



MINDNET

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COLOMBO MBA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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The Colombo University MBA Alumni Association (CMBAAA) held its Annual Conference on promoting entrepreneurship - in the form of a one day Management Convention on the theme 'Beyond Traditional Boundaries', on 30th March 2005, at the Ceylon Continental Hotel, Colombo.

The event was eagerly anticipated and well attended. CMBAAA appreciate the full house of participants and are grateful to the speakers, participants, organizing committee, and the others who extended their co-operation in various ways for a very successful event.

The event brought out some unique insights into diverse fields represented by these leading entrepreneurs. Learning how they achieved success against the odds of a backdrop of 20 years of civil unrest, political upheavals and natural calamities was indeed enlightening. These real life case studies incorporating diverse management styles & experiences "beyond traditional boundaries", supplemented and complemented theoretical management teachings.

It is important that our management teams are resilient and able to weather any storm in the sustainable development of our country.

We believe that this conference afforded the opportunity to reflect on one's own areas of business, after listening to the speakers, and getting ideas for ways in which we ourselves may break free of traditional boundaries to make a positive change in our own companies.

For this Conference, CMBAAA succeeded in securing the presence of Deshamanya Dr Lalith Kotelawala as the keynote speaker and the following impeccable lineup of prominent business personalities.

- 1) Mr Dian Gomes
CEO, Slimline (Pvt) Ltd
- 2) Dr Hans Wijayasuriya
CEO, MTN Networks
(Pvt) Ltd (Dialog GSM)
- 3) Mr Dilhan Fernando
Director, MJF Group
(Dilmah Tea)
- 4) Mr Jagath Peiris
Chairman, Royal
Fernwood
- 5) Mr Asoka Hettigoda
MD, Hettigoda Group
(Siddalepa)



CMBAAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Will be held on the

1ST JULY 2005 at the TAJ SAMUDRA HOTEL

Who was there & what was said



Deshamanya Dr. Jivaka Lalith Bhupendra Kotelawala, is the chairman of the Ceylinco Group (now called Ceylinco Consolidated) consisting of over 200 companies, more than 30,000 employees, 375 branches island-wide and 17 offices worldwide. Ceylinco now has a widely diversified portfolio of business activities which include Insurance, a Pioneer Credit Card Company, Banking, Travels, Finance, Housing & Property Development, Education, Satellite Communications and Information Technology to name a few, as well as a Diamond venture Blue Diamonds Limited, which operates as one of the worlds foremost diamond cutting and polishing factories. Eight of the Ceylinco Group companies are listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange.



Deshamanya Dr Lalith Kotelawala in his key note speech included some 'thumb sketches' of his life, and the steering of Ceylinco Consolidated to what it is today. In 1973 after his father's demise, he was left only with a nationalized insurance company, a small finance company and a printing press. He conceptualized & created the cellular structure of Ceylinco Consolidated of today.

He usually finds the right person to pass on each issue (he called this managing 'the monkeys on ones back') to handle and address one issue at a time. He advocated how the systems in Sri Lanka should be revolutionized in their approach, especially in traditional banking systems. He emphasized the repercussions of applying western business models 'en-block' in a developing country like ours. He also described his achievements in the form of Corporate Social Responsibilities.



Dian Gomes, a Management Accountant with a passion for people. Excelling in boxing at Royal and later the Sri Lanka National Junior middleweight champion in 1975. Always a "peoples person", Dian has been Managing Director of Sara Lee Courtaulds joint venture Slimline since 1992. Today he is a Group Director of MAS Holdings and heads the Sara Lee Courtaulds/MAS Joint Venture cluster; Slimline, Unichela, Leisureline and Casualline. What sets him apart is his versatility; President CIMA Sri Lanka Division (2001/2002) and recently elected as President of the Sri Lanka Amateur Boxing Association and as an Advisor to the Rana Viru Seva Authority. Dian also serves on the Boards of many Private & Government organizations which includes the NIBM and the Mahaweli Authority.

Dian Gomes in his speech stated that often, intelligent, unconventional approaches have the advantage over your competitors and takes you through difficult times.

