



Samuel Tan Wee Cheng (left) and Denny Lee

## IBM helps develop a new field of study

The STAR (StarBiz) Thurs, 10/7/08 pg: B7

**PETALING JAYA:** IBM Malaysia is collaborating with Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) to spearhead the development of a new multi-disciplinary academic discipline dubbed service science, management and engineering (SSME).

Managing director Ou Shian Waei said the services sector was the engine of growth for economies worldwide and talent was necessary to help develop and accelerate the growth of the sector.

"We need problem-solving talent, which is what SSME addresses. This collaboration will help put together the right kind of skills development and curriculum needed for SSME," he said at a roundtable discussion on SSME on Tuesday.

SSME integrates aspects of established fields such as computer science, operations research, engineering, management sciences, business strategy, social and cognitive sciences and legal sciences.

Ou said SSME was an urgent call to develop a formalised educational programme to nurture services professionals and researchers.

"We are working with UMP and USM to produce the talent that we

require. We hope to follow what IBM has done in China and Singapore," he said, adding that the company would provide the universities with case studies, teaching material and access to middleware and hardware at no cost.

IBM inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with China's education ministry late last year to create SSME as a new academic discipline in Chinese universities. The parties hoped to initiate an SSME curriculum in two to three years at 50 leading universities across the country.

The company also inked several MOUs in Singapore last November, including with NTU School of Computer Engineering and NUS School of Computing on service science curriculum development and research exploration.

UMP vice chancellor Prof Datuk Daing Nasir Ibrahim said the services sector's contribution to gross domestic product had surpassed the manufacturing sector, thus driving the need for new academic models to support the services sector.

"We will take on this new agenda in collaboration with IBM. The curriculum is there but we will have to adjust it to address the specific needs of the Malaysian market," he said.