

Commerce means Business

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MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Mission Statement

“To actively promote and facilitate, in close collaboration with the Private Sector, the establishment of a dynamic investment and trading environment, which anticipates changes in global circumstances, whilst strengthening and enhancing the productive capacities and competitiveness of Industry and Commerce, encouraging good business practices and promoting consumer interest.”

Editor's Note

Welcome to the 5th Issue of Commerce means Business,

**a publication of the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs,
produced by the Commercial Information Centre (CIC).**

Spinelli Jr. et al (2007) in the book, "Entrepreneurship—The Engine of Growth," describes entrepreneurship as an "iterative, business churning process which stimulates development and generates social wealth through opportunity discovery and exploitation." (Spinelli Jr. et al 2007) The word entrepreneurship is being echoed by many policy makers of today as a means to enabling economic growth of our domestic economy, in light of the current economic climate affecting most of our sectors. Cognizant of this policy recommendation, the Ministry of Commerce which holds the portfolio of "Business Development" continuously works with micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) of various goods and services sectors to assist in their development and value creation. This is achieved by creating an enabling environment through the implementation of policies and practices geared towards assisting MSMEs transform their theoretical business idea into a living enterprise, thereby enabling their successful growth and development and in turn the economic growth of our domestic economy.

In this issue of Commerce means Business, a new segment has therefore been included to capture the progress of some of our MSMEs with a view to featuring their story and highlighting the impact of the work of the Ministry in their development. In this issue we feature an article on a young, innovative enterprise which discovered an opportunity and exploited it as we briefly walk through this businesses' progress from discovery to its success to date.

In this fifth issue of Commerce means Business, we also highlight some of the main activities undertaken by the various departments of the Ministry, in the months of *July, August and September 2014*.

We then wrap-up with some health tips and our usual staff profile, as well as, a brief note on one of the publications available at the Commercial Information Centre for referencing by commercial information users. In addition, for the Quality Management Systems (QMS) corner, an article entitled "Leveling the Playing Field" is portrayed in observance of World Standards Day. An informational piece by the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council is also included to mark the observance of Productivity Awareness Week.

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs is pleased to present another issue of this publication to our readers, with the hope that we can continue to satisfy your appetite for knowledge and information, through our quarterly publication of Commerce means Business.

Happy Reading!!

*Lydia Dariah - Information Officer/Editor
Commercial Information Centre*

SEDU's Community Outreach Programme

The Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) of the Ministry, in collaboration with James Belgrave Micro Enterprise Development Fund Inc. (BELfund) hosted a Community Outreach Programme in Dennery on September 2nd 2014 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at the Human Resource Development Centre.

This event formed part of the Ministry's ongoing Entrepreneurial Development Programme; the key objective of which is the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture and the development of best practices amongst potential and existing micro and small business owners. At the Community Outreach Programme prospective and existing entrepreneurs gathered information on Entrepreneurship & Starting a Business, SEDU's services (which includes Business Name Registration), as well as, BELfund's services.

Mr. Neil Serieux of Belfund apprised attendees on the services offered which included financing, training programs and technical support. The Outreach also featured a testimonial by successful entrepreneur Mr. Chris Dahoma of Phone Bay Saint Lucia Ltd. who has received assistance from both BELfund and the Ministry of Commerce.

He spoke of his experiences and his challenges as an entrepreneur and gave advice on how one can make their business unique and be a cut above entrepreneurs that are in the same line of business. Using his own experiences he encouraged the participants to see their competitors as possible partners and explore opportunities to collaborate for mutual advancement of their respective businesses.

This Outreach catered to a mix of persons who were eager to get information that would move their business forward or encourage them to think of starting a small business. During the questions and answers session, there were lively discussions and most participants indicated a willingness to make a change to their existing business practices.

The Ministry would like to take this opportunity to thank all persons who assisted in making this Outreach Programme a great success as it continues with its entrepreneurial development drive.



