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Making Mimos top in applied research



Wahab believes in having passion in one's work.

Ever since he was appointed as head of Mimos Berhad last June, Abdul Wahab Abdullah has made some adjustments to the country's premier research and development arm to enhance its image and turn the entity into one that is globally competitive. Recently, he shared his vision and strategy for Mimos and the country's ICT landscape in general. **IZWAN ISMAIL** finds out more.

Q Please describe your current scope of responsibilities and tasks? What do you enjoy most at work?

A: My task is to steer Mimos into a premier applied research centre in frontier technologies for the country and develop solutions and technologies to enhance customer value and create globally competitive indigenous industries. To enable this to happen, I have carried out a corporate restructuring exercise in the fourth quarter of last year by positioning new and existing personnel with vast industry experience in strategic positions.

My focus has been on developing my people, which are the most important asset, into “mental warriors”. Towards this end, the focus was on training, retooling and re-aligning my people into the right skillsets and technology areas.

We have also developed a strategic framework and put in place stringent documentation and best-in-class process controls and methodologies such as Six Sigma and CMMI (Capability Maturity Model Integration) that will ensure organisational excellence for Mimos.

What I enjoy most is developing people and seeing people grow. There is nothing more satisfying than to see the seed that we sow bear fruit in the form of individuals who are eager to pursue goals to meet the organisation’s vision and mission.

Q: What would you consider the most significant achievement in your work life so far and why?

A: In my previous job as senior director of R&D operations, Asia Pacific division, global technology development group, government and enterprise mobility solutions sector

of Motorola Technology Sdn Bhd, I brought technology into the country. I have set up an R&D centre in the country, which is standalone and self-reliant in designing ICT products. The centre has grown to 1,000 employees during my tenure.

Q: What are your plans for Mimos for the next five years and where would Mimos be by that time?

A: In five years, Mimos should be the leading applied research organisation in frontier technologies. It also should be the leading organisation in people development. Mimos will also support the development of indigenous industries to position Malaysia as a global software development and services hub.

Q: How would you relate your experience in Motorola to your current position as the chief executive officer of Mimos?

A: It is indeed a great honour to have been chosen to helm Mimos and a great opportunity for me to contribute and give back to my country. I want to capitalise from the experience, knowledge and expertise that I have gained from developing Motorola’s world-class multinational research, development and innovation centre to propel Mimos into a premier applied research centre in frontier technologies.

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Q: In your opinion, what are among the key ICT issues and challenges faced by Malaysia today? What would be your answers to address these issues?

A: Malaysia needs to push the envelope on intellectual property (IP) to ensure it is recognised for applied research.

As such, in our efforts to steer Mimos into a premier applied research centre in frontier technologies, our focus lies in innovation and patents.

Towards this end, I have made IP generation a key performance indicator (KPI) for all Mimos employees and designed an IP reward scheme for Mimos.

The collective effort within Mimos is to see an explosion of innovation and invention in frontier technologies in line with the Government's aim of taking the country to new heights of science and technology innovation.

Mimos' collective target is for each of its researcher to have at least one patent disclosure accepted by

the Patents Committee every year. Last year (2006), only a month after the patent reward scheme was announced, Mimos researchers have surpassed the annual patent disclosure target by 100 per cent, with a total of 80 patent disclosures by end of November 2006. By end of 2008, the target is to have 290 patent disclosures.

Q: What is your management philosophy?

A: My management philosophy is "Work like me!". Truly, I believe in having passion in one's work. To be successful and effective, you have to put passion in your work.