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Beyond NUMBERS

Special Issue

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**#AOCWinStories:
Future Leaders Program Testimonials**



BKR Asia Pacific 2024 Future Leaders Program



The Future Leaders Program (FLP) organized by BKR International Asia Pacific recently concluded at the Novotel Nusa Dua in Bali, Indonesia, marking its fifth successful year. The event was facilitated by Coach Mennen Aracid and gathered 23 promising young leaders from across the Asia Pacific region, including India, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Among the delegates were 12 representatives from Alas Oplas & Co., CPAs.

Held on July 26 and 27, the two-day event provided a valuable platform for these emerging leaders to network, exchange experiences, and develop critical skills to foster regional collaboration and growth. The program aimed to empower the next generation of professionals to navigate challenges and lead with innovative ideas in a dynamic business environment. Throughout the program, delegates took part in dynamic workshops, insightful panel discussions, and collaborative team-building activities designed to refine their leadership skills.

AOC proudly supports this initiative, originally launched by Marycris Oplas, the firm's CEO and current Chair of BKR Worldwide. The firm is committed to providing its young leaders with opportunities to engage on an international scale and collaborate with peers from various countries.



Takeaways from Delegates

We were faced with an unavoidable situation that required a decision with both pros and cons. On the day of our flight, heavy rain persisted, and reports indicated that NLEX, the road we needed to reach the airport, was impassable. As time was running out, I felt uncertain and asked Ms. Jen if rebooking our flight was an option, knowing that waiting for the water to recede and the road to clear might mean missing our flight. Thankfully, she looked into the possibility of flying out of Clark instead, despite the ongoing heavy rain. We ended up making the switch. It turned out to be one of the most nerve-wracking flights I've experienced. I was anxious that the decision I made might be costly and that things might not go as planned. Despite the rain, the increased costs, and the challenges, we couldn't afford to miss this opportunity.

Change is inevitable, and it touches both our personal and professional lives. When confronted with unexpected situations, our initial responses can be driven by instinct rather than reason, making it challenging to make rational decisions. The topic "Change: How to Turn Uncertainty Into Opportunity" is particularly relevant. As a working mom, being adaptable is crucial, as is managing the reactions of those around me. Juggling the shifting moods of my children, the responsibilities of being a wife, the loss of yet another nanny, and leading a growing team with a demanding schedule and diverse staff often leaves me concerned for my sanity.

The training gave me a chance to recognize that there are aspects beyond my control, such as the weather, the airline's rebooking policy, or even the FLP schedule itself, or even changes at home. What I can control is how I respond to these changes. I can work on shifting my habits to better adapt to the evolving circumstances and make more effective decisions.

The training gave me the courage to connect with other delegates from BKR and draw inspiration from them. I reconnected with William from Indonesia, Nikhil and Lal from India, Gordon and Henry from Hong Kong, Joanne, Tenku, Chew, and Sherly from Malaysia, and of course, Isaac from WalkerWayland. The training was highly interactive, and we actively participated in each group activity. I believe that each of us gained a deeper understanding of the importance of recognizing different reactions and learning how to address them effectively as future leaders of the firm.

I'm grateful for the opportunity and the support from Ma'am MCSO, as well as for the assistance from you, Ms. Jen, Sir Philip from Greatjoy, and Meann and Lae, who accompanied me during the 6-day trip. Together, we faced our fears of flying, tried new foods, managed with shorter sleep, and navigated a DIY itinerary in Bali and Singapore. This trip is one I will always remember. Given similar circumstances in the future, my reaction might differ, but I am confident that my commitment to embracing growth and seizing opportunities will remain unchanged.



MARY GRACE D. PALOYO
Partner, Bulacan Branch

Takeaways from Delegates

“Helping leaders change the world”



KRIZZA M. OPLAS

Managing Director, Bacolod Branch

As a leader, I am glad to be one of the participants of BKR’s Future Leaders Program that was held in Bali, Indonesia. The conference focused on “change”, specifically on how we should handle it as leaders. It had helped me understand myself more as a leader and reflect on how have I been doing especially in handling different types of change in the workplace, in our team, and the organization as a whole. It also refreshed my mind on the responsibilities that I have as a leader. And me realize of how significant our roles not just for our team for the individual members.

It was also an opportunity for me to meet other BKR members. It feels good that I have shared my insights and experiences with them. But it feels even better that I have learned so much from them as well. Conferences like this is really a chance for us to meet fellow leaders, learn from them and convey our learnings to our teams. It was also a great experience of the Bali, Indonesia culture.

The conference did not just help us in handling inevitable changes in our teams but also changed some our perspectives as leaders. With these, my heart is full.

