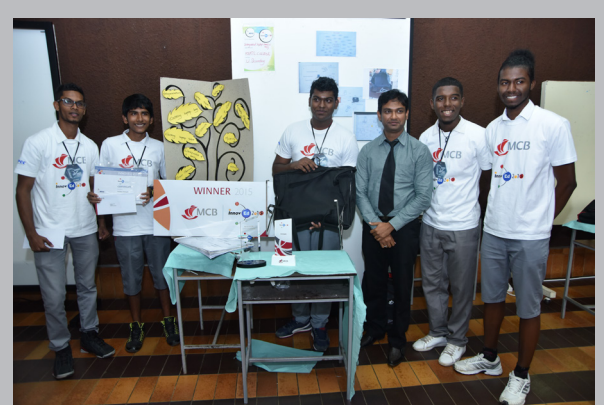
According to Mr. Dev Appalswamy, Officer in Charge of NPCC:

“The innovations bear testimony to our young creator’s capacity to innovate and their bold spirit in trying new things and breaking new grounds. These are values that every one of our students in the Republic of Mauritius should espouse, beyond academic excellence. Our students must realize that anyone of us can be an innovator if we create space in our minds and let our creativity take flight”



InnovEd (Innovation for the Education Sector) is a project of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education & Human Resources, Tertiary Education & Scientific Research, which was launched in 2005. The aim of InnovEd is to promote critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation among students.

The award ceremony of the 8th edition of InnovEd was organized on 01 July 2015 at the Octave Wiehé auditorium at Réduit. The ceremony was graced by the Hon. Minister of Education & Human Resources, Tertiary Education & Scientific Research, Mrs Leela Devi Dookhun Luchoomun. The Mayflower College and the Keats College topped the list of InnovEd 2015 in the Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary categories with the projects “Eco-friendly seating unit” and “Integrated Laptop & Bag” respectively.



InnovEd targets students of form 1 to form 3 (Lower Secondary) and form 4 to form 6 (Upper Secondary). The purpose is to catch them young and shape their innovative mindset. 56 projects from 52 secondary schools were exhibited and judged. Prior to participating in innovEd, the young innovators are trained by their facilitators to understand all facet of their problems, unravel its complexity and then combine all their knowledge to develop an original product or service and why not useful. Moreover, participants were required to complete an Innovator’s workbook which describes all the steps the students have gone through to come up with their innovation and the Innovator’s work book should be ready at hand for the exhibitions.

InnovEd 2015 has been conducted in three phases which consist of

- Capacity building programme for 67 Facilitators from participating secondary schools, both public and private, attended the training sessions at regional level in Mauritius and Rodrigues. These facilitators followed a two-day training programme with the objective of equipping them with tools and techniques to coach the students participating for the InnovEd project.
- Project implementation in schools whereby students, under the guidance of their facilitators worked on their respective projects in teams.
- National selection culminating in an award ceremony whereby the 56 projects from 52 secondary schools were assessed by the juries.

In the Lower Secondary category besides the winner, Mayflower College with their project “Eco-friendly seating unit”, the first runner up was Islamic Cultural College Pre-Vocational Department with their project “Dual Function Wheelchair” and the second runner up was Marechal College from Rodrigues with their project “Domestic Salt Maker”.

In the Upper Secondary category the laureate Keats College with their project “Integrated Laptop table & Bag” was followed by two runners up; John Kennedy College with their project “Automated Irrigation System using wireless and computerised technology” and Sir Leckraz Teelock SSS with their project “Painting Aid”.

All participants were rewarded and they received a certificate of participation. The winners were rewarded with cash vouchers and tokens from the Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) which was our official sponsor for the event. It should be noted that InnovEd is an initiative of the NPCC to develop a culture of innovation in Mauritius to improve productivity and ensure our international competitiveness.



CEREMONY OF AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES FOR THE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SME (GO SME) PROJECT



The Handing over of certificates for the Growth Opportunities for SME (GO SME) project on 21st June 2015 at the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited (BPML), Ebene. 90 SMEs were rewarded and the ceremony was graced by the presence of the Minister of Business Enterprise and Cooperatives, Hon. Soomilduth Bholah and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Mr. Ram Prakash Nowbuth.