*By: Mrs. Ruthanne Carasco-Phillip
Business Development Officer - SEDU*

5th Meeting of the Regional Services Project Steering Committee

Noting the economic significance of the services sector to developing countries, member states of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) have agreed to develop and implement a Regional Strategic Plan for Services. The objective of this Regional Strategic Plan is to facilitate the formation of a single space for services and boost the region's international competitiveness. It is against this backdrop that representatives of member states met in Antigua and Barbuda for the fifth meeting of the Regional Services Project Steering Committee, 11th - 12th August, 2014. Saint Lucia's focal point, Mr. Guillaume Simon, Commerce and Industry Officer of the Ministry was Saint Lucia's representative at this meeting.

The Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at its 28th meeting agreed to establish a Services Steering Committee to oversee the preparation of the Regional Strategic Plan for Services. The COTED agreed that the composition of the Committee would consist of one high level official from each member state, a representative of the OECS Secretariat and representatives of the CARICOM Secretariat.

The functions of the Regional Steering Committee would therefore be:

- To establish functioning governance mechanism to oversee the preparation of the regional plan
- To complete the preparation work related to the preparation of the regional strategic plan for services
- To ensure full oversight by member states
- To mobilize the resources to prepare the plan
- To assist in the preparation of the draft plan
- To ensure the respective stakeholders of all sub-sector are consulted in all aspects of the preparation of the plan

At its 31st meeting, the COTED further agreed to the identified seven services sub-sectors which would be targeted for development. These sub-sectors are: **Financial Services; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Professional Services; Tourism Services; Education Services; Health and Wellness Services and Entertainment Services.**

As part of the institutional framework to ensure the realization of the decision of the COTED, member states agreed to give effect to creating a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) to oversee the initiative at the national level.



The NCC will comprise of private sector entities engaged in the services sector, as well as, key government ministries integral to the development, trade and investment in the services sector.

Attempts to initiate the NCC in Saint Lucia commenced in 2011 with the committee convening three meetings to date. Members of the committee include a representative of the Saint Lucia Coalition of Service Industries, (SLCSI) and include *inter-alia* a representative from the Ministries of Health, Tourism, Commerce and Education.

The 5th Regional Committee meeting provided an update on developments in services since the 4th meeting and briefed on the status of multilateral and bi-lateral negotiations on trade in services. Also highlighted was the Community five year Strategic Plan and CARICOM Commission on the Economy. The meeting also reviewed the status of the establishment of the administrative and institutional arrangements for the preparation of the regional strategic plan at the national level and highlighted the need for all member states to give life to their respective NCC's, in order to, accelerate traction on the Regional Strategic Plan for Services.

The meeting also considered an analysis of inventory of member states' policies, plans and strategies on services and noted the need for a greater national and regional public information campaign to notify the professionals within member states of the Regional Policy on Professional Services already deliberated and approved along with the draft Model Professionals Bill (2014). Also deliberated on was a Regional Strategic Plan for Financial Services, Cultural, Sporting and Entertainment Services and ICT.

The meeting also considered and approved a work plan for the development of strategies for the seven priority sectors and the proposed strategy for the management of the work of the Regional Committee over the next two years (2014-2016). It is expected that this proposed work plan will be recommended to the COTED for approval of the strategy for the management of the work of the Regional Services Committee over the next two years.

*By: Mr. Guillaume Simon
Commerce & Industry Officer
Commerce & Industry Department*

Business Continuity Management Workshop



PROTECT

YOUR

LIVELIHOOD

The Small Enterprise Development Unit of the Ministry in collaboration with Pan American Life Insurance and Dr. Lyndell St.Ville of Datashore hosted a two part workshop on Business Continuity Management. The workshop took place on July 29th 2014 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Training Room of Ministry of the Public Service. Present at this session were twenty eight (28) micro, small and potential business persons.

