

Earning work-based Qualifications Launch of NVQ Pilot Project

This year it will not be business as usual for some special Barbadian workers drawn from the three sectors of Tourism and Hospitality Services; Customer Service; and Information Technology. The group will be part of a pioneering team piloting National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) within the new certification system, being introduced to Barbadian workplaces by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC).

Expected to get underway in the first quarter of this year, the pilot project and the eventual introduction of the qualifications to all job areas represent exciting news for local workers. Like counterparts in such places as Jamaica, Britain, New Zealand, and Canada, they

will now have access to this internationally respected certification and training system which is convenient, efficient and very much in line with modern work trends and the demands of a competitive globalised economy.

Commentators agree that since the qualifications are generally delivered from the workplace, and are assessed and awarded based on competent job performance, one of the greatest strengths of the system is ease of access to all categories of workers. Under a mature programme, Barbadians can for example also expect NVQs in such areas as architecture, construction, management, etc. to be delivered at their places of employment.

Key to Workforce Development

Wendy McClean, Senior Technical Officer, TVETC believes that such competency-based training and certification is key to developing a workforce that is skilled, productive, flexible, and capable of producing and delivering world class products and services."

She explains: "The new qualification system demands a shift in focus from 'education' and 'experience' to competence. If jobs in Barbados are being performed by persons who are competent and motivated to be so, the potential benefits

are immense: increased productivity, less wastage, improved quality, reduced staff turnover, higher customer satisfaction and increased investment. NVQs are about developing a world class workforce in order to enhance the competitive position of the nation."

As many as 100 candidates

The pilot project, which will include approximately ten enterprises drawn from the retail, hotel, utility and training sectors, will be conducted in two phases with four enterprises participating in the initial launch. It is expected that as many as

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Wendy McClean (Centre) and participants L-R Sasha Harewood and Kelly-Ann Mayers at NVQ workshop.

TECVOOC is published twice a year by the TVET Council, a statutory corporation established in 1993 with a mandate to promote *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)* in order to enhance the competitive position of the nation. **TECVOOC** offers information on the TVET Council, its programmes and activities to stakeholders, who include employers, employees, training providers and government, and the wider population.

The TVET Council is tri-partite in nature and comprises:

Chairman:

Mr. Rudolph Gibbons,
BIMAP Representative

Members:

Mr. Wendel Cozier, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic Representative

Mrs. Wendy Griffith-Watson, Chief Education Officer - ex officio

Mr. Dennis Clarke, Conference of Trade Unions and Staff Associations Representative

Mr. Raphael Cave, Barbados Vocational Training Board - ex officio

Mr. Peter Miller, Barbados Manufacturers Association Representative

Mr. Edward Bushell, Barbados Employers Confederation Representative

Mrs. Susan Springer, Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association Representative

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Earning work-based Qualifications Launch of NVQ Pilot Project Continued

100 candidates will be eventually involved in the overall project. National Vocational Qualifications are internationally offered at five levels. The local pilot will offer qualifications in Customer Service - Level 2; Food and Drink Service - Levels 1&2; Reception - Levels 1&2; Bell Service - Level 1; and Using Information Technology - Level 1.

With objectives of testing the quality assurance model and checking that qualifications adequately meet the needs of industry, the pilot is an important step towards a successful wide scale delivery of National Vocational Qualifications here.

Story of Cooperation

The effort to introduce NVQs to Barbados is a story of co-operation among key sectors. It started back in 1999 with the establishment of Industry Lead Bodies - entities comprising workers, employers and trainers in the particular field - to develop the occupational standards upon which the qualifications are based.

Ms McClean notes that the process of ensuring a high quality end product has been thorough. "It is to the credit of the Lead Bodies and other stakeholders that they have remained committed to the programme over the years. I think this is because they have a vision of what these qualifications will mean for Barbados. And that is the competitive advantage of having a workforce certified as being competent to perform to internationally benchmarked standards."

Singing Praises

Many who have seen the system work in such places as Britain sing its praises and welcome its advent to Barbados. One such person is Pauline Mager, Head of Human Resources, Dutyfree Caribbean Holdings. A trained assessor, internal verifier and external verifier, who has worked within the British NVQ system, she thinks that introducing the programme here "is absolutely brilliant." She explains: "There is so much benefit. The strength of this certification system is that candidates must perform the role before they receive the qualification. It is not about theory - when an employer gets the worker, that worker is able to perform the task."

