



Leadership for Making Labuan the Pearl of Borneo

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Introduction

It was a great experience to be part of the ProSPER.Net Leadership Programme 2016. The programme on Labuan Island allowed me to see and explore the island's natural habitats and relate to the people of Labuan.

This island – nicknamed 'the pearl of Borneo' - has huge potential to become a jewel of Malaysia and a symbol of pride to the entire nation. Known for both its oil and gas exports as well as being an offshore financial hub, the island's economy has brought thousands of expatriates to Labuan. However, if this part of Malaysia is to fully reach its potential, something that needs to be addressed immediately and strategically is waste management on the island.

Issues and Challenges

Waste management is one of the biggest problems for many developing countries. Factors contributing to the problem can be divided into three major aspects, namely 1) **people**, 2) **process**, and 3) **performance**. On Labuan Island landfills are not being managed systematically.

The opportunity to visit these sites has changed my perspective altogether on how I perceive waste management. Poor management of a landfill will not only give a bad impression to the local authority of Labuan Island only, but to the people of Labuan as a whole.

During the dialogues with two representatives from the Labuan Authority that were responsible for waste management I was able to share my worries, frustrations, hopes, and ideas on how they can make Labuan Island a cleaner, greener and healthier destination for tourists and residence for locals.

However, during our visit to the site, there were no top management officers present during the dialogue. To me, this was a missed opportunity to tap ideas and knowledge from the participants, many of which were college professors, engineers, members of international NGOs, and other.

Recommendations

1. People

Making Labuan cleaner, greener, and healthier is not only the responsibility of the island's local authority. While it is true that the local authority is responsible to drive the agenda, nothing can be achieved, if the public fails to play a role. Household's contributions to landfills need to be addressed not only at the site, but also at the source of the waste, which are houses, hotels, and local businesses themselves.

This means that the local authority must develop a comprehensive plan, program and initiative that the people of Labuan are a part of. Specifically, the people in Labuan need to be educated and made aware and be part of any plan the local authorities develop. They need to know how to play their role effectively, and this is not only on how they manage their household waste, but how they can consume responsibly and sustainably.

To make the island cleaner, greener and healthier will not materialize without strong commitment and support from the people of Labuan. There is a need to ensure the right people are in the right positions within local communities to ensure all objectives and initiatives are planned and executed successfully.

2. Process

To identify the best processes for managing domestic waste, it is important that all stakeholders must know their role in the context of the waste management process. For example, the households should be fully aware and engage in separation of household waste initiatives. Apart from this, the local authority should identify and invest in technology that is best for waste management in the island. The local authority should then allocate sufficient budget for the waste management department to buy appropriate equipment for waste management. Labuan should be benchmarked against a city that is doing well in waste management practices. To have a twin sister city from a highly developed country would be another strategic move that the local authority of Labuan could consider.

The objective to make the island cleaner, greener and healthier will not be materialized if the local authority fails to identify the best processes to address its agenda. Specifically, the need to ensure that the right equipment and processes are used is pertinent to ensuring all objectives, programs and initiatives being planned are implemented successfully.

3. Performance

This aspect is crucial for all local authorities or leaders. The right performance measurements need to be identified and all results collected should be used for future actions. Every group of

stakeholders should have their own performance measurement perspective. Generally, they can use a performance measurement tool known as a Balanced Scorecard (BSC) that consists of different measurements such as financials, customer satisfaction, processes, and learning and growth.

These perspectives should be complimented with other performance measurements that are appropriate, since not all groups of stakeholders can apply all the four perspectives. This means, through appropriate performance measurement perspectives, better plans and actions can be identified and executed for short term, medium term, or long term measures.

To make the information more meaningful, the local authority should lead the initiative to integrate findings from all these groups of stakeholders and use it for better decision making in addressing the issues and challenges.

Conclusion

The future of Labuan Island is highly dependent on its people. There are no other people who are better suited to the task - they themselves must do it. This means, a Labuan which is truly 'the pearl of Borneo' is within reach if everyone plays their role accordingly and effectively.