The topics discussed included (1) Insuring Your Business which was facilitated by Mr. Joseph Dolor of Pan-American Life Insurance and a representative of Nagico Insurance and (2) Safeguarding your Information Assets which was facilitated by Dr. Lyndell St. Ville.

The purpose of this Business Continuity Management Workshop was to get micro and small business persons to appreciate the need to put contingency plans in place to protect their livelihoods and ensure the continuance of their business in cases of disasters, emergencies or serious disruptions.

Some of the areas covered during this workshop included:

- Types of life insurance policies that provide an income to business owners in situations where they are unable to work due to sickness, accident or death.
- Types of policies that can be used by partnerships in case of the death or the decision to dissolve the business by one of the owners.
- Types of general insurance policies that can be used by small business owners to safeguard their properties, equipment and stock against fire, theft and natural disasters.
- Types of insurance policies that are needed by various professionals to protect them in cases of malpractices and personal liabilities.
- Safeguarding of data in cases of fires, theft and natural disasters.
- The various devices that can be used in order to store and back-up data.



- The processes involved in storing and backing-up data.

This workshop is one in a series of workshops that SEDU has put together in order to increase the competency of our micro and small business persons in running their businesses.

*By: Mr. Jonathan Allain
Business Development Officer
SEDU*

Conflict Management and Mediation Workshop



The Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) of the Ministry in collaboration with Psychsolutions Consultancy Services and The Resolvers held an awareness building workshop for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) on Conflict Management and Mediation. This workshop took place on July 24th, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, at the Conference Room of the Ministry of Education. The facilitators of the workshop were Mr. Taddeus Joseph, a certified Organizational Psychologist of Psychsolutions Consultancy Services and Ms. Lisa D. Evans, who is a trained Mediator and Arbitrator at The Resolvers.

The audience was approximately twenty-two small business owners and managers who gathered information on:

- What is meant by term conflict and conflict resolution
- Dynamics of conflict
- Kilmann and Thomas (1977) Conflict Resolution Model, where the discussion points elaborated on responses such as to compete, collaborate, avoid, compromise or accommodate
- Importance of context in conflict resolution/management
- Psychology and conflict resolution
- Positive and negative approaches to conflict mediation



The latter segment of the workshop focussed on:

- Defining and describing the mediation process
- Identifying the advantages of the uses of mediation in business;
- Helping participants to select the best type of mediator
- Direct participants to sources for further development of mediation skills.

**THERE'S
ALWAYS
A
SOLUTION!**

Of the twenty-two persons who attended, there was 100% satisfaction with the workshop in terms of the content, presenters' knowledge, clarity, ability to hold the participants interest and delivery style, and material. SEDU is therefore considering a repeat session for existing and prospective entrepreneurs who may be interested.

*By: Mrs. Roycelyn St. Hill Howell
Business Development Officer
SEDU*

SEDU's 2014 Graduation Ceremony

Once again, the Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) of the Ministry successfully delivered another cadre of entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs to Saint Lucia's Micro and Small business sector.

The annual graduation ceremony is held for participants who successfully complete training in the ministry's entrepreneurial development courses. It also provides an avenue to recognize the participants' achievements while promoting the services provided by SEDU to entrepreneurs. This, among other things, assists SEDU in fulfilling its mandate in promoting an entrepreneurial culture and developing best practices among micro and small scale owners in Saint Lucia.

This year's ceremony was held on 10th July, 2014 at the Civil Service Association under the theme, "*E-commerce: A World of Opportunities.*" This theme was chosen as the Ministry wanted to highlight the significance of e-commerce on the growth and development of the micro and small business sectors in Saint Lucia. In light of the 2007/2008 global recession which impacted many sectors, the ministry sees e-commerce as presenting a plethora of opportunities for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) which can enable them to be more competitive.

Mr. Christopher Roberts, coordinator of Caribbean Regional Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) who delivered the keynote address implored the graduates to embrace e-commerce in order to grow their business and to use technology in their business operations to be more efficient.