Kathy Greenidge, Managing Director, Computer Resource and Training Centre couldn't agree more. "I really think it is a process that we should embrace. "Many workers have a great deal of knowledge and ability but no certification to reflect it. For example, there are numerous able people with lots of knowledge in the field of Information Technology. NVQs will allow them to demonstrate this knowledge and be certified. Among other things this will give them greater mobility," Greenidge notes.

Not Only Attractive but Necessary

When National Vocational Qualifications become a reality in Barbados, it will be due to long term dedicated efforts by many, including employers and trade unions. According to Ms. McClean, these entities have made "a significant investment in the programme by releasing staff to contribute to the development and evaluation of the occupational standards and NVQs on a voluntary basis." She notes: "There is a general appreciation of the relationship between competence and competitiveness, and in an economy like Barbados' where our main resource is our people, a programme like the NVQ becomes not only attractive but necessary."

Training and the Challenge of Globalisation

by Mr. Trevor King, TVETC Executive Director

Adapted from an address delivered at a conference marking the 10th anniversary of the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Jamaica



Mr. Trevor King

CARICOM Governments over the past few years have been involved in negotiations at the regional, hemispheric and multilateral levels aimed at liberalizing trade in goods and services. The commitments made at these negotiations will present challenges to many regional sectors as they seek to capitalize on opportunities offered by new and enlarged markets and strive to meet increased foreign competition at home.

If we are to survive in this environment, we must become as good as or even better than our competitors. This can only be achieved by developing a high quality work-force, equipped with the necessary skills for today's marketplace. There are some key considerations which inform Government's policy in this area.

If we are to survive in this environment, we must become as good as or even better than our competitors.

These include the need for greater access to tertiary education; appropriate coordination of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at the tertiary level; increasing partnerships between training institutions and industry; and achieving parity of esteem between TVET and academic systems. Imperative to all this must be a clear understanding of the role of TVET in economic development; and the recognition of life-long learning as a given in our knowledge-based economies.

National System of Training

These issues have given rise to a number of objectives aimed at creating a

national system of training which facilitates a sustainable, appropriately trained, productive and flexible labour force that responds readily to trends in industry and to the forces of trade liberalisation and globalisation.

Objectives include: establishment of a coherent and flexible framework of competency-based qualifications in order to promote high standards of achievement throughout the TVET system; an increase in persons pursuing vocational education and training as a career; and the achievement of cost-effectiveness, efficiency and student satisfaction by reducing duplication of training activities. Creation of an environment conducive to life-long learning as well

as the fostering of a culture of entrepreneurship are integral to this effort.

The agency entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that these policy objectives are met is the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council.

Occupational Standards and NVQ Programme

The major thrust of the Council's work is its Occupational Standards and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Programme. While the TVET Council is still in the early stages of implementing this initiative, it is interesting to note how different developments at the national,

regional and international levels are providing a platform for national embracement of this workforce development initiative.

At the national level, competency-based training and certification seems to be one issue upon which employers and employees representatives agree readily. As one employer puts it, "Employers are looking for solid competency-based training to move from service awards to competency awards; and to move from favouritism to competency-based promotion."

Trade Unionists have also been giving strong support to the initiative. Speaking on the NVQ programme, Mr. Ulric Sealy, a Deputy General-Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union and Head of the Union's Labour College, notes: "Workers have to be part of the process of developing competency-based qualifications like the NVQ. Workers have to impress upon their Unions to put the matter of occupational standards and NVQs on the bargaining table; to get their managements on board with a view to embracing the programme and creating the internal environment to facilitate the acquisition of these programmes and these qualifications."

At the regional level, the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the CSME in Chapter 3, Article 35, states that "Member States shall establish or employ as the case may be, appropriate mechanisms to establish common standards to determine equivalency or accord

Training and the Challenge of Globalisation Continued

accreditation to diplomas, certificates and other evidence of qualifications secured by nationals of member States.” In addition, in 1998 the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) took the position that as a matter of principle, technical and vocational education and training and certification of skilled workers should be competency-based with reference to standards developed in collaboration with industry.

At the international level, the International Labour Office at its 92nd Session adopted Recommendation 195 which speaks among other things to the developing of a national qualifications framework.

