



Report of
Caribbean Tourism Human Resources
Think-Tank

**“Developing a World Class
Tourism Workforce”**

5-6 June 2008

Accra Beach Hotel & Resort

Barbados



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1. Terms of Reference

1.1 Workshop Objectives

The workshop, which is expected to be the first in a series of two, will provide the platform for the region to:

- i. Explore means of formulating and implementing strategies for identifying and recruiting the best people who can add value to the tourism business.
- ii. Explore means of formulating and implementing strategies on sourcing and utilizing the best methodologies and practices in educating and training the tourism workforce to deliver world class services.
- iii. Share and learn from good practices at national, regional and international levels.
- iv. Develop a Strategy Document based on workshop deliberations. The Strategy Document will identify actions to address urgent issues and challenges with respect to building a world class tourism workforce. The Strategy Document will be shared as widely as possible across the region.
- v. Define the role CTO and other key stakeholder groups can play in advancing the goal of the Think Tank.

1.2 Workshop Areas

- i. The human resources component of tourism competitiveness and how this is affecting the region.
- ii. Human resources challenges faced by the region.
- iii. Skill demand patterns in the region.
- iv. Recruitment challenges faced by the region.
- v. Training needs patterns in the region.
- vi. Effective modes of training delivery.
- vii. Role of policy makers, public and private sector organizations, and regional organizations in improving the quality of human resources.
- viii. Use of visitor/customer feedback in improving service delivery.
- ix. Best practices in tourism human resources development.

2. Definition of terms

There was unanimous agreement that several key terms needed to be clarified and defined accurately to enable the members to be clear about the remit and scope of the think tank. These terms include “world class”, tourism workforce, and the tourism industry.

World class

There was considerable debate about the term “world class” and how it might be defined in a meaningful way with regard to the Caribbean tourism workforce. It was proposed that measures relating to the contribution of people to behavioural (repeat custom) and emotional loyalty (word of mouth) of tourists should be developed. “World class” could then be defined in terms of these measures.

Workforce

It is important to recognize the range of people that are involved in delivering the tourism experience. In addition to those directly involved in the tourism industry (workers in hotels, attractions etc.), there are also those who work in related industries such as retail and transport. For an HR strategy for tourism to be meaningful all these categories of workers must be considered.

Tourism industry

The UN World Tourism Organization defines tourism as “the activities and persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than twelve consecutive months for leisure, business and other purposes.” Tourism activities and services include: Accommodation; Food and Beverage; Adventure Tourism, Transportation, Travel Trade, Travel Services, Events and Conferences and Attractions.

3. Identification of Key Themes

During the activities on the second day of the workshop, organised by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Think Tank discussions focused on identifying the key themes involved in “Developing A World Class Tourism Workforce in the Caribbean”.

The result of this discussion was the identification of six key themes as follows:

- Re-define and enhance the profile of tourism and hospitality
- Creation of a new enabling environment
- Continuous education, training and development
- Recruitment, retention and recognition
- Leadership
- Feedback and communication (later changed to “Research”)

These six key themes were then discussed and explored in terms of their dimensions, implications and relationships. The results of these discussions are shown in section 4 of this report. As part of this process the final theme, feedback and communication, was redefined as research. Technology and its usage was seen as a cross cutting area in all six key themes identified.

The final stage of the Think Tank was to identify aims and objectives for each of the six key areas. These aims and objectives would then be used to form the basis of the human resource strategy for tourism in the Caribbean. The latter discussions were captured in their entirety on a DVD, which can be viewed at CTO’s corporate website: www.onecaribbean.org.

See Appendix 1 for the Programme Outline.

4. Six Key Themes

4.1 Re-define and enhance the profile of tourism & hospitality

Paradigm shift

- From lengthy job profiles to focusing more on relevant training/experience and more result oriented objectives
- Perception of the industry as first choice career option
- Tourism is not just about “accommodation” but a means towards achieving “national development priorities”
- From servitude to hospitality/generosity/host
- Transcending sectors and all-inclusive (banking, insurance, agriculture, construction)
- Structured program for training – interns

Expectations

- Front line employees are the face of the industry (immigration, customs, hotel receptionists)
- The linkages between the various sub sectors to ensure the visitor experience is complete
- The commitment from the national level
- Tourism to be profiled as a rewarding career option
- Expect the revolutionary change that will excite individuals to participate

