**Steve Nash Interview (Malaysia)**

FYI <Below are the questions for the interview with CBT ([www.cbt.com.my](http://www.cbt.com.my)) with Steve. I’ve to add that these questions were proposed by us. We followed up for a long time for CBT to provide questions but it didn’t come about. We’ve sent the below to them and they are fine with this. But they added one more question from their side (highlighted in yellow below).>

1. **How did you get to work for the motor industry?**

Whilst I was student I did some work for a friend’s father who worked for Chrysler who, back then in the 70s, had just acquired a large portion of the British motor industry. I worked for the parts distribution arm delivering parts in a van. I remember being there for August registrations and thinking, this is fantastic. I got hooked in by the new car smell and feel as all the new stock came in.

When I finished by studies I wasn’t clear about what I wanted to do and found myself in Chartered Accounting, simply because that is what my brother had done. However, one day I found myself working on a large audit for a Vauxhall dealer and realised that I both appreciated and understood how the environment worked. I realised I had enjoyed that piece of work more than anything I had done in accountancy, so I went back to work for Chrysler as a graduate trainee.

I went on to work for Renault and as a Sales Manager for a BMW dealership in London before I moved to work for BMW UK some 26 years ago, leading to my position as BMW Aftermarket Director in the UK. I have been involved in the IMI for much of what has turned out to be a critical development phase over the last 10 years and feel a certain degree of joint ownership with what has been achieved. I was approached to join the council back then and have been involved in various roles since. I was also heavily involved in the IMI critically becoming a Sector Skills Council. In some ways, therefore, it was am logical next step for me to become the CEO.

**3.         What advice do you have for those working in this industry?**

Invest in yourself. The sector is not a static entity and technological development is not slowing down any time soon. If you want to go far you should ensure your training is up to date. Make sure you are as valuable as possible to your company by being able to handle the latest challenges, be they in customer service or in the workshop. Companies are crying out for talented individuals who can help them ahead of curve, make sure this is you!

**4.         How do you see the automotive sector in Malaysia and in terms of career prospects for those in this sector?**

Malaysia is a rapidly evolving market with prestige brands from Europe making big investments in the country and domestic companies like Proton and Perodua looking to forge ahead with new product ranges.

Also, the ‘National Automotive Policy’ announced in Malaysia early this year, aimed at transforming the country into a regional energy-efficient vehicle (EEV) hub, is expected to generate 187,000 additional employment opportunities by 2020. In response, automotive professionals will need to acquire new skills and knowledge relevant to EEV. Electric cars are also breaking into the market, with various initiatives introduced to encourage the use of such cars. Someone will have to keep all this new technology on the road and, with more than 22million cars on the road already, there will always be a requirement for professional technicians to keep Malaysia moving. Those who apply themselves will have plenty of opportunity to move up through the ranks. With the robust automotive market we are seeing here, I would say there has never been a better time to get into the Malaysian Automotive Sector.

**5. What are some of the initiatives in the automotive scene you have introduced since becoming the CEO of IMI?**

Earlier this year IMI introduced a new three year strategic plan which includes plans to develop overseas business and diversify our offering. At the heart of the strategy is the leveraging of our awarding body operations to allow us to expand further into international markets. IMI has grown to attain a dominant position in the UK automotive sector as its leading automotive awarding body with a current market share in excess of 80% - we are aiming to transfer the expertise we have accrued in achieving this into other markets around the world. We are also looking to develop a specific membership offering for individuals based outside the UK so automotive professionals all over the world can benefit fully from our expertise.

Earlier in the year IMI announced the acquisition of Automotive Technician Training (ATT), an e-learning company with a presence in over 200 colleges in the UK and contracts in a number of foreign countries. The deal offers valuable opportunities to broaden access to the IMI’s qualifications and gives us the option of delivering training directly to foreign markets such as Malaysia.

In the UK, we are currently campaigning to license automotive technicians in the sector .We believe introducing regulation will ensure technicians have the right skills to work on modern cars safely and give the consumer greater confidence in the sector. We also believe that higher standards will ultimately make it easier to recruit high calibre talent into the sector.

**6.  How has IMI helped to improve or address some of the challenges in this sector?**

In 2013 we launched an online searchable database of qualified, competent automotive personnel called the Professional Register in the UK. The Register acts as a voluntary license to practice, allowing automotive professionals to demonstrate to customers that they have up-to-date skills and relevant qualifications. The idea is to give a commercial advantage to those who invest in skills and training and has so far received a great deal of support in the UK. We hope we can replicate something similar in other countries too in the near future.

We also constantly work with manufacturers, training providers and aftermarket businesses to ensure our qualifications and accreditations meet the requirements of the industry. Our aim is always to ensure that the industry can access a professional and profitable workforce.

In Malaysia, we have been working closely with automotive players and education bodies to enable them to become IMI approved centres to offer internationally recognized IMI qualifications. In April this year, we recognized Nasim Sdn Bhd as an IMI Approved Assessment Centre, so their technicians can be trained and assessed based on internationally recognised standards, in collaboration with Automobile Peugeot. We are also working with the Ministry of Education to provide training support across a network of community colleges in Malaysia to enhance the skills of automotive professionals - particularly focusing on electric and hybrid vehicles.

**7.  In your opinion, what is the determining point for those working in this sector to succeed?**

The obvious answer is hard work and a passion for the sector. For me it is also about looking ahead and not ignoring new challenges. Technology constantly changes in automotive and the demands of customers change for those in customer service and sales roles. Those who take it upon themselves to face these challenges head on and grow with them are the people who end up in senior roles in the industry.

**8.         What has IMI achieved in Malaysia since it started 8 years ago with Martin Austin and later, John Young? What is the plan to revive the IMI in Malaysia?**

My predecessors have done good work in laying the groundwork and establishing the connections and contacts with the various players in the automotive sector. Since the beginning of this year, we have been stepping up the momentum of our work here – especially with the help of our Malaysia-based Senior Manager, Matthew Stuart. In January, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Malaysia Ministry of Education.  Central to the MOU is the delivery of training support across a network of community colleges in Malaysia to enhance the skills of automotive professionals, particularly focusing on the growing footprint of electric and hybrid vehicles. The Pekan Community College, Kedah and Kepala Batas Community College Pulau Pinang are among some of the colleges we have initiated this with. This development kicked of our new international strategy with Malaysia as a focal point.

With the current focus in the Malaysian automotive industry on raising standards, the IMI believes it can play a central role in giving local training providers the very best qualifications and accreditations for their candidates. By partnering with a recognized and trusted awarding organization such as IMI, a centre is guaranteeing the quality of trainers, equipment, internal verification and external verification. We expect the Malaysian automotive industry will hear a lot more from us in the coming years.