Increasingly too, NVQs are being discussed as a mechanism for assisting employers and unions to agree on pay scales based on the levels of competence; and training and certification clauses are beginning to be deliberately included in collective agreements.

Driven by Competitiveness

It is becoming increasingly apparent, that investment in training, if not pursued for its own sake, will be driven by the two “Cs” of Competitiveness and Compliance. Within this context, Government, through the Ministry of Public Works is in the process of establishing a Building Authority to regulate the construction industry and to enforce a building code. It is expected that the Council will have an important role in this programme as Barbados and the region move towards a standardization of skills in this important area.

World Class Excellence

Yet another development which has implications for the TVET sector and occupational standards and NVQs in particular, is the National Initiative for



Major thrust in NVQs - Hospitality Lead Body meets.


Service Excellence (NISE) launched last year. NISE acknowledges that service delivery has to be elevated to a standard of world-class excellence in order to contribute to the continued and sustained growth of the Barbadian economy, within the context of an increasingly globalised environment. Since Standards, training, assessment and recognition of achievement are core aspects of this people-centered initiative there are opportunities for linkages with the work of the TVET Council particularly as it relates to the TVETC's Customer Service programme.

Recently, as well, there have been several important developments across the TVET landscape in programmes mounted at such institutions as the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Vocational Training Board and the Barbados Community College. Within this context, the innovative Open and Flexible Learning Centre established at the SJPP and the opportunities its distance education programmes have provided is worthy of special mention.

Impact on Universities

Also of interest are developments at the University level. Traditionally, in our region, universities have been viewed as

somewhat outside the technical and vocational education and training framework. However, as the global training revolution takes place and is debated, there has been significant impact on the university sector internationally. Pleasingly, the Cave Hill Campus, UWI is adopting strategies to strengthen its linkages with the business sector and to deliver specialised workforce training directly to enterprises. There has also been an increased delivery of modular, professional programmes as well as specialised Masters.

Indeed, across the globe, there are renewed - sometimes frenetic - efforts in the area of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. This emphasis underscores an acute awareness that the key to increased national competitiveness lies in labour force development. Within this context, activities within our own TVET environment will have considerable impact on our capacity to successfully negotiate the opportunities and challenges of the new global environment. 

The Future of TVET in Barbados - Part 2

TECVOC concludes the series with Mrs. Norma Holder, retired Deputy Council Chairman and former Principal of the Barbados Community College

After spending over three decades working in the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) field, Mrs. Norma Holder remains committed to its development despite her retirement this year. In fact, she sees the Council's future role as having even greater focus on the rationalisation of TVET, particularly in technical subject areas such as architectural drafting, etcetera.

She stressed that the TVET Council needed now to strengthen the co-ordination efforts that had already occurred between training institutions in Barbados.

"For example, if the polytechnic decides now that it is going to offer an associate degree in electronics, the TVET Council might be the one to say 'why are you offering the programme if there is one being offered at the community college'...in order to minimise unnecessary duplication and a waste of resources."

Maximising Opportunities

Mrs. Holder explained that in order for members of the society to maximise the opportunities and benefits available from the various training institutions, they had to understand how the various roles "fit together". In addition, people needed to know what jobs were available within the TVET field.

"As work changes, you find there is a need for a particular skill and then a job develops, and another job develops and so on. There are many opportunities that we don't even know about. There is a lot of public education that needs to be done about the skill sets that go towards the new or developing areas of employment."

The former Principal also noted that making education and training available at the highest levels for TVET subject areas would assist in the efforts to establish a favourable comparison with

academic subject areas, thereby ensuring recognition by all.

She called for people in the various occupation areas to take their professions forward by promoting what they do.

"Your technical/vocational person must be able to represent himself, he must be able to talk about his profession, his career competently and fluently.. You have to set up professional bodies (if necessary)...you have to take your vocation to the level of any other."

She argued that the discussion surrounding the importance of technical/vocational education had to be led by people in the field able to show "why their job is as important, why it is as satisfying" and to be able to take their profession forward.

Free Movement of Labour

Mrs. Holder also pointed out the need for continued emphasis on training since it was skilled persons who would be able to benefit the most from the free movement of labour within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

"It is the ones who are skilled who are going to be accepted within other countries. More and more we are looking to see what competencies workers have and we need to use some benchmark.

"This is why not only are we looking at National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) but we are also looking at Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) so that a skilled worker has some qualification which represents his competencies before he is hired. So we are moving towards that particular goal."