Attracting the brightest and best

- Raise the profile so that the jobs in the industry are seen as prestigious
- Financial rewards
- Hiring experienced, trained communications specialists
- Promote the industry as challenging, inspiring and creative
- Promote entrepreneurial opportunities within the events and leisure sector

Public Awareness/formal education

- Undertake research to inform decision making
- Self assessment of the persons in management in the industry
- Undertake programs which will promote the sustainability of the industry
- Develop strategies to inform the public of the linkages between the tourism industry and other ancillary services

Public Relations/Marketing

- Creative ways of disseminating information

4.2 Creation of a new enabling environment

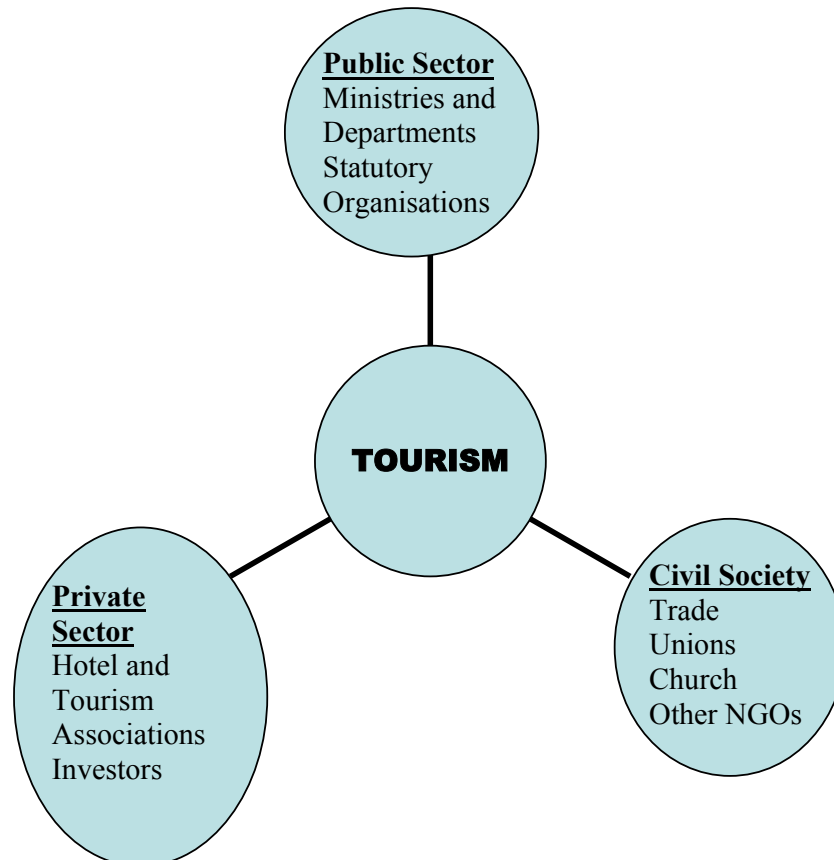
Problem

- Although tourism is the live wire of many Caribbean economies, it is still not contributing as much as it could to GDP
- There is a poor public image of tourism
- There is a negative response to tourism being a career of choice
- Insufficient resources are assigned to tourism
- Customer satisfaction is below what it needs to be
- There is a disconnect between internal and external customer satisfaction

Goal

- To correct the deficiencies outlined above with a view to:
 - wealth creation for all stakeholders
 - sustainable economic development for all countries

Stakeholders



The specified (bulleted) areas of this agenda items are best captured by examining the respective role of each stakeholder grouping.

Role of Public Sector

- To establish a policy (vision) for tourism
- Planning - Government needs to establish a master plan/a comprehensive tourism strategy for this most vital sector
- Creation of appropriate institutional frameworks and infrastructural developments (e.g. communication and transportation)
- Updating and enacting enabling legislation, e.g. managed migration; incentives for non-repatriation of profits
- Job creation

Role of Private Sector

- The private sector’s overarching responsibility is to ensure corporate social responsibility. This can be achieved in the following ways:
 - Lobby government beyond self-interests (such as incentives) for standards of business that bring simultaneous economic, social and environmental benefits
 - Investment
 - Use of innovative approaches and the continuing development and application of best practice. This involves research and the most efficient application of systems and technologies
 - Related to the above is the need to coordinate business into the tourism value chain
 - Better utilising the media for informational and promotional purposes.

