

INSIDE TVET



STAFF OF the Barbados Public Workers' Cooperative Credit Union Limited attending customer service training with Nexlevel consultants earlier this year. (GP)

Customer service training with a difference

THE Barbados Public Workers' Cooperative Credit Union Limited (BPWCCUL) earlier this year undertook customer service training for its staff with the assistance of training consultants Nexlevel Information Services Inc. which provided the training for the 136 employees that included managers, supervisors and general staff. The cost of the training workshop was subsidized by the Employment and Training Fund (ETF).

The Human Resource Development Officer Patricia Archer disclosed that the in-company training workshops were designed to meet the specific needs of the organization based on the occupational standards which make up the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) in Customer Service Level 2.

"During the training we used role play to get the staff accustomed to using the (participatory) approach to resolve the identified customer service problems but for the assessment we developed scenarios that were designed according to the departmental problems. The scenarios were designed to suit the situations that arise in the perspective departments," Archer explained.

The BPWCCUL utilised the services of actor/simulator Angelo Lascelles of Rhema Acts, which provides actors for different occasions to make the scenarios more realistic.

"The scenarios are videotaped and then assessed through peer assessment and training facilitator assessment. Peer assessment sharpens reflection on these types of behaviours and keeps the staff engaged during the training scenarios by helping them to think of ways to resolve customer service issues during the training," she noted.

FIFTEEN MEMBERS of the Sandy Lane Hotel's Food and Beverage staff have successfully earned internationally recognised certification following wine training.

Two persons achieved the Level 2 Intermediate Certificate in Wines and Spirits and 13 persons achieved the Level 1 Foundation Certificate in Wines, all under the tutelage of Master of Wine, Michael Palij. A Master of Wine (MW) is someone who has demonstrated through rigorous examination, a thorough knowledge of all aspects of wine and actively encourages others in the pursuit of knowledge among other areas.

There are currently 299 Masters of Wine, based in 23 different countries.

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust, often referred to as WSET, is a British organisation which serves as an Awarding Body for qualifications in the field of wine and spirits. WSET, established in 1969, is headquartered in London and is regarded as the world's leading provider of wine education.

The WSET exists to promote, provide and develop high quality education and training in wines, spirits and other alcoholic beverages for those already in or intending to join the trade, and enthusiastic consumers throughout the world.

WSET operates in 55 countries around the world and about 30 000 people do wine training courses and examinations annually.

In an interview with **INSIDE TVET**, Palij explained that WSET exams contribute to better service by the food and beverage staff including the waiters/waitresses, the managers and the sommeliers. "If guests are spending £500 or the equivalent, they have certain expectations about the level of service. They expect a high level service (and) Barbados is a high-end destination."

He continued: "There is a need first to have clearly defined career paths and to identify the skills required in the various career paths such as selling, wine service, or sommelier. That way, individuals are able to see the opportunities for personal development and career advancement."

Palij stressed that if Barbados wanted to advance its tourism and hospitality product it could do so in part by identifying the human resource development opportunities in the wine and spirits sub-sector.

Head sommelier with Sandy Lane Shawn Desrivieres, who assisted the candidates with their preparation and has himself previously completed the foundation and intermediate

The TVET Council in action

THE TVET COUNCIL (TVETC) continues to be steadily engaged in promoting the mandate of competence-based training, assessment and certification both at the level of corporate or industry-based training and the vocational education and training system.

TVETC is a statutory organisation dedicated to improving the competitive position of Barbados through workforce development. The Council has adopted the Competence-based Education and Training (CBET) model for vocational training that has been endorsed by the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) for use in all CARICOM member states since 2002.

TVET Council is mandated to plan, coordinate and establish occupational standards and qualifications for the discipline of technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

The TVET Council also manages an Employment and Training Fund (ETF) which promotes workforce training by providing grants to applicants who comprise employers, registered training institutions and employer/employee associations that have met specified criteria.

Key criteria include up-to-date National Insurance (NIS) contributions and training that is conducted according to a competence-based format utilizing occupational standards.

Sandy Lane staff wine certified



MASTER OF WINE Michael Palij explaining the importance of the WSET qualification. (GP)

qualifications, recommended the WSET training for anyone interested in the area. He noted that such training and certification increased an individual's knowledge and skills as well as confidence to speak with and guide the high-end guests like those who patronised Sandy Lane.



MICHAEL HOMER assisting one of his Quick Books students. (GP)

Making Barbados' workforce ICT ready

"THERE is a lot of training to be done still; in particular a lot of women are now interested in areas such as Quick Books, A+, Network+ and SQL Server. These are computer courses which equip trainees with the skills and knowledge to use the software properly and also provides opportunity for certification that is internationally recognized," says Sarah Playter, managing director of Computer Knowledge Centre.

Referring to the Quick Books course, which is one that has been funded by the TVET Council through the Employment and Training Fund (ETF), she elaborated: "Quick Books certification enables you to work in data entry or clerical positions in companies and that makes you more marketable because so many companies are using Quick Books."

Referring to some of the more technical Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) courses, Playter added: "Some of my graduates use the opportunity to go into business for themselves in areas such as computer repair and building computers."

"The women in particular seem to appreciate the chance to be self-employed and work from home which is provided through training in an area such as Basic IT Technician, a qualification awarded by United States-based awarding body CompTIA."