

Supporting the training of skilled and effective technical personnel

AutoAlliance (Thailand) (AAT) is developing systematic human resource development programs, which is an uncommon practice in Thailand. Fostering personnel with advanced skills that can be passed on to future generations, Mazda is committed to overseas personnel development.

Looking back, Khun Bundit Soonthornamornrat, who is in charge of human resource development, confides that personnel development was more important than anything else to solve any issues at AAT.

When AAT started production in 1998, problems of safety and quality emerged in proportion with increases in production volume and the number of employees. At the same time, other problems surfaced, including lack of opportunities for employee education and high employee turnover rates. At that time, Thailand had very few companies that had instituted systematic personnel development programs in the same way as in Japan. Starting in 2005, AAT adopted one such program with the aim of establishing a technical training system.

In 2006, the Freshman Dojo Training program was established, targeting all new employees. The effects of this training program were dramatic. Soonthornamornrat recalls that "safety and quality on the production line were greatly improved." This policy helped new employees become accustomed to their jobs smoothly, raised the level of employee job satisfaction, and resulted in an over 10% reduction in employee turnover.

In addition, AAT also started its own Craftsmanship Training program based on Mazda's technical training program in order to foster engineers with higher levels



Bundit Soonthornamornrat
AutoAlliance (Thailand) (AAT)

of technical skill. Through this program, trainers who had been trained at Mazda's head office educate employees to pass on their expertise. Thawatchai Butsabasri had been hoping to improve his own technical skills for some time and signed up

immediately. He says, "There was nowhere to acquire sufficient levels of education and training up until then, so it provided the perfect opportunity to polish my technical skills. Not only did it improve my technical skills and the quality of my work, it also broadened my views with regard to personnel development."

In 2007, AAT launched an in-house technical skill certification system, in which ten people with high levels of technical skill were selected from each field and competed with each other. Surach Khumtan, who had been working at AAT for ten years, took on the challenge because, as he explains, "I wanted to know what level my technical skills were at." Khumtan went on to win the competition and was promoted to the position of leader as a result. "We were evaluated on the quality of our work as well as preparation for and implementation of our work. This not only improved our technical skills, it also increased our awareness of safety, which in turn led to improved quality throughout the entire workplace," says Khumtan.

AAT's establishment of these systematic training programs and the results they achieved are currently attracting attention throughout Thailand. AAT's efforts have contributed to an increased level of skill within the country, and their example has generated momentum within universities and local business partners, many of which have indicated that they would be interested in adopting Mazda's programs for training and technical skill evaluations.

In speaking about the future directions of personnel development at AAT, Soonthornamornrat states, "We will continue to put every effort behind providing education for highly skilled trainees in all fields, and will provide full support for the growth of our employees in the hope that they can pass their skills on to future generations."



Left: **Thawatchai Butsabasri**
Right: **Surach Khumtan**
AutoAlliance (Thailand) (AAT)