Role of Civil Society

- Civil society has a major responsibility for ensuring that changes and strategies do not compromise social, cultural and morale values. They should:
 - Promote positive labour-management relationships
 - Lobby government and the private sector to adhere to appropriate legislation
 - Partner to improve the product at all levels of strategy implementation

Shared Responsibility

- Ownership - each partner should see the product and service as theirs
- Job Creation - all partners should ensure that the search for best talent does not compromise the local labour market situation (e.g. need for skills transfer to improve local employability)
- Trace and implement best practices (tailoring these to the local situation wherever necessary)
- Engaging to establish standards for the tourism product

- Development of a culture of excellence. Ethics and values (e.g. self discipline and excellence as an attitude) must be taught and encouraged by all pillars of society (family, school, church). Attitudes are particularly important for an industry whose success depends equally on both behavioural values and skills requirements.
- Appropriate leadership, management structures and styles at all levels of the stakeholder partnership that is committed to the achievement of the overall objective.
- Service excellence training focussing on both the internal and external customers.
- Partners must regroup as the need arises to ensure that plan implementation is responsive to changes in the dynamic environment of tourism.

4.3 Continuous education, training and development

- Certification & Credentialing
 - Incorporate existing certification programs such as the CVQ from the CANTA)
 - CTO to coordinate with CANTA to ensure that the interest of the industry is represented in the certification program
 - Explore incorporating CVQ component in certain CXC courses
- Coaching and mentoring
- Standards (academic and performance)
 - include existing tertiary level institutions in the region such as UWI and University of Belize.
 - Need to introduce the subject of tourism from upper primary school level
- Technology
 - Driving force in industry; it has implications for curricula and careers
 - E.g. Reinvention of travel agents roles
 - Borderless learning
 - Technology as a facilitative process
- Apprenticeship
 - Industry & education links
 - Partnerships with various sectors of the industry and educational institutions
 - Research to find out what the industry requires
 - Partnerships between hotel schools and international hotels and Universities
- Educating the educators
 - School tours in hospitality and tourism institutions
 - Primary and secondary school tourism trained teachers
 - Subject area must be relevant
- World class skills transfer (visas)
 - Transference of skills to local staff and students of hospitality institutes
- Relevance of curricula
 - Research to involve the industry
 - Conduct regular training needs assessment – nationally and communicate results appropriately
 - Collaboration between Ministries of Education and tourism as is model in Guadeloupe
- HR paradigm shift
 - Leaders should do a self assessment
 - Research

4.4 Recruitment, retention and recognition

Right Fit

- Methodology of selection process needs review:
 - Psychometric
 - Combination of psychometric and traditional approaches
 - Team approach to interviewing to be used
 - Job Analysis/Job Specifications are critical before interviewing process begins
 - Apprenticeship and Internship could be used as an assessment tool to determine whether to recruit the individual or not
 - Trainee Management orientation programmes can be used as well

Ownership/Retention

- Buy in of ideas by CEOs
- Check management practices – some management practices cause people to leave
- Find ways to build loyalty and commitment

Compensation/Recognition

- Build sustainable initiatives to recognize at all levels
- Management/leadership need to “KNOW” their employees
- Need creative compensation/recognition programmes (must consider staffing demographics)
- Rebranding of the industry as an employer of choice (desperation versus inspiration and aspiration)
- H.R. should consider using same type of P.R./Marketing techniques to underscore and support recruitment efforts
- Adopt/Customize best practices
- Continuously review data to introduce and modify salary structure
- Celebrate achievement – kill underperformance

Technology

- Embrace technology in recruitment efforts through:
 - Cyber recruitment
 - Reference Check
 - Build talent pool prospects
 - Social networking sites

Taxonomy of Job Titles

- Find creative ways to promote job specialty and talent; create a recognition and salary structure to support
- Kill the desire and practice to promote persons just to gain higher remuneration or beyond their “capacity to perform”

4.5 Leadership

The group thought that it was essential to define the term “Leadership”.

Definition:

A leader is one who influences, guides, listens and charts the direction of an organisation/sector to achieve its goals. (World class tourism workforce)

What are the imperatives for effective leadership?

A Paradigm Shift

This involves shifting from traditional approaches to leadership. Less top down communication and authority and greater involvement are required. It is therefore important to embrace the strengths of others.

There needs to be a shift in political leadership approaches which are reflected in the policies created to govern the sector, and in the resources allocated to the development of human resources in the tourism sector.

The regional tourism community, eg. The Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) should influence policy makers in matters relating to tourism. (Public and private regional organisations)

Leaders should demonstrate greater conceptual skills in terms of their vision, creativity and innovation.

