

**Parliament Hill Presentation:
for the Era 21 Networking Breakfast for Young Canadians**

Increasing your value proposition to compete in tomorrow's "Global Market"

Howard Shearer - President & CEO of Hitachi Canada Limited

**Parliamentary Restaurant, Parliament Hill
Ottawa**

February 24, 2005

I wish to express heartfelt thanks to J'Nikira Dinqinesh Education Centre, Senator Poy and other members of the organizing committee for the invitation to give the keynote address today.

My comments are targeted to the youth in our society, whom I feel very privileged to address as an audience which is representative of the very future of a country so blessed in its abundance of resources, so enriched by its cultural diversity and so empowered by its democratic institutions. We can be immensely proud of being a part of a Canada whose commitment to human rights is enshrined in its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is a country that holds your dreams, and can deliver on your expectations, but to be able to do so Canada requires your full participation. Please get involved; volunteering is very important and one sure way of making a difference. The earlier you start the better.

On reflection, I have tried to remember what life was like during my earlier school years in Jamaica ...similar to Grades 11-12. Well, internet access was non-existent; cell phones... no; computers in class rooms... no; calculators were not allowed into exams, not even slide rules. But what was consistent then, and now, is the presence of dedicated teachers whose efforts to deliver excellence in the classroom made the difference in the lives of so many. I strongly believe teachers should always be recognized and appreciated, so how about a hand of applause for teachers, some of whom are among us today.

No doubt this magnificent setting has crystallized your dreams. Someone in this room will have the opportunity to be an MP, Prime Minister ...maybe a Senator, Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, Race Car Driver, Tradesperson, Social Worker, Healthcare Provider, or maybe, President of a company. We all have expectations of ourselves, and when combined with those expectations our family and friends have of us, this can be daunting, but whatever path you

choose, what attributes do you believe are necessary if you are to achieve your goals?meet those expectations, so to speak?

In order to achieve tomorrow, you must start taking action today. You can begin right now to increase your value proposition. By value proposition I mean increasing your own capability to contribute to others, whether that means to family, friends, community or eventually the professional environment in whichever profession you chose.

So let us begin by ensuring that before you leave this room you meet, and at least greet, the persons sitting in front, beside and behind you because each of these individuals represent access for you to have a different experience which may enrich your life. You see my friends, by meeting new people we may learn more about another culture, increasing our value proposition.

As mentioned I am currently employed as the President & CEO of Hitachi Canada Limited.

Just a few comments on Hitachi. In Canada, there are approximately 700 employees in the Hitachi group of companies in Canada, and over 320,000 employees globally. Main areas of business focus in Canada are Consumer, Power & Industrial, Medical, Optical and Security, Transportation, and Computers, among others.

Globally, there are 412 overseas operations as compared to 511 in Japan. In Canada, Hitachi has two manufacturing locations, Guelph, Ontario, and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

We take pride in our technology leadership driven by a commitment to research, development and the commercialization of solutions to meet customer/market needs. This can be challenging as you will agree the change in taste in the consumer market can be swift and those who fail to adapt do so at their own peril. The race to convert technology into needed solutions must be won if a company is to maintain its relevance in today's competitive market.

In regards to corporate social responsibility, it is ingrained in our corporate culture to give back to the communities we live and do business in, and this is done through Hitachi's Community Action Committee (CAC) and the various Hitachi Foundations. The CAC consists of volunteer employees who direct resources to make a difference.

Hitachi Canada Ltd's mission statement, which can be accessed on our web-site, reflects the following: Hitachi Canada Ltd., through its Employees, will always conduct business with the highest level of integrity, while striving

to support the communities we live and do business in. Our focus is using Hitachi's Technology strengths, to deliver the Products and Solutions, which reflects the highest core values of our Organization, and the greatest contribution to improving society's quality of life to our Customers. Our goal is that all actions taken in the pursuit of Excellence, in meeting our Customer needs, will serve to "Inspire the Next"

Most importantly, vision, mission, and values are the critical elements for building a sustainable future, personally and in business.

I was born in Jamaica and came to Canada in 1971. Previous to that I visited Canada in August, 1967. I am a graduate of McMaster University where I majored in electrical engineering.

My first job after graduation was in Trenton, Ontario.