He explained his strength in building people with passion & team spirit. He explained how he uses factors such as recruitment policy, investing in gifted & special people, positive emotion, sporting culture, visuals & displays, competitions, communication & dialog & eliminating fear of failure, to build such 'never-say-die' type of people and to achieve a totalistic approach to build people with passion & team power play to 'hit the numbers'.



Dr Hans Wijayasuriya is currently the Director/Chief Executive of MTN Networks Pvt Ltd., which operates Sri Lanka's leading mobile phone network – Dialog GSM. He graduated from the University of Cambridge, UK in 1989. He subsequently obtained his PhD in Digital Mobile Communications from the University of Bristol UK in 1994. A Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the Institute of Electrical Engineers UK, Dr Wijayasuriya also holds an MBA from the University of Warwick UK.

In our life we face a cloud of complex uncertainty, and are trying to place them in a box of defined certainty, in order to deal with them. Dr Hans Wijayasuriya said that, what is in the box is comfortable & easy to deal with but so it is to everybody including your competitor. Winners are those who force clarity in an unclear situation in a way that the path is clear for themselves. So do not only look for the certainty which somebody else has defined.

Think differently of what business are we in, time & time again. After the correct ascertainment of this factor, you may find lots of underutilized opportunities & resources. For example, he found he was in the business of 'delivering equality'. He had the advantage of a huge population with aspirations, needs & wants on one side & the technology which had the power of social leveling on the other. So he rightly exploited the larger market of the less affluent, by creating various products and introducing 'sachet' marketing whilst also maintaining the right hybrid by serving the exclusive 'niches' too.

@ The Management Conference



Mr Dihan Fernando, is the Marketing Director of Dilmah tea. He was educated at Stony Hurst College in England and earned an Honours degree in Economics from the London School of Economics. In 1991, he joined Dilmah Tea, the family business founded by his father, Merrill J. Fernando and has built on the success of the family philosophy that has made Dilmah, Ceylon Tea a role model in export marketing for developing countries.

Dilmah is amongst the top 10 Global Tea Brands today and is reputed for its quality in the 92 countries in which Dilmah is available. The brand is very much a family brand with traditional values. Dilmah was the pioneer in the tea industry to add value at source and continues to lead the tea category in innovation, ethics and authenticity.

He said that innovation, design and consumer orientation are the corner stones of the success of Dilmah. He elaborated on the success story of his father whose dreams beyond traditional boundaries materialized when they ventured in to value added tea export from Sri Lanka. Catering to the more affluent tea drinker overseas, who wants a premium tea with a difference. Dilhan said that he joined the family business in 1991 and explained the international marketing success they achieved so far.



Mr. Jagath Peiris, is currently the Chairman and Managing Director of the Royal Fernwood Porcelain Group and has the unique achievement of having professional qualifications in four professions, viz. Engineering, Accounting, Business Administration and Marketing.

In his speech he said that he prefers 'hands on' methods to 'delegation' especially when facing high-risk-high-gain situations. He explained the difference between the approaches of an entrepreneur as against a manager in different situations. He disclosed the secrets of his successes in understanding & communicating costs & bottlenecks of manufacturing processes by all employees, and trying to work towards the right product for the right market, as a collective effort of an entire team.



Mr. Asoka Hettigoda, is the Managing Director of Hettigoda Group of Companies. A product of St. Thomas' College, he attended the Northwestern University, IL, USA where he read for a BSc degree and the Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenapura, where he did his MBA. At the Northwestern University, he was the winner of the National Engineering Consortium's W.J. Everett award for Academic Excellence and Leadership in 1990. He worked for Price Waterhouse in Chicago in their Management Consulting Services Division from 1990-95. He was recognized as the highest performing Senior Consultant of the Management Consulting Service, Price Waterhouse, Chicago in 1993.

Mr Asoka Hettigoda in his speech, observed the critical turning points or 'Piyasathan', in the unconventional turning out of a traditional Aurvedic Medical Profession in to a full fledged business with patented brand names, that involves the Manufacture, R & D, Distribution and Export of Ayurveda Products, providing Health Care Services of complete Ayurveda hospitals, and exclusive boutique category Tourist Hotel with Ayurveda Spa facilities.

CMBAAA arranged yet another guest lecture at the Faculty of Management and Finance on 21st May 2005

This guest lecture by Dr. Mahendra Perera from Australia focused on HUMANISTIC ASPECTS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT.