SMEs having completed the three phases of the GoSME project is eligible to a special package under the PIP (Productivity Improvement Programme) project they will contribute a minimal fee and NPCC consultants will continue to follow up with a new project in their enterprises.

Dev Appalswamy, officer in charge of NPCC highlighted:

“The Go-SME project marks a milestone in our journey to improve enterprise productivity. It has taught us many lessons, the first one being about leadership. Organisations hardly succeed by accident. It takes leaders, people and a workplace culture. Leaders who inspire and make new ways possible; people dedicated to improving or picking up new skills; and a whole workplace culture that is committed to innovating and delivering the best quality product or service for customers”



After SMEs registered for the programme, Productivity Executives from NPCC visited them individually to conduct an audit. During the Analysis phase, a walk-through survey was conducted to collect data about their needs and to discuss possibilities of improvement. The analysis phase was conducted during the first four months of year 2014, 600 companies registered for the GoSME project. During the period May to October 2015, 7 batches of 20 Productivity Champions identified by SMEs were trained on the concepts and tools of Lean Management. Following the training, the Productivity Champions were motivated to implement at least one project in their respective enterprise. 90 projects have been implemented in enterprises

The 90 Projects impacted on :

- Efficiency
- Sales
- Cost
- Delivery Time
- Quality

The NPCC targeted to embark at least 500 SMEs on the productivity improvement journey for the year 2014. Why SMEs? SMEs of Mauritius contribute 40% to our GDP and improving their productivity would undoubtedly impact positively on the national economy.

The GO SME project was free for all participants.



The Growth Opportunities for SME (Go SME) was officially launched on 05 December 2013 where the NPCC was required to provide training on productivity to the SMEs.

The Go SME project consists of 3 phases:

- Phase 1: Analysis
- Phase 2: Training
- Phase 3: Implementation

BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUE

Brainstorming is an effective way to discover incredible new ideas and take your life and your business in incredible new directions. It is a very powerful tool designed to generate a large number of creative ideas in a very short period of time. This technique encourages participation, the generation of free flowing ideas, and opens people's thinking and perspective on issue of interest.

In nearly any situation and with nearly any issue, brainstorming can perform miracles as long as the situation or issue is clear and specific. If you have multiple problems that need solving, multiple goals to achieve, then consider holding separate brainstorming sessions for each of them.

When should **BRAINSTORMING** be used?

Brainstorming can prove to be an ideal means when a group needs a creative and comprehensive list of ideas or problems. They help identify driving and restraining forces, opportunities for improvement, causes, effect and solutions to address a problem. Nevertheless, it is imperative to provide equal opportunity to each member of the group to voice out their ideas in the course of the session.

Once a problem has been identified for the brainstorming session, it is important to decide upon which brainstorming technique to use to start generating solutions.

There are five steps in the Reverse Brainstorming Process:

1. Identify the problem plainly and write it down.
2. Reverse the issue. For example, instead of asking "How can I help?" ask, "How can I make it worse?"
3. Brainstorm to figure out all possible reverse solutions. Reject nothing. Criticize nothing.
4. Flip the reverse solutions to create real fixes for the actual issue.
5. Evaluate these solutions and decide if a real solution can be formed.



BRAINSTORMING SESSION...

BRAINSTORMING RULES

- Defer judgment – separating idea generation from idea selection strengthens both activities. For now, suspend critique. Know that you'll have plenty of time to evaluate the ideas after the brainstorm.
- Encourage wild ideas – breakout ideas are right next to the absurd ones
- Build on the ideas of others – listen and add to the flow of ideas. This will springboard your group to places no individual can get to on their own
- Go for volume – best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas
- One conversation at a time – maintain momentum as a group. Save the side conversations for later.
- **Headline** – capture the essence quickly and move on. Don't stall the group by going into a long-winded idea.



Although the brainstorming technique can be a success in finding solutions to particular problems, it can also, however, be an exercise in futility if not handled properly. A disorganized and untrammelled brainstorming session can, at its worst, lead to total chaos, confusion, frustration, and despair. In order to avoid this situation, there are rules to keep a brainstorming session on track.