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Takeaways from Delegates

After attending the two-day seminar and training, I gained valuable insights on how to effectively handle change and turn uncertainties into opportunities for both my organization and my personal growth. It was truly enriching to learn how to prepare for and manage change, as well as overcome obstacles and disruptions by embracing new ideas and exploring opportunities for adaptation. Furthermore, I learned how to inspire my team members to embrace change and contribute to the improvement of our organization. The program also provided guidance on navigating changes in my work environment and developing skills to effectively confront these changes. Additionally, the training provided an opportunity to connect with members of other firms, exchange ideas, and learn from each other. As a great Greek philosopher once said, "Change is the only permanent thing in this world." Embracing change positively is crucial for success in any endeavor.



NOEL A. GERALDO
Manager, Makati Outsource

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Takeaways from Delegates

Change: Turn Uncertainty into opportunity



AJI ACOSTA

Managing Director, BSU Team

The two-day leadership training taught me that change is inevitable and our reaction to these changes is normal. There are common reactions that may help us to adapt to the changes; these are move, minimize, wait, resist and quit. And all these reactions have their own advantages and disadvantages. Reactions to changes are basically automatic. The training taught me to manage these reactions thoughtfully, so I'll be able to adapt rather than to react. The training also taught me the change model that may help me understand where I am in for this change and what to do next to make the uncertainty become certain and eventually make it an opportunity. I also learned in this training that I should not just lead myself through change, but I should also lead my team through change. That I should have a mindset that I am, as a leader, is the key to make this change successful, no matter how this change will start.

The whole experience of this training in Indonesia was truly a dream come true. I was able to meet different people, with unique experiences and perspectives. So, I am very grateful to have an opportunity to be part of the delegates from the Philippines, AOC.

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Takeaways from Delegates

My key takeaways from Future Leaders Program "Change How to Turn Uncertainty into Opportunity."

The topic taught me to embrace change rather than being scared. I have experienced many challenges in life/work. But it made me realized that embracing change is essential for growth and progress, It helps me to develop new skills, gain new experiences and expand my perspective.



AILENE GRACE PATENO

HR / Payroll Team

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Takeaways from Delegates



Mary Ann Cruz

Asst. Manager, Bulacan Branch

The recent Future Leaders Training, "The Change: How to Turn Uncertainty into Opportunity," provided me with valuable insights on how to successfully navigate the complexities of our dynamic business environment. In an environment where change is the only constant, it is crucial for leaders like us to not only embrace change but also effectively communicate and implement it within our teams.

A leader's reaction to change significantly impacts its success. It is essential to deliberate the change process carefully, as it influences how team members accept and embrace new developments. Clear communication is essential for reducing fears and encouraging acceptance of change. The training highlighted the importance of using tools such as change worksheets and hurdles, quicksand, and brick walls. These resources helped me understand how to embrace change as a leader and improve my approach to implementing it effectively. Sir Menen's

discussion on the change model was particularly enlightening, it gave me a clear understanding of how I now feel about change and providing actionable ideas for personal growth as a leader. This training has enhanced my thinking and response strategies for managing change.

Furthermore, the opportunity to interact with people from different countries was invaluable. Despite communication difficulties and language challenges, I overcome my fear of speaking English and developed genuine connections with a variety of people. I am grateful to our management for sending us to this transformative leadership training. It has significantly contributed to my development as an aspiring leader and has broadened my horizons.



Takeaways from Delegates

Last June 26 and 27, I was one of the 13 Filipino delegates given the opportunity by AOC to attend a conference-Future Leaders Program 2024, hosted by BKR Asia Pacific-held in Bali Indonesia.

We traveled July 24 and on the 25th we had our tour of Bali. Our first stop was at UmaPakel- it's a hidden paradise in Ubud area, we had our free taste of their offered teas and coffee in the coffee plantation, one of which is the famous Luwak coffee. Our comrades also had their chance to have their Instagram-able photos taken while on a swing wearing a long dress, with a background of the luscious greeneries of the place.

We also had a quick visit and witness the charm of Tegallalang Rice Terrace and had our lunch at a nearby place and ate the famous fried crispy duck called Bebek. We also visited the Ubud Palace known locally as Puri Saren Agung- the historic home of the royal family of Ubud, Bali.- our tour guide also did not miss on telling us interesting history, culture and stories of the places we have visited. Just across the palace is the Ubud Market-as the tour guide says- the shop for souvenirs were price is for tourist, our skills for bargaining with the vendors were tested here! 😊

We ended our day and do a quick shopping at Krisna Oleh- Oleh Bali -known to its plenty of merchandise at a competitive price. I bought Balinese delicacies while others bought souvenirs as pasalubong to dear families and friends back in Philippines.

The next 2 days we had our conference at Arjuna Hall at Novotel Nusa Dua Bali. The Hotel resort is only 20 minutes-drive from Ngurah Rai International Airport and Kuta area.