Leaders should show strong technical and human skills. The emphasis has been on the former, but the ability to motivate people is equally important. Leaders need to understand the value of the human resource.

Countries within the Caribbean Community should collaborate more closely to solve problems, many of which are often similar. (Financial impact on regional economies will have to drive change if necessary).

Productivity and Performance Measurements and Targets

Adopt best practices and learn from one another.

Information relating to productivity and performance should be shared at industry, national and global levels.

Strategy

The organisation’s strategy should be arrived at through collective agreement, and should provide vision and direction. This should be at the micro and national levels.

Staff (management and line staff) should be involved in the creation of the strategy.

Culture of Excellence

There is a need to set the standards (industry wide and at the organisational level)

Reward and recognition at all levels are essential.

Celebrating excellence should be a feature of the organisation.

Embrace talent, creativity and innovation.

Technology

Throughout the organisation, technology should be used creatively and efficiently to maximise the use of time.

Research capacity and its applications should be strengthened.

Video-conferencing should be used to reduce costs wherever possible.

E-learning for enhanced performance should be encouraged.

Champions

Leaders should provide inspirational leadership.

Demonstrate dedication and commitment to achieve goals and objectives.

Have passion.

Making Jobs Aspirational and Challenging

Right fit. Employees should be suited to the job being executed. Therefore recruitment is an important element in the whole process.

Be passionate to inspire others

Give recognition

Facilitate creativity

Exchange roles as is done in a few Caribbean countries (leader plays the part of a line worker on a particular day). This leads to a deeper appreciation of the importance of each worker.

4.6 Research

Research

- Area was contained in the other five agenda items
- Redefine tourism and hospitality profile
- Creation of a new enabling environment
- Continuous training education and development
- Recruitment, retention and recognition
- Leadership

Context

- All recommendations are dependent on a culture shift re participating and sharing information
- Research is needed as a baseline for the strategy to be created

Enhance/redefine the profile of Tourism and Hospitality

- We need research
- Where we are now
- Finding the gaps or needs of the industry
- Research on the economic role of the sector with social implication

Creation of a new Enabling Environment

- HR practices
- Review of standards and creating benchmarks
- Review of all legislation in each individual country
- Environmental impacts, Health, Safety and Wellness
- Movement of labour
 - CSME
 - Cultural differences
 - Imported labour
 - Future needs

Continuous Training Education and Development

- Existing institutions and organizations that are offering programmes
- Relevance of curricula
- Details of the programmes
- National programme
- Apprenticeship and Internship programmes and how facilitated
- World class skills transfer - work permits

Recruitment, Retention and Recognition

- Is Retention really an issue
 - Where in the organization
 - What motivates people in jobs
 - Why people leave – exit interview
- Types of incentive programmes - what is working and what is not
- Job titles
- Compensation survey – relevance to country’s economic situation
- Minimum entry requirements for tourism jobs

Leadership

- Assess current leadership skills
- Identify gaps
- Assess required skills, attributes
- Productivity
- Performance
- Quality systems

Other Areas

- Carrying Capacity
- Tourism Plans - operational

5. Strategy – Aims and Objectives

5.1 Re-define and enhance the profile of tourism and hospitality

Objective 1

Re-work job descriptions to reflect outcomes as opposed to tasks (1 year) - HR practitioners in the private and public sector.

Objective 2

Conduct research on the economic impact of tourism (1 year) – Government.

Objective 3

Massive public awareness campaign to include community and industry levels (1 year) – Civil Society.

Objective 4

Develop national programmes to incorporate schools at various levels by a revision of the curriculum to include tourism (5 years) – Government, Private Sector.

5.2 Creation of a new enabling environment

Aim: *To improve the image of the tourism industry.*

Objective 1

Co-ordinate stakeholders' input to design/define a master plan for the industry (1 year) – Ministry of Tourism, Stakeholders.

Objective 2

Manage outputs from the master plan to create appropriate institutional and legislative frameworks (1 year) – Ministry of Tourism, Stakeholders.

Objective 3

Develop and promote operating standards for the tourism industry (1 year) – Ministry of Tourism, Stakeholders.

Objective 4

Develop, promote and implement national education and training programmes for all stakeholders (1 year) - Ministry of Tourism, Education, Human Resources Development.

Objective 5

Infusing tourism and hospitality throughout all levels of the formal educational system (1 year), at secondary school level 4th and 5th forms (2 years) - Ministry of Tourism, Education, Human Resources Development.