The road to Trenton is an interesting story for indeed on my journey into Trenton for the interview, I remember looking around, seeing the lack of cultural diversity then, and praying that I would not be offered the job. The interview was detailed and I became convinced that the human resources manager was racist, or so I thought. On completing the interview, and departing Trenton back to Hamilton, I knew then and there that my prayers were answered as there was no way I would be offered the job. You can well imagine my surprise when two days later, the phone rang and I was offered the job. More importantly this individual whom I thought was so racist became one of my closest personal friends and a mentor. Even today we speak at least 4 times per week. On further reflection, the moral of this story must be please ensure you do not pray yourself out of an opportunity; do not assume; tough questions will always be asked, and honest answers will win the day.

This followed summer jobs in the steel industry in Hamilton.

Job experiences have been with Erie/Trenton, Texas Instruments, Ottawa, and now Hitachi where I have spent the last 20 years, starting in Ottawa. I can best describe myself as a people person in that I enjoy meeting new faces.

Perhaps this is why I entered the field of sales on joining Texas Instruments and continued on that path into Hitachi. One of the most rewarding aspects of working with Hitachi is the experience of working in a global company where the solutions for customers are input by team members from different parts of the world.

One of the most challenging aspects remains managing change whether that be customer needs, competition, or the deployment of resources.

In many ways I consider myself a coach, empowering team members to make the decision and plays necessary to achieve the goals.

So today we live in an information age where knowledge empowers you to make a difference. Where speed and decisiveness are the order of the day.

You are required to manage change and meet expectations. Many of those expectations may seem insurmountable with odds stacked against you, or so many of you may think...so how will you succeed?

This is the question you will continually be asking yourselves as you progress through the various stages of your life.

With this question in the forefront of our minds this year's celebration of Black History Month can also be described as a rallying cry to each and everyone not only to learn from the achievements of the past but more importantly to reach out and grasp the future. After all, the future holds the promise of great rewards...ah if only we can grasp the future. How best can we do this!

We can start by recognizing early in life that it is important to eliminate procrastination, to practice setting goals and trying your best to achieve them. Some mistakes will be made along the way; do not be concerned, but always try to manage the risk and make the smallest of mistakes, where possible.

What about commitment. After all, commitment means not only saying what you intend to do but also doing it in the time frame committed.....how many of you are late on assignments over and over, with excuses to your teachers requiring extensions on due dates...sounds familiar.. been there, done it!!!

Where else do you start? Continuing education, formal or by other means is one primary way to achieve this. Please remember knowledge is the gateway to opportunities.

Speaking more than one language is an asset and increases your value proposition. Make an effort to master as many languages as you can, and respect the place of French in this society. You will discover that in the global world of business your ability to communicate in multiple languages gives you an advantage.

Being more aware of the social, religious and business customs of different nationalities increases your ability to build bridges to new markets and open doors to new friendships; it will allow you to understand market needs for a global economy and market needs in your own society, so to speak....

Being able to sit at the table and experience different foods can run parallel to being open to new ideas. In my daily routine, the choice of meals varies from Japanese, Chinese, Italian, French, Caribbean, Indian, Canadian, Middle Eastern, European...you name it. Invariably, the choices are made by business associates, many of whom I may never have met before.

The message is clear...cultural diversity enhances your value proposition, and can best be achieved through friendships, education, and being receptive to new ideas.

If you are still wondering why, and how, this is important to you. Well, look around this room. This can best be described as a mirror of the global business environment. You have the rare opportunity to start the process of engagement now. And as many of you will no doubt go on to higher schools of education, for example university, the richness to be gained from reaching out will multiply. Do not miss this opportunity to enhance your value proposition.

Let me continue now by relaying some of my experiences and then let us together explore some ideas that will be your anchors in global storms.

Some lessons to be learned from my experiences are as follows:

- There is no substitute for the integrity of your word. This is how you gain trust. Get in the habit of starting to meet your commitments now. This is one way of gaining trust. In business, the Spirit of any agreement is as important as the Letter of the agreement. Confidence that the other party has the integrity and political will to execute any agreement reached is critical for a successful negotiation and can only be gained by making efforts to develop relationships with other members.
- Sometimes achieving success means doing best what you dislike doing the most. As long as it is the right thing to do, execute. If it is not the right thing to do, do not execute.
- Understand what you can bring to the table (your value proposition so to speak). For example, you may be multilingual, you may have a unique understanding of different cultures from living in different geographic regions...or you may simply be so brilliant, and then once you understand it, enhance and use it to benefit others. Getting into the habit of helping others builds you into being a team player. Guess what - being a team player is critical for success in business.