Other delegates were Seniors, Managers, and incoming Partners from different race like Indian, Australian, Malaysian, Chinese and Indonesian among others. Its a whole day conference and I had learned a lot from our speaker Sir Mennen Aracid-who is to our advantage is also a Filipino. Our topic is about Change- how to turn Uncertainty into an Opportunity. He was able to share not only his professional know-how of the topic but also shared his relatable personal experiences to "Change". Its true indeed that as Humans "were wired to react to change to survive, and we're also amazingly adaptable to it."

"The goal is to not just manage change but to embrace it and unleash our own potential to achieve greater possibility because of the change" this is my favorite excerpt from the guidebook that we have while in the conference. The first day focuses on change on a personal level, common reactions, and how we can manage our reactions to these changes and knowing the zones you are in. On the second day, its about how Leaders should lead the team through change. We are given set of questions that we can ask, and steps that we can do in the " Change zones" to help the team prepare, clarify, persist and finally explore through any changes. In these two days, we are given the chance to share our insights individually and in group to better understand the topic and utilize the tips and tools as we work on our own case for change.

I am thankful to the knowledge that I had gained from this conference- this help me understand my capabilities and will use this to hone my leadership skills.

After the conference, we had our mini team building and this gave us time to bond with other delegates. We had our dinner at The Square restaurant where live music was played whilst we are enjoying the Barbeque-buffet set up prepared by the hotel. We also had the quick visit to the beach- I'd enjoyed the few minute walk in the shore. It was great. A memory to keep as we had our last day in Bali.

I am forever grateful to Ms. Glesie, Mr. Alas and Ms. Oplas and the rest of the Management of AOC for entrusting me to participate and learn from this conference, I enjoyed and had a wonderful Bali experience!



CHERYL GRACE LUCERO
Asst. Manager, Cavite Branch

Takeaways from Delegates



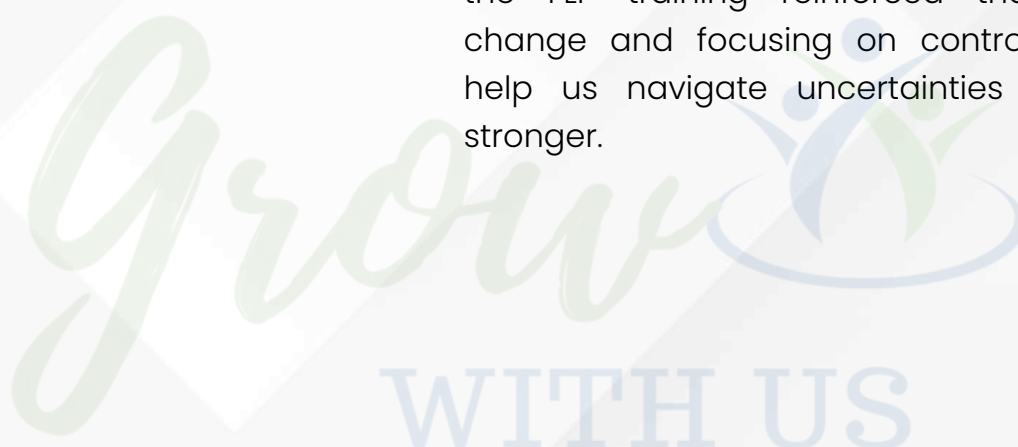
Laezelie Soriano
Asst. Manager, Bulacan Branch

Our flight from Manila to Bali in early June 2024 seemed smooth until a super typhoon hit, causing severe flooding and making travel impossible. We almost missed our flight, but thanks to Ms. Meg's quick actions, we made it to Bali for the FLP.

During the FLP training, themed "Change: How to Turn Uncertainty Into Opportunity," I realized that our experience illustrated that uncertainties are a natural part of life and business. Embracing change and focusing on what we can control is essential. Challenges should be viewed as opportunities for learning and growth, fostering innovation and resilience.

As leaders, we must engage our teams in addressing changes, share knowledge, and maintain a positive outlook. This creates a supportive environment where opportunities are recognized and pursued, building a resilient organization.

Our journey to Bali and the insights gained from the FLP training reinforced that embracing change and focusing on controllable actions help us navigate uncertainties and emerge stronger.



Takeaways from Delegates

"Change is risky, but it opens a door for new opportunities, new learnings and new experiences. You do not have to fear change, you just have to embrace it, face it and learn from it."



