Japanese adoption of the theory of constraints is growing at a rate that rivals the quality movement started by Dr. W. Edwards Deming. The founder of the Theory of Constraints (TOC), Dr. Eliyahu Goldratt, made several personal trips to Japan and allowed his books to finally be translated to the Japanese language. The most respected national newspaper in Japan, Asahi Newspaper (circulation 8M), runs a weekly regular article about TOC written by TOC expert Yuji Kishira. These articles were most recently summarized in a book “Unreasoning Workplace” and released in Japan.

The Theory of Constraints International Certification Organization (TOCICO) hosted the first international TOC conference in Japan in 2009 with a keynote from the Director General of the Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism on how TOC was used to complete infrastructure projects in less time and provide one day response to contractor requests. The impact of TOC on the country of Japan is so significant that immediately following the TOCICO conference a MLIT conference drew over 300 executives. Dr. Goldratt said, “Toyota changed factories in the world. In the future, people will say that MLIT Japan changed government management in the world. I want you to understand how important your activity is.” The director general described how MLIT was able to complete good quality infrastructure in shorter time while supporting the government in the difficult financial turnaround and allowing the contractors to make a profit. MLIT was tested in its use of TOC during the recent tsunami in the Fukushima prefecture. With TOC, all of construction finished earlier by 20% and significant issues around the clean-up of decontaminated land were resolved fast and in a win-win-spirit between officials and citizens.

Other presenters at the 2009 landmark conference included a past Executive Vice President of Sony, one of the last living student of Dr. Taiichi Ohno, the General Manager of Ngahama Canon and a Director from Hitachi Tools - all describing how Theory of Constraints has created a win-win-win condition in their supply chain.

The adoption of TOC has grown dramatically in Japan. This summer a TOC conference focused on youth education was attended by top executives from the ministry of education, the ministry of infrastructure, school teachers as well as many business executives including Japanese leading companies like Toyota, Fujitsu, Mitsubishi, NEC, Sony, etc. The diversity of attendees was from teenagers to business top executives.

Previously, due to the success experienced in projects by MLIT, all kinds of government officials
attended TOC education from all over Japan; Cabinet, Healthcare, Economy, Finance, Agriculture, Education, Infrastructure, city and prefectural governments. The application of this education was to solve problems in the areas of Healthcare, Agriculture, Education, Tax payer's safety in natural disaster, Government management, and the Economy.

Carol Ptak, the TOCICO General Manager and CEO said "The positive impact made to Japan by TOC is rivaled only by the quality movement after World War II started by Dr. W. Edwards Deming. The United States could easily be trying to play catch up with Japan once again."

About TOCICO - The Theory of Constraints International Certification Organization (TOCICO) unites people who share a passion for win-win holistic thinking and share a vision that this will become the main way to manage organizations. The TOCICO is a global not-for-profit certification organization for TOC practitioners, consultants and academics to develop and administer certification standards, and facilitate the exchange of latest developments.

The next TOCICO conference is June 3-6, 2013, Bad Nauheim. Germany. For more information and to register, visit http://www.tocico.org/?page=intl_conference_2013

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