She re-emphasised that Barbados and the rest of the region were at the stage where qualifications, whether NVQs not, will have to be based on competencies



Mrs. Norma Holder

which reflect the practical application of skills and knowledge.


"Qualifications in some cases must include specific competencies which are related to the function ...or area of work...of the job that you are going to use those qualifications to do. Qualifications are fine but it is how you then extend them into the qualifications required for the performance of a particular job."

Mrs. Holder stressed that standards-based or work competency-based qualifications must get to the stage where they complement academic qualifications.

CSME

Referring to the CSME, she noted that the regional accreditation mechanism was put forward a long time ago because it was recognised that if people were going to be moving around the region, their skills and competencies had to be accepted by somebody.

"Whether it be the NVQ or the regional accreditation mechanism, whatever you call it, is going to be the thing which helps us to monitor standards and make sure there is a certain minimum standard...minimum competency, or minimum best practice, throughout the region for occupations."

Though retired Mrs. Holder is still actively involved in the development of education in the region. She is at present spearheading in Barbados the work of the Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN), which promotes distance education through the establishment of a virtual learning environment via regional tertiary institutions. 

TVET Council Significant Step

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC) has a pivotal role to play “by increasing access to education and training for all persons in the world of work.”

This view was put forward by Mrs. Norma Holder, former Deputy Chairman and retired Principal of the Barbados Community College as she delivered a lecture to mark the Barbados Workers' Union Labour College 30th anniversary.

Arguing that establishing the Council was “one of the most significant steps in human resource development in Barbados,” she believed that TVETC's

work in introducing National Vocational Qualifications, (NVQs) was extremely important. Holder said that through this programme the Council hopes to help cultivate the competencies i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes which are required to make Barbados competitive in the global economy.

Addressing the topic *Developing the Human Resource for the Challenges of Globalization*, she noted that employers are looking for a combination of specific competencies, which included for example the skills and knowledge required of engineers, doctors, secretaries, accountants, chefs,

carpenters etc. as well as soft skills, such as the ability to communicate, solve problems, identify with the place of work and possess a good work ethic.

“It is clear then that human resource has many facets,” Mrs Holder told her audience, “These include education, and training, institutional development, capacity building, skills development and character building.” She stressed that it also addressed such areas as “development needs at various levels of the economy - global, regional national, sectoral, organisational and of course at the level of the individual.”

Busy Schedule of Meetings

As 2004 drew to a close, officers of the Technical Vocational and Education Training Council (TVET) continued a busy round of meetings with local establishments. The fora served to brief enterprises and agencies on the work of the Council with special emphasis on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and the pilot project to be conducted in 2005.

Within this context, several Barbados Shipping and Trading staffers from the area of human resources were given insight

into The Council's programmes during a lively exchange held at the company's corporate headquarters at Warrens.

In a presentation which outlined TVETC's mandate and work, Mr. Andrew Skeete, Technical Officer, noted the positive impacts which National Vocational Qualifications will have on training and work force performance. He stressed the benefits of NVQs not only as a certification system but as a human resource development tool and a quality assurance mechanism.



From left, TVET staffers, Wendy McClean, Andrew Skeete, Geoffrey Yearwood and Barbados Shipping and Trading Vice-President Human Resource Group Everton Browne during the meeting.

BS&T Meeting.

Key Persons Trained

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council continued to lay the groundwork for introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) through a training programme conducted by Scottish Qualifications Authority Consultant, Mr. Ian Loudon.

The training, held October 13 to November 5, 2004 involved over 40 participants, who will be involved in delivery of the work-based qualifications. These include Council staffers, centre coordinators, assessors, and internal and external verifiers. The workshop gave these key persons a better understanding of their individual roles within the certification system and was therefore an important input towards the efficient execution of the pilot project.

The training largely examined systems and procedures for implementing NVQs as well as assessment and verification procedures within the context of quality assurance.

Special Relevance

Mr. Loudon, said he was extremely impressed with the high levels of participation within the training workshops. He felt that this augured well for a successful implementation of the pilot project and subsequent wide-scale introduction of NVQs.

Addressing the benefits of National Vocational Qualifications, he said that they were applicable to all members of the workforce desirous of attaining competence-based certification, but had special relevance for categories of workers who for "Whatever reason have never had the opportunity to gain certification in their particular field. - people who have been doing hard jobs physically and mentally but whose skill and contribution have not been awarded with traditional certification."