The following techniques may be used:

1. Round Robin technique

The basic structure of a Round robin session begins with a central theme, question, or issue which the facilitator identifies for discussion. Arranged in a circle, participants begin by considering the question. One participant is selected to lead off the process by offering a single thought or reaction, either out-loud or on a piece of paper/index card. In a verbal format, the rest of the participants remain quiet during his or her answer. Once this first participant is finished contributing, the participant sitting directly to his or her right contributes an additional point, idea, or thought. Working clockwise around the circle, each participant either speaks or writes a single idea - ideally one which has not yet been mentioned - until a full circle has been completed or the time reserved for the exercise has passed. During this period, the facilitator records insights and central points raised. The session then concludes with a group discussion.

2. Freewheeling technique

This technique is unstructured allowing participants to add ideas spontaneously. The disadvantage of this technique is that if some members within the group are shy, it happens that they won't participate in sharing ideas. On the other hand, others within the group can dominate the brainstorming session if they have many ideas and not giving the chance to others to participate.

3. Reverse technique

Reverse brainstorming solves the problems of direct questioning and the singular approach by exploring multiple factors in reverse. This encourages more creative thought. Instead of asking what a problem is and how to fix it, reverse brainstorming asks "What causes the problem?" or "What achieves the exact opposite effect of what we're looking for?" Doing so encourages more participation and outside-the-box thinking. With reverse brainstorming, the question is not "How do I solve this?" but rather, "How do I cause this to be a problem?"

Mauritius: the Gateway to Africa

Increasing Productivity; Building Leadership

As Mauritius thrives to boost growth, talent development and building sustained leadership capability are crucial. The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) is collaborating with the Result Based Leadership Group (RBL) to measure the current leadership capacity in Mauritius, define the Mauritian Leadership Brand and develop leadership capabilities to bridge existing gaps.



A Keynote address on **“Talent Accelerator: Building Results-Based Leaders for Sustainable Growth”** which marks the kick-off of the project was held on 30 April 2015 at BPML Ebene. The conference was led by Justin Allen, a Principle of the RBL Group and the Head of Operations for RBL’s Leadership Practice. He is dedicated to advancing the fields of Leadership and Strategic Human Resource by connecting leaders with practical tools, leading edge theory, and opportunities to learn from each other.

The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC), is collaborating with the Result Based Leadership (RBL) Group to:

- Conduct a survey to measure the current leadership brand in Mauritius to identify existing gaps
- Facilitate a series of consultations with relevant stakeholders to craft the Mauritian Leadership Brand based on best practices and results of the survey conducted
- Build an overall roadmap to ensure execution, geared towards positioning Mauritius as a leader in the region and achieving long-term economic growth for the betterment of one and all
- Provide research-based insights, skills, knowledge, and tools that Mauritian leaders need to leverage the talent of their people and achieve spectacular results.

The consultation forum will culminate into a Master Seminar, led by **Dr. Dave Ulrich** on the theme **“Strategy, Talent and Leadership for Growth”** on **03 September 2015** at **Trianon Convention Centre**. He is the Rensis Likert Professor of Business at the University of Michigan and co-founder of the RBL Group (www.rbl.net). From this body of work, he has received numerous profiles, accolades, and lifetime honors. Passionate about learning and perennially curious, Ulrich is one of the most in demand business speakers worldwide. So far, he has worked in 87 countries and consulted for half of the Fortune 200. This conference will help participants build organizations that accomplish desired results while pulling leaders from across the nation together to collectively continue to build Mauritius as a strong economic engine in the region. The seminar is designed for business leaders who are owners and primarily responsible for delivering results, for HR professionals who are architects to design and deliver effective organizations, and for government officials who are setting policy and creating solutions to boost productivity. All details about the tickets and the workshop will be available on our website: www.npccmauritius.com

At the end of the project, the current leadership capacity will be measured and assessed, the Mauritian Leadership Brand will be designed and leadership capabilities will be built. This will increase stakeholder confidence around delivery of high quality results, today and into the future.

Mr Dev Appalswamy mentioned in his speech:

“A key thrust for the growth strategy of Mauritius is to enhance workforce capabilities by grooming talents while focusing on, innovation and productivity. To achieve this, we need to support organisations, both public and private, develop progressive talent management and leadership capabilities. Furthermore, rather than simply letting a generic leadership brand emerge, it is necessary to develop the Mauritian Leadership Brand.

With this in mind, the project Mauritius: the Gateway to Africa – Increasing Productivity; Building Leadership has been designed”

Mr Nowbuth, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms quoted from Paul Krugman, Nobel Winning Economist:

“Productivity may not be everything, but in the long run, it is almost everything.”

