



## ECCO comfortably 'shoehorns' intensive training

**ECCO is one of the world's leading shoe brands, whose shoes and leather goods are sold in more than 90 countries. The company ECCO Sko A/S, a Danish, family owned organisation, was founded in 1963 by Birte and Karl Toosbuy, in Bredebro, Denmark, beginning with only the production of footwear, but has since expanded into leather production, as well as accessories and small leather goods.**

**E**CCO's products are sold from over 2,200 ECCO shops and more than 14,000 sales points and the company employs more than 21,000 people worldwide.

In 1984, ECCO established a production subsidiary in João de Vêr, Portugal. This site was ECCO's first owned and operated shoe factory outside Denmark. Portugal was at the time already a major player in the European footwear industry, which made it easy to recruit specialist staff. Large-scale production ceased in 2009 due to tough Asian competition, but in 2012, ECCO restarted

production there as flexibility and closeness to European markets became increasingly important and many previous employees returned to ECCO.

Alan Searle moved from England in 1989 to be based in Portugal as ECCO's Production and Technical Director after significant experience in the footwear industry. Currently approximately 98% of ECCO's shoes are produced in their own shoe factories in Portugal, Slovakia, Thailand, Indonesia, China and Vietnam, and the rest under licence in a number of

other countries. After a number of years with the company a strategic decision was taken by the business to progress from an emphasis on Lean initiatives to re-establishing work study and time standard skills to help support each of the company's manufacturing operations to be more cost-effective in times and methods.

Now as ECCO's Productivity Global Consultant, Alan was keen to re-establish and spread the productivity culture across the company with a focus on generating consistent and accurate time standards and monitoring individual performance and accurate costs.

He nominated ten people from among all the six manufacturing sites to study for the IMS Certificate and Time Study Practical Certificate. As an MMS himself, Alan realised these qualifications were the industry standard for productivity professionals and approached Scott-Grant Limited to determine the best way to deliver the training. He was also interested in the guided application offered by Scott-Grant and was keen to incorporate several days of this specialist help in the programme. He decided to bring all the delegates from their six different locations to the shoe factory in Indonesia, ECCO's first Asian-based factory established since 1991 and now employing around 8,000 people in its shoe factory and own tanneries.

Two Senior Instructors arrived at the end of June in Sidoarjo (near Surabaya) on the eastern side of Java Island. Ian Winstanley and Richard Easton had planned in great detail with Managing Director Richard Taylor how to condense the four-week training course and guided application as much as possible to ensure the delegates' time away from their workplace was kept to the minimum. An agreement was reached to work long weekdays (8am to 5pm) and part days on the Saturdays in the hope that everyone would be able to cope with the intensity and achieve the objective within four weeks.

Readers will see from the photograph of the presentation ceremony, that all the delegates were successful and coped not only with the amount of technical information, the learning of new skills and techniques, but also with the various examinations after each of the four modules; some delegates achieved a distinction in their exams. Bear in mind that many of the delegates were coping with using English – not their first language – and with all the technical detail. Their achievement was hailed a great success, not only by Alan Searle who was regularly on site during the course, but also by a Senior Vice President of ECCO, Flemming Larsen, who, from his base in Singapore, came in to meet the delegates and endorse the re-focus on the need for work study as the foundation for the most cost-effective and efficient future for the company.

"The training was delivered in a very professional manner" said Alan Searle, "bringing people together from six different countries can prove to be very difficult. Ian and Richard managed this situation very well; the whole team bonded and the four weeks ran smoothly. Having completed the course and passed the exams, the newly qualified team members have all returned to their respective factories and will practise and apply their new skills."

At the end of the course the delighted delegates were presented with their certificates and Performance Rating cards by an equally delighted Senior Instructor Ian Winstanley. Also attending the presentation were other senior colleagues from ECCO, Production Director Danny Tin Tau Chan and Production



Newly qualified delegates with their IMS Certificates, with delighted ECCO managers and Scott-Grant instructors (back row left to right: Danny Chan, Ian Winstanley, Alan Searle, Karun Thandapani, Richard Easton)

and Technical Director Karunanidhi (Karun) Thandapani, who came to congratulate the delegates on their significant achievement.

On a lighter note, the World Cup was running while the Scott-Grant instructors were in Indonesia, which for many, wouldn't have been an issue. Senior Instructor Ian, however, is a keen football fan and was particularly interested in the England v Croatia match.

His Scott-Grant colleagues back in the UK were wondering if he managed to watch the match since the hotel TV wasn't licensed to show it, mobile devices won't show BBC or ITV outside the country and trying to find a local bar in the early hours might be unrealistic. Ever the creative genius, Ian found the solution: "Facetime home worked a treat. I was technically in my own living room on top of a pile of cushions, propped up inside my son's trainer watching the game!"