Mr. Loudon said that when the system is fully implemented, Barbados "Will end up with a workforce that is more motivated...



Mr. Ian Loudon

a workforce that has greater self esteem."

He explained that with National Vocational Qualifications, it was not a case of simply certifying skills. "If persons have the skills, there may be no training involved at all. However, a candidate may well have skills but if there are gaps in his/her training and knowledge, then programmes will be mounted for them to come up to the required standards."

The NVQs therefore help workers to develop skills and knowledge which are in demand and are transferable across occupational areas; and to acquire certification which indicates that they can perform to national standards. 



Ian Loudon (centre) assists two participants during the workshop



Training for assessors, internal and external verifiers

Wine Skills Boosted



Michael Palij, makes a point to participants in the programme.



Participants take their turn at tasting.



Michael Palij goes through the paces

Twenty-five staffers from a dozen top local hotels have significantly improved their knowledge in the area of wines and spirits through a TVET Council's Employment and Training Fund (ETF) supported programme held November 2004.

The project, which was mounted by the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association and the wine division of R.L. Seale and Company Limited, was 75 % funded by the Council. Michael Palij, a London expert, who is one of

only 257 Masters of Wine in the world, delivered the training.

Participants gained their foundation certificates in the first part of a four-phase programme which will ultimately lead to a diploma from the prestigious Wine and Spirit Education Trust, (WSET) the London-based organisation whose certification is recognized worldwide.

Sue Springer, Executive Vice-president of the BHTA, said that the purpose of the specialised training was to create a "solid core" of qualified people throughout the hospitality industry who know the nature of wine and the countries in which it is produced as well as how to store and save it.


"Our hotels and restaurants have needed to develop this kind of expertise for sometime," she said. "A lot of people who come to stay in Barbados are affluent and sophisticated enough to go to a restaurant and order a bottle of wine for \$400, \$500, or even \$1,000. Our wine stewards, waiters and waitresses must be knowledgeable enough to recommend those wines and to advise customers in making the decision."

The BHTA Executive Vice-president said that much credit must be given to the members of R.L. Seale wine division who conceived the idea and made the

arrangements with the WSET and Master of Wine Michael Palij.

Nic Teller of R.L. Seale's wine division said his company sees the training as a value added service to its clients. "We supply fine wines to many of the best restaurants and hotels on the island and we feel we have a responsibility to have them sell and serve those wines in as professional a manner as possible," he stated.

Teller in turn praised TVET Council for so willingly providing the funding for the training. "This is an excellent example where the private sector identifies a pressing need for skills development and government keeps its commitment helping to pay for it." He noted, "Our goal is to have all four stages of training in operation."

Geoffrey Yearwood, ETF Manager said that the council was happy to become involved when the calibre of training and certification became clear. "We are a government agency that is here to help fund the training of Barbadians in skills needed by our major industries and we are particularly pleased to participate when that training is helping nationals to achieve international standards," he said. "I would encourage other businesses, including manufacturers, to take advantage of the support we offer." 

Corporate Training and Development in Barbados

by Calvin Husbands,
Barbados National Productivity Council

The study, *Training and Development in Barbados 2000*, sampled 142 organisations as a means of creating a comprehensive appreciation of trends in the training policies and practices amongst Barbadian institutions. Undertaken by personnel from the Centre for Labour Market Studies of the University of Leicester on behalf of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council of Barbados, the survey alluded to several critical training issues.

Existence of a corporate training budget can be deemed a tangible indicator of an organisation's commitment to staff-related training and development initiatives. Survey results showed that 57.7% of the respondents allocated a portion of their budget to training and only half of that 57.7% had any intention of increasing it in the near future. However, within the subset of larger organisations with more than 100 employees, there was an 81% existence of training and development programmes.

Such statistics seem to suggest that there is considerable need for further focus on the improvement of employees - a fundamental for institutional strengthening and competitiveness, particularly within smaller business entities.

Ironically, even though only 57.7% of the respondents assigned a portion of their budgets to training and development, approximately 80% of the said respondents held the belief that staff members (managerial and non-managerial) were less likely to leave an organisation that provided training opportunities.