Approximately eighty-five persons who included existing and aspiring entrepreneurs graduated from the following entrepreneurial development courses offered during the two cycles September to December 2013 and February - May 2014: **Basic Project Management for Small Contractors; Cost Estimating for Small Contractors; Peachtree Accounting and Small Business Management.**

The top performers in the various courses were:

- Small Business Management (September to December 2013) - **Shannon Alexander**
- Small Business Management (February to May 2014) - **Samuel Emmanus**
- Basic Project Management (February to May 2014) – **Lynch Thornille**
- Cost Estimating for Small Contractors (September to November 2013)—**Warner Eugene**
- Peachtree Accounting (September to December 2013) – **Magaret Fleur Nelson**
- Peachtree Accounting (February to April 2014) – **Luanne Lesporis**

One of our very own, **Mr. Esli Lafeuillee**, Business Development Officer also graduated from the Peachtree Accounting Course.

The Ministry partnered with corporate citizens including Bank of St. Lucia, St. Lucia Development Bank, CIBC First Caribbean International Bank, BELFUND Inc., Auberge Seraphine Hotel, Royal St. Lucian Hotel and Bay Gardens Hotel & Beach Resort, to successfully undertake this event.

The student testimonial was delivered by **Mr. Lynch Thornille**, whilst **Ms. Shernela Elva** gave the vote of thanks.

*By: Mrs. Michaeline St. Juste
Business Development Officer
SEDU*

Highlights of the 2014 Graduation Ceremony



GRADUATING CLASS 2013-2014



MR CHRISTOPHER ROBERTS DELIVERING KEYNOTE SPEECH



**LYNCH THORNILLE - TOP PERFORMER
BASIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR SMALL CONTRACTORS**



**MAGARET FLEUR NELSON - TOP PERFORMER
PEACHTREE ACCOUNTING**



**SHANNON ALEXANDER - TOP PERFORMER
SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT 2013**



**SAMUEL EMMANUS - TOP PERFORMER
SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT 2014**



**WARNER EUGNE - TOP PERFORMER
COST ESTIMATING FOR SMALL CONTRACTORS**



STUDENT TESTIMONIAL - LYNCH THORNILLE

NATMED LTD



This piece is a brief profile about a unique and innovative enterprise which started off by a young couple with a passion and love for Naturopathic Medicine. Like many successful businesses today, this entity emerged from humble beginnings and through endurance, persistence and diligence, grew to be a successful manufacturer of the finest natural products in our beautiful - *Helen of the West*. This piece is based on an interview conducted by Lydia Dariah, Information Officer of the Ministry with Director and Co-owner of Natmed Limited, Dr. Gayle Maria Devaux-Segovia, on September 16th, 2014.

Natmed Ltd. is a St. Lucian owned business which manufactures all natural, health-related products formulated by Doctors of Naturopathic Medicine - Dr. Gayle Devaux-Segovia and her husband Dr. Carlos Segovia since July 1997. The mission of Natmed Ltd. is *"To manufacture and distribute all natural products of high quality which promote health and wellness, while building a financially successful business."*

After successfully acquiring the degree of Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, which is a distinct health care profession that combines the wisdom of nature with the rigors of modern science¹, Dr. Gayle Devaux-Segovia and her husband returned to St. Lucia to settle down and start their career paths. During that time, the young couple had not envisioned the establishment of this business, as it was only through experiments which started in their kitchen that this business idea sparked.

When asked what was the inspiration behind this business venture Dr. Segovia replied with a smile as she recollected those earlier days and stated, *"after having my first born, I wanted to treat my baby's skin with only the finest natural products. So my husband and I developed a natural insect repellent which was successful and it became the first product we developed."* *"Since then, we continued experiments and testing products among family and friends and through their encouragement we expanded our product line and started selling to M&C and JQ."*

The inspiration also came from our passion for Naturopathic Medicine and being health conscious individuals as well, we were our own best customers – we believed in what we did."