RENELYN NEGRIDO
Shared Services Team

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Takeaways from Delegates



LANIE CATAPANG

Asst. Manager, Cavite Branch

Change is both a challenge and an offer for growth. Before attending FLP training, I knew I had my own way of reacting to change and I didn't care much about the way I react to it until the 5 common reactions to change were presented in the training and I realized that feeling is the first to control our reactions to change followed by thoughts. The training, specifically the Change Model, helped me gained a better understanding that there are better and more effective ways to handle change, both for myself and for the team I belong to. It helps me recognize that the uncertainties we experienced during change are a door for opportunities. As an individual facing change, it is vital to be prepared, be open to clarifications, be persistent through setbacks and also to be open to explore and innovate. As a leader heading for a change, it is essential to have the right perspective and sense of ownership. A leader should create a compelling vision to encourage and guide the team, a leader should have an effective dialogue to its member to minimize disruption, a leader should engage the team to help them persist in creating success, and a leader should also inspire the team to explore more and get curious on the opportunities created by change.

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Takeaways from Delegates

I am glad and thankful that I'm one of the lucky employees who was invited to attend the FLP recently. This is a good opportunity for me and for everyone else who attended. The conference entitled "Change: How to Turn Uncertainty into Opportunities". Whenever we heard that there will be a change in our organization or in life mostly, we felt the negative /worst side of it since we are already comfortable with the existing practices that we have. We tend to be uncertain / doubtful about it, without knowing that gives us an opportunity to help us to know our strength it doesn't just give us a chance to grow but also, we are bound to adapt to it for us to survive.

We all have a different approach or reaction to it. One is MOVE which we quickly adapt toward the change. The advantage of it is you are ahead of the others and have more opportunities, but it may have a higher risk in the process. Second is MINIMIZE, which we want to know what is expected of us and change a little as possible. We're in a phase where when there is change you just focus on what is expected, avoid unnecessary trouble, but it may slow down your competitive edge. Third is WAIT, it is where we must see what will happen to others before we act or adapt to a change. This time before we act there should be an existing path or practice since there is already a proven way to solve or improve on such changes but in this kind of reaction or approach, we may likely lose the opportunity that is coming to us. Fourth is RESIST, which is you don't like the change that is happening in the organization. And lastly is QUIT, which is you don't want to be part of the change that is happening that is why you quit.

Well, good for us in AOC that we are good in adapting to changes we go for it, and we are all eager to learn in every opportunity given to us, it is whether a change in our role, change in officers/leader and change in technology / system. We may have to undergo a lot of training, but we always accept, adapt, and learn in every possible way. We are lucky that we always move and look forward to what will help us make our work easier. And, I love what sir Mennen said and let us write this phrase "Connect first before you Correct" and "Dialogue before discussion". We always apply this in our firm, we always connect to each other even though we are in different places that is why we are "One AOC". I especially gone thru this firsthand as Mam O and Ms. Sofia always ask first what had happened before they assessed my mistake. They listen first and help me to realize my mistake and learn from it. And I am very thankful, and it helps me to improve myself as well.

This conference helps us to realize that in every change that happens in our life we must not dwell and let it stop /disrupt but we must decide to it and learn from it.

And again, thank you for inviting me to attend the FLP. We had experience and see the BALI how good they are and how they respect woman in their country. And of course have a lot fun not just during the seminar but also the BALI itself.



Jaraha Masing
Shared Services Team

Takeaways from Delegates



MICHELLE MENDOZA
Manager, Bulacan Branch

I am still overwhelmed by the honor of being chosen as one of the AOC delegates to participate Future Leader's Program held in Indonesia last July 26-27, 2024. AOC is so generous not withholding opportunity to learn and empower its people through this kind of training. I feel secure that I am in a company who is in support of its people to reach their highest potential.

This training marked my first trip abroad. The flight to Indonesia was both exciting and nerve-wracking due to a typhoon that was flooding Metro Manila and surrounding provinces. I am grateful to God for His protection, as we were able to fly safely and return to the Philippines so much fine.

The program was about Change: How to Turn Uncertainty into Opportunity. One key realization from the training is that change is normal and it's affecting both our work and personal life. I have recognized that my fear of taking leadership roles concerns how my team will react. I tend to worry about their responses to announcements, directions, or changes, hoping they will be positive, even

though this is not always the case. I struggle with managing rejection, objections, and negative reactions, and I often burden myself with finding ways to make them accept where I am leading them.

Thankfully, the training helped me understand that change is often received initially on an emotional level, and it is beyond our control. People's reactions are influenced by their beliefs, experiences, and environment. I learned that we should respect their feelings in this phase. After it is processed on emotional level, it is where they start to think about it consciously. This is where I can influence them through communication and detailed discussion.

The program also highlighted common reactions to change, such as quitting. I realized that it is okay if some team members choose to leave; it should not be taken personally. Instead, I need to focus on selecting appropriate actions and responses during challenging times, both practically and emotionally.

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Beyond Numbers by:

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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