Empowering women entrepreneurs in the context of the International Women's Day.



The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council organised a workshop for more than 60 women on 19 March 2015 in the context of women's day. Economic and social empowerment of women has proved to lead to growth of a country. Since its inception the NPCC has always included women empowerment in its activities through different projects, namely the Civic Action Team, English Literacy using IT (ELIT) and the Growth Opportunity for SMEs(GoSME). The focus of the workshop conducted was on the following :

- Strategic planning.
- Finance
- Marketing



"Empowering women and girls with more choices and more freedoms is crucial to achieving a better future for all", said Amartya Sen Nobel laureate and a founder of UNDP's Human Development Index.

The women present highly appreciated the workshop. The women highlighted that the knowledge shared by the NPCC was practical and this will help them improve their enterprises.

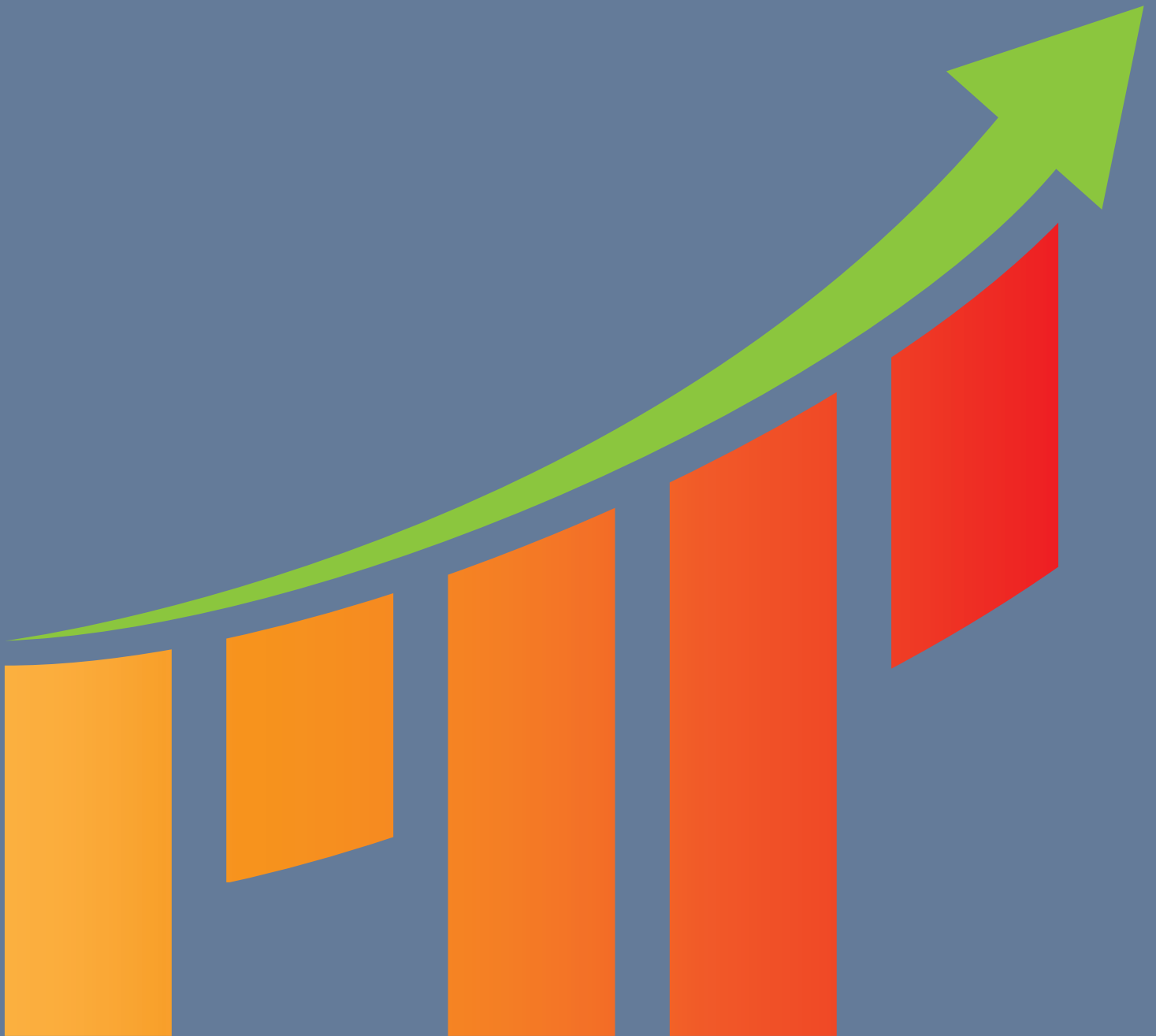
During the workshop, the women entrepreneurs present were required to reflect and draw a picture of their vision and mission. They had to revisit their core values and conduct a quick SWOT analysis of their enterprises. Based on the SWOT analysis they were required to define their strategic objectives and to develop an action plan.