Speaking with passion in her voice Dr. Segovia indicated that to date Natmed Ltd carries two main product lines being **Caribbean Blue ® Naturals** which is a registered trademark of Natmed Ltd and includes all natural sunscreen, suncare, skincare, spa, soaps and natural insect repellents and herbal products. The other product line is **Natmed Herbals** which includes all natural herbal extracts, remedies and products, which is the natural health solution to health issues. Dr. Gayle indicated that the herbs used in these products are those which she studied and are mostly imported; however they are processed with a local alcohol base. Other local products used include cocoa, coconut oil, coconut milk and aloe vera to name a few.

¹Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges AANMC (Accessed Online 29-9-14)



CARIBBEAN BLUE
NATURALS
ST LUCIA

NATMED™
HERBALS


Currently Natmed Ltd. products are found on most supermarket and pharmacy shelves in St. Lucia and are also used by about ninety percent of hotels and spas.

Natmed Ltd. also exports to Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, Necker Island and Curacao, with small distributors in the UK and Singapore. When asked if any challenges are being faced in exporting, Dr. Segovia indicated that the high cost of shipping to and from St. Lucia is in itself a challenge, as well as, the cost of meeting international standards in order to gain market access to some countries. However she indicated that the business is continuously testing its products in order to meet the international standards and penetrate a wider market share.

When asked how the Ministry of Commerce has assisted in the development of Natmed Ltd., Dr. Segovia expressed the following; Natmed Ltd. has over the years participated in numerous trade shows and exposés initiated by the Ministry of Commerce and consequently has gained great exposure. The business also benefited from the manufacturer's concessions granted over the years which have enabled its development. In addition our staff members have successfully completed several training courses provided through the Small Enterprise Development Unit's (SEDU) Entrepreneurial Development Programme.

For example, the Quality Management course provided has allowed Natmed Ltd. to institute several quality management measures including improving internal processes and procedures; improving its bookkeeping; development of a quality manual, as well as, an operations manual. Through this successful training, Natmed Ltd has also developed a quality statement with accompanying quality objectives. The quality policy of Natmed Ltd. is *"to manufacture natural products that meet international standards, with the aim of meeting or exceeding customers' expectations. This will be achieved through the development, implementation and maintenance of an effective quality management system."*

Dr. Segovia indicated that she would advice potential entrepreneurs to visit the Ministry of Commerce in order to get the necessary guidance and support needed to start one's business. She also encouraged existing entrepreneurs to build and maintain a cordial, lasting relationship with the Ministry, in order to continually improve one's business operations, through training and development programmes.





She further added that because of the quality management training received, Natmed Ltd. has earned several awards for quality which includes the following earned through the St. Lucia Manufacturer's Association award ceremony;

2014 Gold Award for Leadership

2014 Gold Award for Human Resource Development

2014 Platinum Award for Implementation of Standards and Best Practices

2014 Platinum Award for Product and Customer Service Quality

2012 Gold Award for Product and Customer Service Quality

2012 Gold Award for Implementation of Standards and Best Practices

Natmed Ltd. has also earned several other awards through regional and international trade shows.

In concluding Dr. Segovia was asked - what/who is the driving force which has motivated you over the years and enabled the development and success of Natmed Ltd.? She simply replied, *"You must believe in whatever you do and you must have a passion for what you do in order to succeed – Naturopathic Medicine is my passion."*

The Ministry of Commerce would like to wish Natmed Ltd. continued success with this unique business venture.



Display of Natmed's products



(L-R) Mrs. Franka DeFreitas—Office Manager of Natmed Ltd; Dr. Gayle Devaux-Segovia and Lydia Dariah, Information Officer of the Ministry during interview at Natmed Ltd.

Notice of the 7th Annual Saint Lucia - Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs in partnership with the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) will this year host the 7th Annual Saint Lucia-Taiwan Partnership Trade Exhibition at Bay Walk Mall, 5th Floor, from November 7th to 9th, 2014.