Dr Mahendra Perera MBBS, PhD, MD (Psychiatry), MRACMA, MRCPsych, FRANZCP, FACHAm is a Psychiatrist who has a sound private practice in Australia, with a life long interest in the study of human behaviour. He also teaches interested groups, how to achieve success in their field by maximizing their potential.

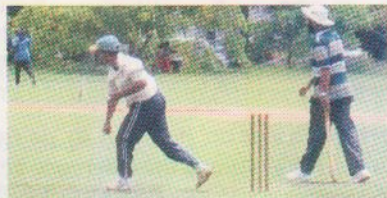
His focus on that day was primarily on the need to share information across the organization in a relevant and timely manner; the need to explore the concept of matching skills to tasks and the need to integrate the business with the local community and the importance of networking. Finally he explained the key area of conflict resolution.

CMBAAA held its Members day on the 15th May 2005

CMBAAA's member's day turned out to be a fun filled & memorable get together for the members & their families. The participation was tremendously improved and the day was spent with both adult & children's events, games & matches. Music was provided by the 'one man band'. The 1997 MBA batch won the championship of the six-a-side soft ball tournament and 1999 MBA batch ('A' team) were the runners-up.



These photos will bear evidence of the fun & fellowship that took place that day at the Colombo University Grounds. Children were kept busy by the PG Martin play area and by the many children's games organized. Prizes were awarded to the winners of various competitions.



CMBAAA Tsunami Relief Work

As we know, the tsunami tidal waves hit the shores of our motherland on 26th December 2004, leaving behind much grief and devastation in our country. Many lives were lost and thousands of survivors became homeless in a matter of few hours. **"What could we do to help them as an Association?"** This was the question we, the members of the Executive committee of the Colombo MBA Alumni Association asked ourselves. As a result, we decided to focus our attention on the children of the disaster because in many ways it is they who have suffered most and are in dire need of counsel and care. So, we set up the **"Colombo MBA Alumni Association - Tsunami Relief Fund : Account # 0050372324"** at Hatton National Bank - Main Branch with the view of looking after the long term educational needs of children of the crisis.

The funds collected in this account by end of April was sufficient to offer a

monthly scholarship of Rs.1,000.00 for a period of about 5 years. So we used the services of Mr. Palitha Wickramaarachchi [Retired Deputy Director of Education Department and Justice of Peace (All Island)] of Matara in identifying a deserving family with a maximum of two school children. Accordingly we were introduced to Mrs. Melany Anne Nicholas and her two sons Master Visva Niranjana (Grade 6) and Master Ashen Malaka (Grade 5) living in a temporary house at the "Kithuleywala Rendawum Kandawura", Matara. These children, both boys aged 11 years and 10 years are studying at St. Servatius' College, Matara and they have lost their father and two other members of the family due to the tsunami. They have survived with the mother and she too does not have a permanent job. To earn a living, she makes string hoppers, pittu etc and sells them to the inmates of the camp.

A team comprising members of the executive committee of our association visited this family on 23rd May 2005 and met the beneficiaries and their mother and explained as to how we intend supporting their education. They were informed that each boy will be provided with a monthly allowance of Rs.500.00, so that the family will get Rs.1,000.00 per month in total. Further, they were told that the continuation of this grant/allowance will

depend on their educational performance, which we will review at the end of each school term. Here we requested Mr. Palitha Wickramaarachchi to closely monitor the education of the two children and keep us informed about their progress. During this visit, we handed over a sum of Rs. 4,000.00 as the allowance for four months from May 2005 to August 2005 and requested them to send us their school progress report at the end of the school term in August for us to consider the release of the September allowance. We also mentioned that in future, the disbursements will be in kind as far as possible (school books, stationery, uniforms, shoes etc), but we will provide them with money, if we feel there is a genuine need for it. We stressed that what we expect by awarding these scholarships is to create an additional source of inspiration for them to continue their education and become useful citizens of the country. We also gave the two children some clothes which we purchased for them.

In addition we also handed over some clothes to the mother and blankets, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap etc. to the family, which we collected from donors who were eager to help the victims of tsunami disaster.