Benefits Jeopardised

According to the research, there are a number of micro-level benefits that are jeopardised by not adequately harnessing training efforts. The main ones include: promotion of employee skills development; improvement of employee

health and safety conditions; development of employee commitment to business objectives; recruitment of new employee talent; attainment of quality standards; and promotion of multi-skilling capabilities.

If a more strategic view of training is adopted spin-offs include: more effective use of staff resources; increased organisational development; a better rate of return on investment; improved market share; smoother implementation of new technology; increased attainment of quality standards; and greater product innovation and development.

"If any of us continues to do what we do the same way, within five years most of us and our organisations will become obsolete."

The developers of the study poignantly assert: "There are a small number of organisations which are at the leading edge when it comes to the use of training within the organisation. These are comparable to the best in other countries. However, there is also a large number which are following more traditional reactive approaches to training delivery."

A Drop in the Bucket

The financial cost attributable to a failure to recognise the import of training and development is illustrated in Donald E. Wetmore's observation: "When someone says they cannot afford to take three days out of their next week for training, I know they are looking at training as an "expense", and not as an "investment". Three days out of five is 60% of the week and that would be a big expense. But three days out of 365 is a drop in the bucket and if that investment provides just one idea that saves one hour per day, every day, the payback on the investment of three days is over 250 hours just in the next year!"

He further argues, "If any of us continues to do what we do the same way, within five years most of us and our organisations will become obsolete. Why? Because our competitors are helping their people to become more effective through training. If we look closely at companies that are doing well in the long run, they almost always have in place a well thought out and executed training programme




Mr. Calvin Husbands

for their people. They understand that the price for not training is the real expense of training."

An inadequate skills base can provoke poor performance, inefficient utilisation of time and money, inadequate customer satisfaction, lower quality of work life and ultimately diminished organisational profitability. Within an increasingly competitive environment, the enterprise that experiences too much of the preceding could be unable to sustain itself and the jobs of all of its employees.

A training and development programme should be based on: ascertaining the strategic and operational improvements required by the organization; setting performance objectives for the improvement programme; determining what mechanisms can best satisfy objectives; implementing the selected approach; and evaluating the impact of the intervention. Mentorship Circle

In a pleasing development on the local scene, which impacts on our concept and practice of training and development, the Human Resource Management Association of Barbados (HRMAB) is creating a **Mentorship Circle** programme. The project's mandate is poignantly communicated in the slogan - "No job is permanent, your career is permanent". The Mentorship Circle aims to provide resources that will, among other things, ensure the effective induction of new members into the profession; guide, coach and counsel less experienced members; encourage career advancement; facilitate knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer; stimulate and foster innovation amongst members; and provide support for existing managers and other learners in the association.

However, in order for any institutional improvement programme to be effective, it must gain the support and commitment of strategic management. If the assertion that people are our greatest resource is to be more than rhetoric, we must continuously improve our own capacity and be supportive of the growth and development of those persons whom we are charged with supervising or managing. 

Shaping Standards

by Anita DaCosta

Sitting on the Customer Service Lead body over the last several years has been a wonderful experience as members worked together to shape standards and design National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which will have an important role in workforce competitiveness in Barbados. The task is a challenging one, in as much as it sets guidelines and standards for individuals aspiring to excel in the field of customer service, but it is ultimately highly rewarding since these guidelines are realistic and attainable and can fundamentally impact on national development.

An important part of the Lead Body experience has been operating within the tripartite environment where the perspectives of employers, workers representatives and trainer providers have been brought to bear on the process. The TVET Council must be highly complimented for the calibre of members chosen, all of whom have a keen interest in taking customer service in the region to a high level of excellence.

Our group includes representatives from the country's main productive sectors such as tourism, retail, utilities, etc. The expertise of the individuals representing each market segment made our sessions very productive as we defined the desired level of proficiency required to consistently provide a high standard of customer service.

Wide Range of Sectors

This diversity of interest will assure a full and broad-based set of qualifications appropriate to the wide range of sectors and areas to which customer service is applicable and essential to our economy.

Establishing the lead bodies and drawing from practitioners in the field is in keeping with the whole notion of National Vocational Qualifications being a practical work-based certification system. Lead body members have actually lived the process and know what is required to excel in customer satisfaction.