- Take the time to reach out to people you come across. Someone will have a positive influence on your life. Someone will give you the access you need by way of advice or introduction, or assistance in some unexpected way. Leave yourself open to meeting new people. Sometimes, depending on our cultural heritage, we may not be assertive in a society where communication is key. You must take steps to deal with this - communicate... communicate... communicate. In business, you can never over communicate. Whether by sharing ideas or working on solutions, communication is key.
- Remember respect earns respect.
- Learn to listen to friends and be tolerant of others idea's. In business today we strive to listen to our customers so as to create the right solutions they need.
- Be demanding of yourself to achieve excellence in whatever you do. However, do not undervalue your attributes; simply always try to enhance them.
- Remember a team's strength is threatened by its weakest link.
- Remain proud of your heritage and recognize the positive contribution it will make to Canada.
- Believe in yourself.
- It's all about attitude, and you know by that I do not mean being in your face. A positive one never fails to encourage others that the most difficult of tasks can be resolved.
- Monitor for success; do not police for failure. It is my opinion that a positive attitude carries the team through difficult times.
- Never let negative assumptions determine the outcome. Look for the true facts...remember my interview experience in Trenton!
- Be inquisitive about anything you do not understand.
- Flexibility in accepting responsibility is important.
- Flexibility in seeking out the opportunity, wherever it seems possible, is critical. Canada is a vast country of opportunity; take every opportunity to visit all regions and meet/learn more about our

neighbors, and cultures. How about the rich history of our native peoples?

- Seek out best practices; look around for mentoring.
- Weigh options in making choices. Be skeptical of the easy answer/reasons lest wrong conclusions are chosen.

Leadership vision and values are all critical for sustainable growth in a company:

- Have a Vision of where, or what, needs to be done.
- Leadership requires giving credit to others; it requires focusing on the talents of the team to deliver results. It optimizes the use of resources for achieving goals.
- Values gain society's trust.

So again, I ask what does all of this have to do with Black History Month?

It is all about you taking the little, but necessary, steps today to make a positive contribution to your community and ultimately, society tomorrow. Regardless of your ethnic background the struggle of one race should inspire others to make a meaningful contribution to our community - that is Canada - and our neighbors whomever they may be. Learn about your own history, but do not miss the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others. After all, there is so much to be gained.

It is about recognizing early in life the advantage of diversity and the edge it can give you tomorrow. If, by chance, it is done right you will make the type of history which generations past, and those to come, will be proud of. Proud of your contribution which was built on the foundation they prepared with sacrifices for us.

As Canadian companies strive to compete in the global economy, a country such as ours will need to harness all her strength to succeed. You, my friends, are destined to play a crucial part of any plan if we are to succeed. All your experiences are valuable. Your bringing to bear perspectives based on different ways of looking at the same problem will impact success in tomorrow's global economy. Just imagine that a Team Canada trying to increase trade in the global markets of China, India, the Middle East, Africa ,

Latin America, Europe and the balance of Asia will be stronger with your capabilities. This is the opportunity that awaits you. Please prepare for it.

Taking up the challenge means saying no to any temptation which undermines your ability to fulfill your potential:

- Too many are not fulfilling their potential. In spite of sacrifices made by previous generations, there is still a great deal to be done if present and future generations are to be counted and increase their stake in Canada's prosperity. Are you ready to play your part, to commit and to execute?
- How will you prepare yourself to help Canada compete globally?
- Are you ready to take the steps to be a player in tomorrow's global job market?
- Are you ready to lead by example?
- As I mentioned, success tomorrow may mean doing what you dislike doing the most today; reaching out is one such example. Are you ready to reach out and grasp the future? I certainly hope so...business is depending on you.

For the sports minded, in closing, I wish to say to you what I have repeated to myself many times:

In life's relay race, we have been handed a baton to complete our leg of this race. Without a doubt those who carried the baton before us, did so with a great commitment and self sacrifice. Many lost their lives in the process of giving us a foundation on which to build. In running our leg of this unending race we, (you and I) having accepted the responsibility to carry the baton, now have the obligation to achieve our full potential through full participation in building a better Canada, such that future generations may receive the baton from us for their leg of the race with a better foundation, and take their strides with pride to victory.

Please remember, you are the key to realizing this goal.