The exhibition is expected to present to the general public and business community, a wide range of quality goods and services produced in Saint Lucia and Taiwan. Business organizations are also expected to explore avenues for trade and sources of raw materials during the exhibition.

To this end, the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs wishes to invite interested manufacturers and service providers interested in participating in the Trade Exhibition, to submit completed registration forms to the Ministry, on or before **October 10, 2014**.

For further information, please contact any of the following officers:

- Ms. Junia Emmanuel-Belizaire at 468 4213
- Ms. Natalia James at 468 4211
- Mrs. Michaeline St. Juste at 468 4249.



ARE THEY REALLY SUPER FRUITS ?

Don't take it from me, hear what health experts have to say about those super fruits

ORANGE: Sweetest Medicine

Taking 2-4 oranges a day may help keep colds away, lower cholesterol, prevent & dissolve kidney stones as well as lessen the risk of colon cancer.

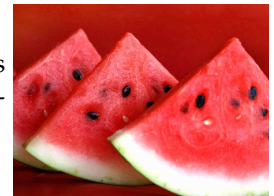


GUAVA & PAPAYA: Lots of Vitamin C

They are the clear winners for their high Vitamin C content. Papaya is rich in carotene and is good for your eyes while guava is rich in fibre which helps prevent constipation.

WATERMELON: Refreshing Thirst Quencher

Composed of 92% water, it is also packed with a giant dose of glutathione which helps boost our immune system. Vitamin C and potassium are other nutrients found in watermelon. Important to, is that they are a key source of lycopene, a cancer fighting oxidant.



STRAWBERRY: Is termed "Protective Fruit"

Strawberries have the highest total antioxidant power among major fruits & protect the body from cancer causing, blood vessels clogging free radicals.



KIWI: May be tiny but is mighty

This is a good source of potassium, magnesium, vitamin E & fibre. While the orange is rich in vitamin C. The vitamin C content in Kiwi is twice that of an orange.

APPLE: Popular saying - an apple a day keeps the doctor away

Although an apple has a low vitamin C content, it has antioxidants and flavonoids which enhances the activity of vitamin C thereby helping lower risks of stroke, heart attack and colon cancer.



SO WHAT DO YOU THINK – ARE THEY REALLY SUPER FRUITS?

By: Mrs. Ruthanne Carasco-Phillip
Business Development Officer
SEDU

Productivity Awareness Week

The Government of Saint Lucia in collaboration with the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council is organizing a “Productivity Awareness Week” during the period 13 – 18 October 2014.

This initiative forms part of the Government’s overall thrust to promote the awareness of productivity and to also showcase initiatives that are being undertaken by both the private and public sectors geared towards the promotion of productivity. Therefore, this exercise will assist in inculcating productivity-consciousness among the citizenry.

The theme for the week is: “Enhancing Productivity is our Responsibility”

The objectives for the week are:

- To foster an awareness/understanding of productivity at all levels of society
- To discuss measures that can be taken to enhance productivity in this current economic climate (both within the private and public sectors)
- To begin the process of inculcating a mindset change in our citizens

Prior to the commencement of the week of activities, an essay competition with productivity as its theme will be held throughout the secondary schools. The competition will target students from forms 3 – 5. There will also be a debating competition to be held amongst the various divisions of the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

THE WEEK OF EVENTS WILL INCLUDE:

October 13th 2014 - (Morning)

A prize giving ceremony to award the winners of the Essay and Debating Competitions. This ceremony will be held at the SALCC.

October 14 2014- (Morning)

The Official Opening of the Productivity Awareness Week by the Honourable Prime Minister and a Panel Discussion on Critical Factors for Improving Productivity. The results of the ongoing productivity study will also be released during the opening ceremony.

October 15, 2014

Public Sector Forum on Productivity

A full day session for the public sector where initiatives that promote productivity will be highlighted. The day will also include guest speakers on productivity and the results of the productivity assessment of the four pilot agencies will be released.

