



A program that develops innovative thinking abilities, effective for product development, personnel training, and various other fields.

Bridgestone, the largest tire manufacturer in the world with business locations across the globe, has established a full-scale personnel-training center in Thailand. Hiromichi Ikeda, a senior instructor at this institution, attended an ITST[™] instructor training course and is currently preparing to unfold this program back at Bridgestone. In an interview, Mr. Ikeda explains why he attended the course and what he hopes to achieve in the future.

**Reinventing old methods of success;
Cultivate talents to meet today's challenge**

The Bridgestone/Firestone Training & Communication Center (hereafter referred to as BFTCC), which is located in Nong Khae, Saraburi province, Thailand, was

established in June of 2000. The Bridgestone Corporation founded this institution in order to train the personnel of subsidiaries and distributors in the Asia Pacific region. The training programs offered at BFTCC help attendees increase product knowledge, enhance sales and marketing strategies, and improve technical

service knowledge and technologies. The highly interactive training is facilitated by 2 instructors who conduct 15 different courses, in total 24 courses per year, each ranging from a 3 to 5 day period.

“When we're young, we learn how to do our jobs, face various

obstacles, overcome them, and become capable business persons” Mr. Ikeda told us, explaining what initially drew him to ITS™. “In this process, we try to avoid tasks that seem too difficult to overcome in a timely manner and instead take care of realistic and manageable issues. This type of approach helps us handle necessary tasks quickly, and in general, that’s a good thing. In other words, through this approach we learn how to conduct a smooth operation, which we consider growth. There are variations around the world, but I believe the general trend is the same. That said, I thought that reinventing these individuals’ success patterns would enable them to reach an even higher level of success. However in a higher stage, employees will need to have the ability to come up with new and original ideas to overcome problems that they could not resolve using their old thought processes (although this may be easier and safer), and act quickly upon such initiatives. Then I found out about the ITS™ program offered by Business Consultant Corporation (hereafter referred to as BCon).”

“Coming up with ideas and acting quickly upon them is not an easy thing to do, especially for those who are considerate of others’ feelings. If the new idea may impose an extra workload

upon others, one may refrain from acting upon it. But the important thing is to make one realize that this is misguided, and that believing it will only limit your possibilities. One must convince others and gain allies, present the new idea, and be confident that it can be done. I thought the ITS™ program was an effective way to encourage this way of thinking. At BFTCC, attendees of our program come from all over the world and have varying characteristics. In general, people from Asia are very generous and caring, and I thought this program would be appropriate for them. ITS™ is effective for personnel from various backgrounds, because it is designed to remove barriers encountered when trying to give shape to innovative/new ideas.”

The program’s focus on turning ideas into reality is very attractive

ITS™ is an interactive program that hones a person’s ability to come up with ideas for new products or business improvements, then select the most robust concepts and turn them into reality. ITS™’s main characteristic is its ability to train and improve innovative thinking skills and team management leadership. This program has been used in many enterprises, mostly by manufacturers, and has received

a great deal of acclaim. Mr. Ikeda describes his initial impression of ITS™: “I had been previously acquainted with BCon, and I knew they offered various programs in which innovation was the main theme. I received information about the ITS™ program from a salesperson one day. There are many programs designed to come up with new ideas, but ITS™ focused on how to narrow down numerous ideas and turn them into reality, which I felt was a superior approach compared to other programs available in the market. In business, giving shape to ideas is a must. As I mentioned before, there are many who hesitate to present their new ideas due to the risk of increasing the workload of others. However, the program offers specific steps to predict possible effects upon others, and how to deal with them upon deployment, which I thought was very useful and well thought out.”

“I also felt that the “innovation” taught throughout the ITS™ program was not limited to product development. It would be applied to other aspects of the individual’s work load, allowing them to improve efficiency and other qualities critical to problem solving. These qualities made it a versatile program effective for personnel training in various departments of an enterprise.”

Adjust it to your own firm, and deploy it to a wide range of employees

Twice a year, the ITST™ instructor training course offers a 5-day session in Japan for 5-6 attendees, conducted in English. Mr. Ikeda attended the session in January of 2013 and acquired an instructor license. Mr. Ikeda recalled the program, saying: *“The training covers the thought process for coming up with many ideas, how to narrow them down, refine them, and act upon them. I found it interesting that at each step, the program suggested 7 different techniques/approaches for better results. I cannot say much about the program’s effectiveness back at my place of work, since I have not conducted any lessons yet, but I can say that I was very satisfied with the program itself. I also felt that 5 days was the perfect length for this program. If the program is too short, it’s hard to thoroughly assimilate what you’ve learned, and if it’s over 6 days, it’s hard to fit that into your schedule.”* Starting July of 2013, he plans to deploy his training course at BFTCC, working on acquiring internal approval and gathering potential attendees through announcements and other methods. Mr. Ikeda described his future hopes and plans regarding the internal deployment of this

program. *“In Asia, where the largest growth is expected, Companies are facing a shortage of personnel. This problem needs our immediate attention and action. Throughout the ITST™ workshop, I hope to encourage employees to come up with new ideas, gain confidence, improve themselves, and actively suggest new and innovative ideas back at their local offices. I believe that the ITST™ is a well-designed, well-thought-out program which nurtures one’s ability to come up with ideas and act upon them. I also believe this program will drastically increase one’s thinking speed. Because this program is highly sophisticated, I plan to stick to what I’ve learned at first. However, I believe as the program progresses, there will be parts that need to be altered in order to adapt it to our firm’s specific needs. In such cases, I plan to consult my coworkers and make the necessary changes. First, I’d like to come up with ideas for new methods to sell existing environmental products, and turn those ideas into reality. If a person comes up with a good idea, I will ask them to try it back at their office. Even if they cannot come up with a practical idea during the program, I still think the experience itself will work positively towards their operations.”*

Attendees will consist mostly of sales/technical service staff in the Asia Pacific region, though Japanese expats have also requested admission. Furthermore, a technical center is to be established in Thailand in the future, and Mr. Ikeda says he would like to see the technical center’s engineers attend this ITST™ course as well. It seems that the strength of the versatile and widely adaptable ITST™ program will benefit the Bridgestone corporation.

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