THE Senzai Nouryoku Approach in organisation recruitment is based upon the philosophy that, "the development of human potential and harnessing of the inner strength of the individual shall produce unlimited resources and optimisation of human potential."

Consequently, the individual is expected to work within the organisational framework, culture and environment rather than working within the individual qualifications or limitations. To illustrate, engineers shall not limit themselves to maintaining the system alone but to improvise and to create a better and more efficient system.

Managers shall not only effectively manage their respective departments but harness all resources towards the development of the organisation as a whole. In short, the classical connotation "do what we are told to do" is to be replaced with "do as much as you can do; the sky is the limit".

The classical recruitment approach is therefore ineffective in addressing these needs. Japanese organisations are less concerned with mere job qualification. On the contrary, they are looking for people with the best qualities or potential in developing and leading the organisation towards greater heights.

These new targets are immeasurable because we are examining the human potential which cannot be gauged from past experiences or mere academic qualifications. The individuals may be doing well now as in the past but may not be doing so in the future.

The intellectual, psychological and physical constraints in relation to time must also be taken into account. The fundamental question that needs to be answered is... "What does that person have that no one else has...a dream to be better, a conviction to succeed".

We certainly understand that vast and rapid technological changes are occurring globally. Similarly, a person's academic qualifications may be relevant now but, obsolete in a near future.

In the 1970s, a person with an LCE qualification who could use a typewriter was considered to be the best qualified person for a clerical job. In the 1990s, a Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia holder who is computer literate has the advantage. But in the next millennium, the best qualified clerks may well be degree holders who are experts on the Internet.

Hence, the characteristics of an individual with the best qualities can be viewed from four hierarchies (see graphic on the next page):
A person’s inner strength is believed to be generated by his character and personality or *Seikaku*. This is fundamental for an organisational man. The interpersonal and communication skills enhance a person’s ability to communicate and interact effectively. Vital information can be transmitted, values inseminated and problems resolved immediately without any negative repercussions.

An executive must be independent and always take the initiative. The ability to blend in the existing environment or culture would give the advantage to learn, influence and take the lead. Successful executives must take pride in their work and be able to manage enormous working stress.

Beside these extraordinary and charismatic attributes, high self-esteem and self-confidence would boost a person’s potential to explore vast possibilities for self-improvement and preservation in time of hardship and difficulties. A successful executive must be proactive, leading a healthy or active lifestyle, optimistic and always aiming for utopia.

The second ladder *Chisiki*, takes into account the knowledge that the individual possesses which can be applied or is relevant to the organisation’s job requirements or work operations. A person without knowledge but only equipped with working experience is incompetent. Try walking on a tightrope without a balancing pole.

Even so, knowledge can be acquired through many learning institutions, relevant books or even through the Internet. It is not possible to judge a person’s potential through his paper qualification. It should extend towards the knowledge on what are the current and future trends which require swift changes.

To improve is to change frequently. One cannot change without knowing what is happening now and in the near future.
The third ladder *Keiken* explores both work related and life experiences. The person working in a similar environment will have better potential because the familiarisation period is shortened through less variations.

But again, a person’s ability to learn fast is another aspect of human potential we must not overlook. A person can be working on the same job for ten full years yet not know how to improvise.

Conversely, another person working through diversified sections or operations may have vast understanding of numerous operations and their capabilities. Improvisation can be achieved through these learning experiences.

Japanese organisations experience shows that the more exposure a person has in an organisation, the better he/she will be able to take the lead. A person cannot manage from the top without having the experience working from the bottom. They strongly believe managers are made, not born.

The highest concept in the hierarchy is *Senzai Nouryoku* which is difficult to evaluate or even to explain. However, we understand that human potential lies within the individual personality, ambition and dream to succeed. We also need to base our understanding from the three previous concepts in the hierarchy.

In a simplified form, we have to ask the candidate:

- What are your plans for our organisation?
- Why do you need these plans?
- How would you carry out these plans?
- Who would be involved?
- When can they be expected to accomplish their objectives?

These unorthodox questions simplify many important and intricate matters. A person who doesn’t have a plan has zero potential. A person who doesn’t know why he needs his plan has no idea what he is doing. A person who doesn’t know how to carry out his plan is like an empty vessel which makes the most noise.

If only one person is involved in the plan, that person is simply selfish and not a team player. A person not knowing how to schedule his plan is never going to accomplish anything.

Then, how can we not know how to recruit the right person when we understand the basic objective of recruitment is to fulfil job requirements in the organisation. But, even large and successful organisations fail to invest in human potential.

We are contented with present job qualifications and bewitched by executives having little experience through their job-hopping. We are willing to pay high perks to executives with little or no potential. We allow ourselves to be indulged by the booming economy and frightened by the competitive labour market. In the end, we are paying more for less returns because we simply ignore the one key aspect of recruitment - in search of human potential.