October 16 - 17, 2014

Private Sector Forums

Various forums on productivity will be held on the two days. There will be separate forums on each of the sectors that were part of the productivity assessment. These sectors include: manufacturing, wholesale and retail, construction, financial services, agriculture and tourism. A separate forum will also be held for the education sector.

The Private Sector Forums will focus the theme 'Improving Productivity in our current economic situation and encouraging the mindset change amongst the citizenry'.

The private sector forums will benefit from sharing of success stories as well as discussing the results of the productivity assessment relating to each sector. A guest speaker will also address each forum.

October 17th - (Evening)

Closing of the Week – Cocktail Evening – with international speakers. The theme for the evening: "Creating the Mindset Change Required in this Current Environment."

During the week, there will be the sharing of information on innovation and practical approaches to become a more productivity society. The week of activities will engage Business Leaders, Managers, Directors, Media Personnel, Policy Makers and Government Officials. The NCPC Productivity Awareness Week will ultimately work towards highlighting these findings and reinforcing the ideals of productivity that the Council has already began addressing.

Productivity Awareness Week 2014

October
13 - 18



Enhancing productivity is our responsibility

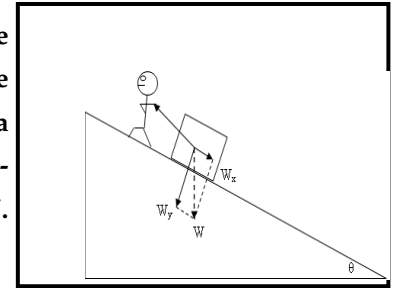
Submitted by the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council

Leveling the Playfield

The following article was prepared in observance of World Standards Day which is celebrated globally on October 14th, 2014. The theme for this year is “Standards Level the Playing Field.”

The first thought that came to mind, when I read the theme, “Standards level the playing field” was, is the playing field level or is it tilted to one side, making the climb steeper for some. More likely, it is for our micro and small businesses a struggle to get to the topmost edge. One of the definitions of “Level” that I encountered was that it is “having a flat and even surface without slopes or bumps”.

But is this *really* so?



While perusing a Harvard Business Review article by Ashwin Srinivasan and Bryan Kurey, entitled “Creating a Culture of Quality,” the experts and researchers stressed that “In most industries, quality has never mattered more”, and that “new technologies have empowered customers to seek out and compare an endless array of products from around the globe. As a result of these pressures, managers must find a new approach to quality—one that moves beyond the traditional total quality management tools of the past quarter century.” The Review indicated that “companies need to create a culture where employees “live” quality in all their actions—where they are passionate about quality as a personal value rather than simply obeying an edict from on high.” In this article a “true culture of quality” was defined as “an environment in which employees not only follow quality guidelines but also consistently see others taking quality-focused actions, hear others talking about quality, and feel quality all around them.” When will we get there, as even among the certified companies, is there truly a demonstrated Quality Culture beyond the “edict from on high”.

In our reality in this part of the world, there is much to be done, but all key players: (i) industrial and service sector partners – in the systems they adopt or adapt to, (ii) consumers – in the choices make, (iii) leaders – in the prioritizing of needs and strategizing for economic growth, including provision of resources with prudent fiscal management. The Harvard Review pinpointed four factors that drove quality as a cultural value: leadership emphasis, message credibility, peer involvement, and employee ownership of quality issues. Their research indicated that “companies could do much better with all four.” Can we effectively get leaders who will “walk the talk”, transforming the “Do as I Say” culture into a “Do as I Do” environment; messages that are consistent, easy to understand and truthful or credible; a system where peers hold one another accountable and not work by friendship and favoritism; and a work environment where workers are comfortable raising concerns about quality violations without fear of victimization. These are some of the harsh realities.

