

PRODUCTIVE TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

Ambition Never Gets Anywhere Until it Forms a Partnership With Work.

A challenge that faces our nation (like any other developmentally focussed country) is the meshing of economic and financial development with the social advancement of our citizens. Thus, any intervention aimed at advancing the Tourism Sector should be complementary to the desire of Barbadians to experience an improved quality of life – from an environmental, financial, psychological and social perspective.

The **Rediscover Barbados** programme of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association and the Ministry of Tourism's awareness/attitudinal development initiatives (e.g. 'the Tubby, the guard' infomercial), represent strategies that seek to facilitate improved performance within Barbados' premier engine of growth.

The aforementioned strategic thrusts seek to:

- Enhance local support for the Tourism industry by highlighting the tremendous contribution (directly and indirectly) that the industry makes to the quality of life of each and every citizen;
- Engender the sustainable development of the industry. This is pursued by emphasising the need for environmental protection, greater willingness of Barbadians to choose the sector as an employment option of first choice, and increased expression of professional and friendly attitudes towards tourists.
- Make every Barbadian a 'walking tour representative/guide', both locally and abroad;
- Distinguish the fundamental difference between service and servitude;
- Foster Barbadian consumption and enjoyment of the attractions and beauty that the country has to offer (National Pride – 100% Bajan);
- Encourage greater and more positive interaction between Barbadians and visitors, outside of the typical client-provider relationship; and
- Diminish the misconceptions that visitors and Barbadians may have of each other.

My wife and I have seized the opportunity to savour some of the services which were offered at discounted prices as part of the Rediscover Barbados intervention. Namely, the Atlantis Submarine, Lone Star Restaurant and Island Safari tour. Several months ago, we at the Barbados National Productivity Council (BarNaPCo) spent our Fun Day enjoying the enlightening and fun-filled experience afforded by the off-road tour of Island Safari (B'dos) Ltd. My group had a great driver/tour guide – Andrew a.k.a. Papa Smurf, who exemplifies what a 100% Bajan tourism professional should be.

Andrew possesses:

- ❑ An acute knowledge of the tourism service that he provides;
- ❑ An intense service-delivery orientation;
- ❑ A warm, friendly and endearing attitude;
- ❑ An ability to provide equally friendly and professional customer service towards tourists and Barbadians;
- ❑ An attitude that makes the service-experience a mixture of fun and increased awareness;
- ❑ A keen focus on timeliness and adherence to schedules;
- ❑ A spirit of teamwork and camaraderie; and
- ❑ Confidence/self-assuredness combined with a willingness to help the client (Andrew epitomises the distinction between service-orientation and servitude).

I must congratulate the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism, the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association, and the companies and employees that work to advance the sector. Strive On!

Calvin Husbands
Economist I
Barbados National Productivity Council (BarNaPCo)