

Right, from the source

Korean-speaking teammates in Calif. and Mesa translate for visiting reporters

BY FELIX SANCHEZ

At home, Andrew Yoo, a senior manager on the C-17 Program, doesn't get much of a chance to speak Korean, his native language: His wife and children speak predominately English. And around other family and friends, Yoo figures maybe he gets a chance to converse in his native tongue about 20 percent of the time.

The same is true for Insoo Shin, a native Korean who moved to the United States when he was age 6. Shin, a C-17 teammate, speaks a minimum amount of Korean with his family. And at their Boeing C-17 offices in Long Beach, Calif., Yoo and Shin together can count on one hand the times they've spoken Korean with fellow workers.

So when the call came out recently for Boeing employees fluent in Korean to volunteer to help the company translate program briefings for a contingent of Korean journalists touring Integrated Defense Systems facilities in California and Arizona, Shin, Yoo and other Korean-descent workers leaped at the chance. It was an opportunity for them to do their part to get Boeing's message across to international customers about the work the company is doing on several important IDS programs—and in their own way give Boeing an incremental edge in building international business.

"I did it to broaden my horizons. It was kind of networking on a personal note and a chance to use my mother tongue," Yoo said. "For the company, it was a chance to make a good selling point. We are in a critical time with the C-17 program trying to find more prospective buyers. I thought it would be good to increase their horizons and understandings about us and the great plane that is our C-17."

Yoo, who's been with Boeing since 1988 and works in strategic support for the C-17 Fuselage Integrated Product Team in Long Beach, volunteered to trans-

late briefings on Global Mobility Systems products for the visiting journalists.

Shin translated during a tour the journalists took of the C-17 final assembly facility, and inside one of the airlifters being prepared for delivery to Canada. He also assisted Yoo and fellow Korean company employees, Yong C. Joo and Myung-Yul Lee, with greeting the visitors, directing them through the C-17 Visitor's Center to get appropriately badged, and then accompanying the reporters to dinner at the end of the Long Beach leg of the tour.

Similarly, Korean-speaking Boeing employees Kap Yoon and Chanhoo Lee in El Segundo, Calif., and Hee M. Moon in Mesa, Ariz., translated for the journalists at Boeing facilities in those cities.

One advantage the volunteer employees offered over professional translators: The Boeing employees were able to provide the journalists valuable insight that only employees can provide about their products, Yoo and Shin said. And who better to convey the technical terms within the verbal

presentations being given journalists than Boeing employees fluent in Korean, said Shin, 30, a 6-year Boeing veteran.

"Even for fluent conversationalists in Korean, some of the terms we had to convey were difficult. Terms such as air-to-air refueling are just hard to translate," said Shin, who works in avionics, design and analysis on the C-17 Program.

Shin said he believes there was an even bigger benefit from using workers as translators. It showed the visitors that Boeing's ranks of employees include "people just like them," he said. "They had somebody they could relate to, another person with the same background as theirs who is working in our company. Using employees who work here, who speak not only the language of Korea, but also conduct the business etiquette and manner—a critical part of a business transaction—gives them the feeling there are people like them who work within the company." ■

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Insoo Shin (holding microphone) of the C-17 Program provides Korean translation to visiting Korean journalists during an October visit to the C-17 Program in Long Beach, Calif. Shin volunteered along with other Boeing employees fluent in Korean to provide translation during the media visit.



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