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Better talent needed :Shih

Competitiveness : The nation needs to upgrade its talent pool if it is to become a real international player in management and markets, according to the Acer CEO

By Joyce Huang

Staff Reporter

Taiwan needs to build a more internationally competitive local talent pool soon if it is going to make headway in managing world resources and markets, said Stan Shih (施振榮), chairman & CEO of Acer Inc. (宏碁集團).

“Taiwan’s competitive edge lies in its world-class products made at lower costs,” Shih said in his key-note speech yesterday at a seminar, organized by the Epoch Foundation(時代基金會) to discuss cultivation and internationalization of the local talent pool.

Shih said that Taiwan has a severe shortage of marketers who are capable of breaking local brands into world markets and, therefore, urged the government to attract multinational professionals who are interested in Taiwan’s high-tech industries and Chinese markets, and willing to exchange their world views with locals.

Compared with other Asian countries, Shih added that Taiwan doesn’t hold enough international seminars to enlighten local talent and also lacks venues that meet international standards.

Taiwan, however, can’t afford too many first-tier world talent, who he said are often too expensive to hire, and should therefore also take advantage of the work forces in the region including China’s talent pool, he added.

When compare the talent pools of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, Shih added that Taiwan still takes the lead role in the manufacturing sector while Hong Kong leads in the service and financial sectors.

“But we can never let China catch up in the competition,” Shih cautioned

seminar participants who responded positively.

Facing fierce competition from China, Nicky Lu (盧超群), President & CEO of Etron Technology Inc (鈺創科技) -a local chip designer-yesterday said “that clock is ticking and the nation’s next economic stage is in China…We, the high-tech industries, need the government to lead us to the mainland to take over a share of the market there within the next three years,” he said.

Sharing a similar view, Shih, moreover, dismissed worries that an exodus of capital and local talent to China will greatly harm the local economy, saying that” as long as those professionals [sent to china] are still serving Taiwan, the long-seeable for the country.”

To create an international environment for Taiwan’s work force, most participants of yesterday’s seminar agreed that it’s up to government and the corporate sector to help breed a skilled talent pool with world vision to help expand Taiwan into the global markets.

David Lee (李紹唐), managing director of Oracle Taiwan, suggested the government emulate the education system in India, which he said places an emphasis on combining practical training and theoretical knowledge.

Yesterday’s Participants also warned that the local work force’s linguistic capability-especially the use of English in Taiwan-is not sufficient to meet the international challenges facing the nation.

Lu, therefore, urged the government to launch English-language courses in schools as early as possible while Shih said that graduate schools should offer management courses in English.