

Richard Mills, CFA, is director of executive search firm Chalre Associates who is based in Manila. He is also the chairman of the CanCham ICT Committee. Contact him at rmills@chalre.com.



Report: April ICT Leader's Forum

by Richard Mills and Sean Georget

ON WEDNESDAY APRIL 20, 2005 THE CANADIAN Chamber of Commerce held its first ICT leaders forum. This committee organized and chaired by Richard Mills, Director, Chalre Associates is planning on organizing regular meetings to bring together all those interested in the ICT sector together.



The goal is to provide a forum for those attending to listen to guest speakers, initiate discussion and possibly work together in areas of common interest. Whether it be drafting a letter to relevant areas of the government or sending out a press release. This session had over 25 senior level managers from the ICT sector attend the lunch meeting which was kindly sponsored by Colliers International.

The CEO of Telus International, Eng Boon Lau, was the guest speaker at April's ICT Leader's Forum. Mr. Lau described his company as a fully owned IT division of TELUS Communications Inc., a \$7B telecommunications company in Canada rated by some independent analysts as the best managed in the North American industry. However, he gave most attention to his company's recent controlling stake acquisition of one of Philippines' most successful contact center organizations, Ambergris Solutions.

The company was started by 3 young entrepreneurs with little call center experience and not much of their own money in 2001. Over the few years they have been running business grew explosively to almost 3000 employees serving a roster of blue-chip clients. Controlling interest of the thriving enterprise was acquired by Telus International (Mr. Lau's company) in a deal valued at \$43.5M.

Mr. Lau praised the vision and hard-work of the founders and through extensive research indicated that Ambergris provided Telus International with the best opportunity of the many he considered in the region. He believes it is a "GEM of a company" and that the Philippines is a smart choice for investment with its English speaking population and educated workforce.

In the discussion period that followed Mr. Lau's information-packed speech, various senior managers in attendance described their company's plans in the business process outsourcing arena. A CFO discussed his company's various options with respect to shareholder value maximization. His company is another call center success story in Philippines and it is deciding whether it should engage in an IPO, bring in a major investor or just continue under their current ownership structure. Another out of town visitor reflected upon his company's outsourcing plans for Philippines where it is already a major player.

The meeting overall raised some interesting points about the Philippines and the direction of its continued success in the ICT sector as well as provided a very positive environment for discussion. Any members interested in attending future meetings or becoming involved with the ICT committee, please contact the Chamber or Richard Mills at: rmills@chalre.com



Present during the forum was D. Jim Evans (Telus Int'l/Ambergris), guest speaker Eng Boon Lau (Telus International), CanCham IT Committee Chairman Richard Mills (Chalre Associates), Sean Georget (CanCham ED), Stewart Hall (CanCham President) and host Alan Dalgleish (Colliers International).

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