Are we truly ready to take this journey? This cannot be done only on the company level but also on the national and regional levels. This is worth exploring as we plunge forward towards developing and implementing a Regional Quality Infrastructure Policy, that should translate to National Q.I. Policies for CARIFORUM states. Let us then press forward to truly level the playing field.

By: Mrs. Roycelyn St. Hill-Howell - BDO
SEDU

Let's Meet the Staff - Mrs. Roycelyn St. Hill Howell



Mrs. Roycelyn J. St. Hill Howell holds a B.Sc. (Hons.) from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine and a M.Sc. from the University of Guelph, in Ontario in areas dearest to her i.e. science and research.

Later she was engaged in extensive training through the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS) in Management Systems, particularly that of Quality. However, it was during her studies in Agricultural Science that she experienced the perfect integration of science and business, and it was then that she began to understand that systems in science and business management, could come together. She later moved through the ranks of the SLBS from an Inspection Officer to Chief Operations Officer, and consequently her work experience and training drove her full-circle into the business arena, where she joined the Ministry of Commerce as a Business Development Officer within the Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU).

Her vision was to contribute to a relatively new area to most micro and small businesses in developing states, which is Management Systems; the range of which include Quality and Food Safety Management Systems, Risk and Environmental Management Systems and Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems to name a few. Strangely, some persons still question this synergy. As a Business Development Officer who is trained in Quality, Standards and Auditing, she views an organization much like an organism such as the human body, with organs and systems that integrate and contribute to the performance of the whole. She recognizes that a business is an integrated, collaboration of sub-systems i.e. Human Resource, Product Development, Process Improvement, which must respond to internal and external environmental conditions to generate revenue and provide highest quality products and services to thrive, whilst using the available resources. This is where working at the interface between science and business offers an opportunity for business development. She strongly believes that significant more needs to be done to strengthen product and market development through research and conformity assessment i.e. testing, inspection and certification.

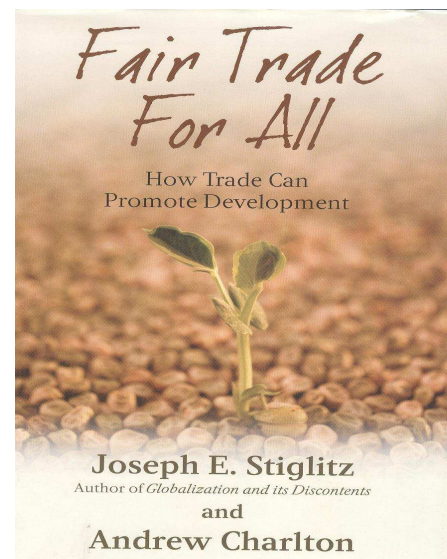
Despite all of this, Mrs. Howell maintains that at the core of her professional life, everything is only possible with God and the support of loved ones (i.e. family and friends). Therein lies the greatest treasures.

What's in CIC

In this era of globalization, a number of challenges have evolved especially for less developed countries in their participation in world trade.

FAIR TRADE FOR ALL—How Trade Can Promote Development by Joseph Stiglitz and co-author Andrew Charlton is a publication which seeks to address the challenges facing world trade by asking this question: How can the poorer countries of the world be helped to help themselves through freer, fairer trade? To answer this question, the authors provide very resourceful information on a new model for managing trading relationships between the poorest and richest countries which will open up markets, ensure trade promotes development and minimize the cost of adjustments.

You are kindly asked to visit CIC to read this insightful publication which can further enhance your knowledge on world trade.



Thought for Reflection



Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit. –Conrad Hilton-

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs welcomes your comments and suggestions towards improving this publication. The Ministry would also like to encourage all staff members to submit articles for the upcoming issues of *Commerce means Business*.

Kindly email the Commercial Information Centre at cic@govt.lc with your articles and feedback.

Thank you to all those who contributed towards this fifth issue of *Commerce means Business*.

The Ministry looks forward to your continued contributions.



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