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# Seeing problems as a challenge

**A management guru inspires students to view things positively.**

**BY TAN EE LOO**  
 educafe@thestar.com.my

**U**NIVERSITI Putra Malaysia (UPM) undergraduate Mohd Firdaus Zakaria is confident that he will no longer view problems as something negative but as challenges that test his determination and ability.

Issues are bound to crop up every day, but instead of brooding, he intends to deal with them in a positive manner, said Mohd Firdaus after listening to a talk by Carlos Ghosn, president and chief executive officer of Nissan Motor Co. Ltd and Renault SA.

"Ghosn has inspired me a lot, he is truly a management 'guru' especially in analysing problems and then using them to his advantage," said the UPM third-year Agribusiness student.

Having different races and diverse cultures in Malaysia was an asset and Ghosn's talk made him realise that there was strength in diversity.

Another student, Radzuwan Abd Rashid, said he had learnt invaluable tips on how to manage and be successful in the automotive industry from the lecture.

Radzuwan described Ghosn's talk as "interactive and informative" and added that Ghosn was very spontaneous when he took questions from the floor and was able to keep his audience engaged.

Despite earlier scepticism in 1999, the Brazilian-born Ghosn proved the world wrong when he managed to bring Nissan out of debt and transformed it into one of the most successful companies in the automotive

industry

Ghosn, was the last speaker of the Khazanah Global Lecture (KGL) series organised by Khazanah Nasional Berhad.

More than 700 local business leaders attended Ghosn's dinner-lecture held recently in Kuala Lumpur. Students from four public universities – UPM, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Tenaga Nasional – were at their respective universities to view and participate in the talk via live-streaming.

The KGL series kicked off last year, with a talk by the former United Nations (UN) secretary-general Kofi Annan. It also saw other influential speakers such as 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and 2001 Nobel Economics Prize winner Prof Joseph Stiglitz.

Other students who heard Ghosn's talks revealed that although they had little or no interest in the automotive industry, it was interesting and inspiring.

Questions from the floor ranged from international outsourcing to motivation, and how Ghosn managed his company and personal life.

UPM third-year Veterinary Medicine student Siti Hawa Anurddin, however, was disappointed with some of the questions. She felt that they lacked depth and were not "tough" enough.

UPM management and marketing department head Dr Noor Azman Ali said students benefited greatly from the lecture.

"Reading textbooks is all descriptive, but when a person like Ghosn delivers a live-cast lecture, they get to hear first-hand about the success and setbacks of his own story," he said, adding that he hoped they would apply what they had learnt in their own life.

Siti Hawa agreed, saying that having a degree alone wasn't good enough. Students had to understand the skills needed to survive the cut-throat world, she added.

UPM second-year Food Study management student Sandy Ow said she would like to apply what she had learnt from Ghosn on managing a food business in a cross-cultural context.



Students were able to view and participate in the talk via live-streaming.

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MOHD FIRDAUS  
ZAKARIA

Ghosh (left) stressing a point at the talk while moderator Datuk Azman Yahya, the executive chairman of Bolton Bhd and Group CEO of Symphony House Bhd, looks on.