



Problem solving system can help turn firms around

A SYSTEMATIC approach to problem solving can help get Irish firms back on their feet, says Bradley Willis, a business consultant and lecturer at the University of Kentucky.

Mr Willis is also a former executive at Toyota, a company which is using 'lean' manufacturing principles to negotiate its way through the present global economic crisis.

This contrasts with competitors who have sought US Government support.

Mr Willis was guest speaker at the recent Cork Chapter of the MBA (Masters in Business Administration) Association of Ire-

land's recent Practical Problem Solving workshop at UCC Brookfield Complex in Cork.

Participants learned Toyota's eight-step problem solving system, which facilitated the identification and elimination of a problem in a systematic way.

Bradley Willis explained: "The Toyota philosophy is to find a problem, fix the problem, and stop the problem coming back."

Having spent 12 years at Toyota, Mr Willis is now an automotive industry consultant. He has taught lean manufacturing in over 90 different plants.

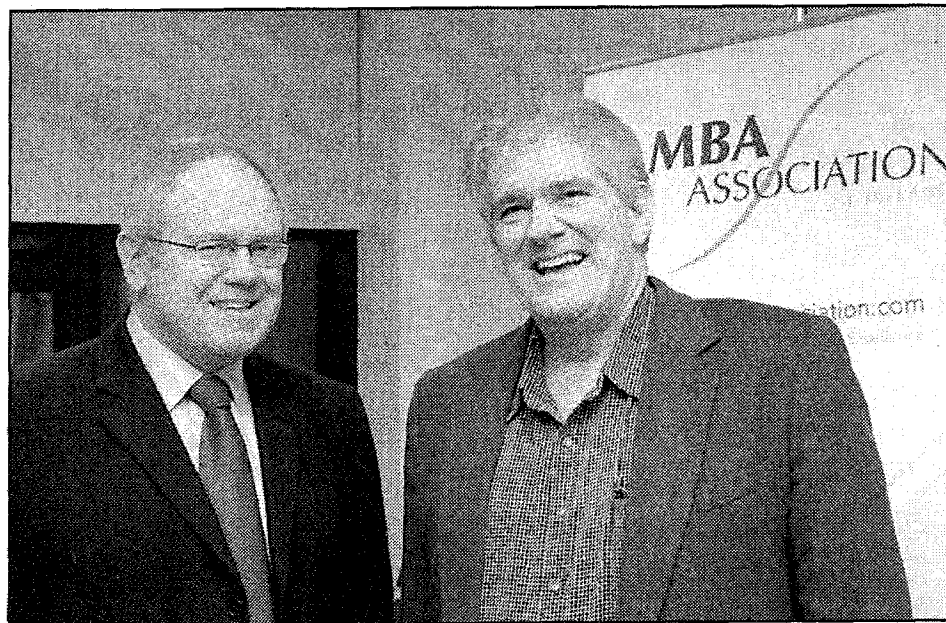
MBA South chairman

Tony O'Riordan noted: "It was very interesting that Toyota have not had to make an approach to the US Government for a bailout package like the big three motor manufacturers Ford, Chrysler and General Motors.

"Toyota regards its workforce as a unified team of 'problem solvers', all committed to the Toyota way of business.

"Brainstorming around problem solving to fix them for good is deeply embedded in their way of working."

The Innovation and Lean Sigma Skillsnet helped organise this workshop.



The southern chapter of the MBA Association are hosting a workshop in UCC, which will be presented by Bradley Willis, right, of Toyota Motors/University of Kentucky, pictured with Tony O'Riordan, chairman, MBA Association of Ireland southern chapter.

Picture: Gerard Bonus