NVQs will have positive Impact


The introduction of these qualifications to Barbados and indeed across the region will have a very positive impact. As candidates undertake the NVQ process of being assessed based on actual performance of various tasks, they will better realise what is needed to deliver the level of customer service people expect. Candidates will also at the same time be operating to the occupational standards embodied in the NVQ programme which is based on best industry practice.

Given this approach to certification, the level of our service delivery would then be equal to any other global society involved in similar enterprise. When we see someone holding a National Vocational Qualification we can be assured that they would have undergone the practical work and have the underpinning theoretical knowledge to make them a flexible and competent worker. In this way the qualification

system represents a powerful recruitment tool since employers will know the performance level of the individual being hired.

National Service Initiative

Within this context, the National Initiative on Service Excellence (NISE) is a very important step for Barbados at this time. It will definitely go hand in hand with what is being done in The TVET Council and within the lead body related to this sector. Customer Service is a critical consideration which impacts at every level of an enterprise in relation to both the internal and external customer. Emphasis in this area is therefore a significant step which will have positive results across the range of productive sectors.

As the TVET Council moves to deliver NVQs to Barbados, we will now be walking the walk and talking the talk. National Vocational Qualifications are a statement on what is considered globally acceptable in a particular field I am very optimistic that ours will be a successful implementation and that our workers will reach the required levels of excellence to consistently deliver second- to- none customer satisfaction. 


Progress Achieved in 2004

Chairman of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC), Mr. Rudolph Gibbons has expressed satisfaction that the organisation has achieved a substantial part of its 2004 work programme.

Mr. Gibbons made the comment as he addressed the Council's annual Christmas luncheon at Colony Club Hotel on December 10.

He said that work in the development and delivery of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) to Barbados was well underway with staffers and key collaborators working hard during the year to set the ground work in place. The Chairman noted that challenges in the new year included launch of the pilot project for delivery of the first set of NVQs

in the areas of Tourism and Hospitality Services; Customer Service; and Information Technology, as well as establishment of an awarding body.

Mr. Gibbons also expressed satisfaction that the work of TVET Council was beginning to be better known in the community as the public relations and promotional work gathered momentum. He hoped that the good work in all areas would continue into 2005 as the organisation sought to further fulfil its mandate in securing a competent Barbadian workforce. 



Mr. Rudolph Gibbons.

UPCOMING EVENTS

First Quarter 2005-01-24

Launch of NVQ pilot Project.

Commencement of the Scottish Quality Authority (SQA) consultancy on designing of certification system.

OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS ORDER FORM

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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CUSTOMER SERVICE (CS0102)

Delivering Customer Service: Levels 1 & 2

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Customer Service Management: Levels 4 & 5

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Printed version \$ 50.00

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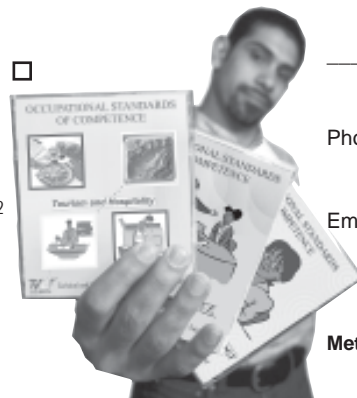
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Holder Lauded

Amidst best wishes and heartfelt thanks for a job well done, recently retired Deputy Chairman of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC), Mrs. Norma Holder, was highly commended for her outstanding contribution to the agency. The accolades were given during the Council's annual Christmas luncheon.

Formally thanking Mrs Holder for her contribution were Mr. Rudolph Gibbons, Council Chairman; Mr. Trevor King, Executive Director; Mr. Ulric Sealy, Deputy

General Secretary of the Barbados Workers Union, Mr. Harry Husbands, Executive Director of the Barbados Employers Confederation and Mr. Dennis Clarke, Deputy General Secretary, National Union of Public Workers.

In response, Mrs Holder expressed thanks for the kind sentiments noting that the early years were challenging ones but that good progress had been made over the years. She praised the Council for its excellent and urged staffers to continue to perform at a high level. 🇧🇧



Norma Holder was presented with a farewell gift by Rudolph Gibbons on behalf of the TVET Council.



Samantha Jones, Technical Officer Communications was in for warm congratulations on a new addition to her family - bouncing baby boy Jared. During the Xmas luncheon proud mum Samantha (left) was presented with a gift from colleague Gloria Jones on behalf of the Council.



TVET Council staffers make a pretty picture at Xmas luncheon.

The Executive Director

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