However, having a clear strategic plan is not enough for them to manage their business. They were also taught how to keep their cash flow positive. The session on finance required women to focus on how they can control their expenses. In their process they were taught to develop their cash flow budget for the year so that they are conscious about the financial challenges awaiting them.

Moreover, cash in-flows depend on the ability of an-entrepreneur to sell their products. The session has focused on the basics of marketing. They learnt how to review their products presentation to be attractive and competitive on the market. They were exposed to the trends of the market and how it is essential to move from a product-focus enterprise to a customer-focus one.

PRODUCTIVITY

IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME



BOOST YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Interesting packages for both private companies and public institutions

Productivity Improvement Programme (PIP) is inplant consultancy solutions with practical training to continuously improve effectiveness of organisations.

We work with you to improve the performance of your people and processes. We also assess your business needs and assist you to align your people and processes so that you can deliver business results and secure significant gains

The tables below summarise the projects implemented and the overall impact area:

Impact of projects on	No. of SMEs
Efficiency	25
Sales	17
Cost	16
Delivery Time	8
Quality	5
Total	71

We proceed in three phases:

1. Analysis of needs
2. On-the-job Training
3. Implementation

The benefits from PIPs within organisations are essentially to:

- Increase Productivity
- Improve Quality
- Reduce Cost
- Decrease Delivery time
- Raise Morale
- Ensure Safety

8-Steps Approach to PIP:

1. Identify the important problems to be tackled based on facts, figures and observations at the workplace
2. Agreement on targets to be set
3. Understand the factors that are causing the problems
4. Conduct on the job training
5. Find best solutions among possible alternatives
6. Implement solutions
7. Monitor and evaluate results
8. Standardise when under control

TRAINING ON LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT ABERCROMBIE WOMEN CENTRE



A half day training was conducted in different Women Centres , targeting social workers, presidents and members of women's association, village council, district council and NGOs.

The sessions aimed at teaching participants to discuss their own values, strengths, qualities as a leader and their own leadership style. They were also taught how to improve interaction with others in decision making through communication, working together and delegating. Management, team building, and conflict resolution were also on the agenda.

Leadership was defined as the process of inspiring individuals to give their best to achieve a desired result. It is about getting people to move in the right direction, gaining their commitment, and motivating them to achieve their goals. On the other hand, management is concerned with achieving results by effectively obtaining, deploying, utilizing and controlling the required resources.

The participants also learnt about different leadership styles. According to Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership model, leaders should adjust their styles depending on the readiness of their followers to perform in a given situation. Therefore, good leaders enable others to act according to their level of skill. The low skill workers should be directed, coached and trained. Whereas the high skill workers should be supported, motivated and delegated.

A very important part of the training were devoted to the Personal Characteristics of a Team Leader, his behaviours, roles and responsibilities for it is undeniable that efficient Team Work is no accident; it is the by-product of good leadership!

The participants were involved in role play, leadership and communication games.

Leadership and Communication Skills



LEADERSHIP

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN MAURITIUS



In line with its efforts to promote a productivity culture among women entrepreneurs, the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council participated in an open day at the National Women Entrepreneur Council Phoenix(NWEC).



Our strategy is to go towards the women entrepreneurs and provide them with information about productivity and the various services they can avail at the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council. Officers of the NPCC sensitized women on the importance of productivity. A presentation was also conducted in the hall of the NWEC. The women expressed their views and commented on various problems they face in their enterprises.

Following the very positive impact on the participants, they expressed much interest for our training and consultancy services. The event was greatly appreciated by the women.