Objective 6

Tourism and hospitality career fairs in selected high schools (2 years) Ministry of Education, Private Sector Partners.

Objective 7

Begin aggressive apprenticeships and internships for secondary school leavers (2 years) – Ministry of Education, Industry.

Objective 8

Design and implement a training programme on attitudes and aptitudes required for success in the tourism and hospitality industry (2 years) – Hotel and Restaurant Associations.

5.3 Continuous education, training and development

Aim: To promote relevant international education and training that is certified, utilizing the highest academic and performance based standards and technology.

Objective 1

Develop a strategy to implement tourism as a subject in primary schools and high schools (2 years) – Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tourism.

Objective 2

Conduct an audit of training providers and programmes to effect standardization (1 year) – CTO & Membership.

Objective 3

Catalogue best practices in education and training (1 year) – CTO & Membership.

5.4 Recruitment, retention and recognition

Aim: To create regionally a tourism workforce that is delivering world class service through utilisation of the talents, capabilities, experiences and the inherent potential of our Caribbean people.

Objective 1

To drive campaigns to recruit the best of the best.

- Target schools/institutions that have tourism as a key subject in the curriculum
- Create an extensive list of all possible careers in the industry and requirements for these jobs.
- Regularly modify and update the curriculum to support the ever-changing dynamics of the industry.

Objective 2

To build a comprehensive salary structure that promotes growth, competitive edge and envy among other employees.

- Prepare productivity measurement tool to enable high performers to be awarded commensurately with the achievement
- Conduct on-going compensation surveys.
- Showcase outstanding individual accomplishment and invite input from these persons to continuously improve this process.

5.5 Leadership

Aim: To reposition leadership approaches that facilitate maximum socio-economic benefits from tourism.

Objectives

- To shift traditional leadership approaches to greater involvement.
- To measure productivity and performance levels.
- To encourage continuous education, training and development.
- To support collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders.
- To embrace vision, creativity, innovation and a culture of excellence.

Outcomes

(One year) The Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) should develop a template for regional and recommended national workforce strategies that engender high levels of productivity.

(Two Years) National Tourism Bodies and private sector stakeholders would develop, agree on and implement industry standards that lead to service excellence.

(Five Years) The group did not reach this point.

5.6 Research

Aim: To create a culture of using research for planning and decision making purposes.

Objective 1

To identify what kind of research is being done within tourism enterprises: what methods, what results (1 year).

Objective 2

To identify critical HR issues which the regional research centre would assist in conducting (1 year).

Objective 3

To establish a satellite accounts system for tourism to enable sector to gather important economic information on the sector (2 years).

Objective 4

To conduct and update the review of legislation that relates to the tourism sector (1 year).

Objective 5

To research organizations that have corporate universities to review their programmes, e.g. Sandals (1 year).

Objective 6

To identify what apprenticeships and internship programmes exist and how they are facilitated, how they are funded, and how they are structured (1 year).

6. Good Practices and Other Presentations

A total of four presentations were given during the Think Tank which were intended to stimulate thinking and feed into the discussions. The presentations were the following:

- (i) *“From Service to Experience; Understanding the Role of People in the Tourism Business”* – presented by Professor Nigel Hemmington, Dean of the School of Services Management, Bournemouth University, U.K.
- (ii) *“Good Practice Case Study of the Public Sector Role in Tourism Human Resources Development: Mauritius”* – presented by Mrs. Chanda Musonda-Chellah, Adviser (Trade) Trade Advisory Services Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
- (iii) *“The Bahamas Experience: Public-Private Sector Approaches to Addressing Human Resource Needs in the Tourism Sector – A Private Sector Perspective”* – presented by Mr. Frank Comito, Executive Vice President, Bahamas Hotel Association
- (iv) *“Preliminary Findings of the CTO 2008 Human Resources Survey”* presented by Mrs. Bonita Morgan, Human Resources Director, Caribbean Tourism Organization

See Appendix 2 for the presentations.

7. List of Participants

A total of thirty-two (32) persons from across the region participated in the Think Tank. The participants are broken down as follows:

11 Private sector representatives
10 Public sector representatives
08 persons from tertiary education institutions, including 1 from the Dominican Republic, 1 from Guadeloupe
01 Representative of the Caricom Secretariat
01 Representative of the Caribbean Congress of Labour
01 Graduate Student studying Tourism at the University of the West Indies

See Appendix 3 for the full listing of participants.