



Valerie Hope

Head of Marketing & Communication – Nation Group

With protocol suitably established. Good Afternoon everyone.

It's truly an honour to be back here again for the fifth instalment of the Barbados' Best Employer Award luncheon and I am privileged to be able to share brief remarks with you this afternoon, on behalf of the Nation Publishing Co. Limited and of course our Business Authority brand.

The BBE programme has received our support from its inception, because it has continued to demonstrate that it is a credible and valuable initiative for our local business community.

In concert with sound business strategy and planning, a successful and well-functioning business truly hinges on the quality, and productivity of employees and their desire to deliver daily for their respective organisations. This is business 101. This is what many management gurus have told us in many different and creative ways over the years.

It is not an alternative fact, it's irrefutable!

We all know and should understand that employees are core to business success. In fact many of you are here with us today, because of the exemplary human resource practices you have adopted in your own companies and which have been identified and recognised by the highly experienced Barbados Best Employers' team.

What is also however clear to me and probably to most others who operate from the business trenches on a day to day, is that despite what we may believe or understand, and despite our best intentions,

sustaining stellar work environments requires continual review and adjustment.

To quote Heraclitus “the only Thing That Is Constant Is Change”. Certainly in our current economic climate, many businesses have been forced to undergo restructuring, reduce expenses and generally change the way they operate to remain viable. People have also adjusted the way they view their jobs and their commitment to their employer. This often leads to changing values both by the organisation and their workforce.

This is why a programme like the Barbados Best Employers needs both our praise and support and why we at the Nation Publishing and the Barbados Business Authority in particular, are happy to lend our support.

From the start of the Business Authority newspaper, its goal and mandate has been to provide readers with informative, relevant and useful business centric content and analysis. Today, in addition to the weekly printed edition available every Monday, readers can access its content in ePaper format and through the Business Authority App, available for download from the Android and Apple stores.

As has happened in past years, the Business authority will feature the winners and some of the finalists from this year's BBE programme. As publishers of a leading business publication, we see our role as facilitating the transfer of valuable knowledge, which can guide and inspire local employers to set new standards of HR management, and is so doing; get the most out of their human capital and effect positive business results.

In case you missed it, over the last year, we have made some sweeping changes to both the look and content of the Nation Newspapers. We will now be concentrating on the Business Authority. Following a

review of valuable feedback from our readers, we will be introducing an even greater focus on small, medium and large enterprises in Barbados and we also plan to widen our net of contributors, to deliver even more investigative and analytical content, suitable for our business readers. We look forward to your feedback on these changes.

Before I leave this afternoon, I want to thank and commend each of you for taking the time out to be here today and also to congratulate the incredible team at Caribbean Catalyst for the delivery of another successful BBE programme, as well as the Review panel for their tremendous role in this process.

On behalf of the team at the Nation Publishing I congratulate all of today's BBE finalists for your accomplishments in employer excellence and look forward to learning which of you will walk away with the top award in each Category.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your time.



Jacqueline Elias

Senior Consultant, Caribbean Catalyst Inc.

WOW!!!! Ladies and gentleman, Kerry has given us some powerful and practical ways as leaders to influence the motivation of our people. That's exactly what leaders in all sectors, private, public, NGOs and our unions, need to do as we move Barbados forward at this pivotal time in our Nation's future.

Today we will focus on three aspects of the BBE programme. These are:-

- 1) Why we at Caribbean Catalyst persist, eight years later, with BBE in spite of and because of current market realities in Barbados.
- 2) Some high level comparative statistics comparing BBE 2018 to 2016.
- 3) What we can learn from the nine finalists and what all twenty-nine participants can expect going forward.

To set the context we would simply like to reiterate why Caribbean Catalyst invests a lot of time, effort and expertise to execute this biennial programme, showcasing sustainable organisations with very good people practices.

Caribbean Catalyst's mission is to be, **“the catalyst for meaningful change, helping our clients achieve through their people”**. This commitment seeks to positively impact productivity as we work with the leaders of organisations (1) to hone and develop their people

leadership practices and (2) to forge a culture of accountability since engagement without accountability is ENTITLEMENT.

Our focus this year is on NEUROSCIENCE, understanding the importance of how people are motivated from a SCIENTIFIC perspective – what influences their level of thinking and thus their behaviour. Oftentimes it is the disconnect between management and their teams that leads to a level of disengagement, untapped motivation, a lack of accountability and ultimately lower levels of productivity.

We at Caribbean Catalyst are therefore passionate to play our part as thought leaders to highlight current research on people practices to help companies better “achieve through their people”, thus maintaining Barbados as an attractive jurisdiction for doing business.

A more effective, productive Barbados in both private and public sector spheres HAS TO BE EVERYBODY’S BUSINESS!!!

We will now take a look at some high level comparative statistics between the five BBE programme years.

A quick look at participation by industry/sector reveals that the Insurance and Financial Services sector led with seven companies.

Hospitality Sector comprised of six companies.

Retail followed where six companies participated.

Another six companies were in Other Services.

We applaud the two Statutory Corporations which entered.

We only had two participants in the Manufacturing Sector.

If we look at our nine finalists, it is clear that these companies work in industries (hospitality/tourism, high end/duty free retailers and international business sectors) that provide world class service. These companies have clearly demonstrated that high standards of excellence can be accomplished here in Barbados.

We would like to single out Blueprint Creative. This Company is an indigenous, entrepreneurial service company that has used the BBE Award Programme from inception to help propel their HR strategy. This year, Blueprint Creative celebrated their tenth anniversary. The leaders of Blueprint have consistently worked on improving; acting on the feedback shared during the debrief sessions with Caribbean Catalyst. Since 2012, Blueprint has been a finalist and they won the Small category in 2012 and 2016.

Our aim is to help as many companies in Barbados attain these levels of engagement, productivity and service excellence.

There remains still some reluctance on the part of both private sector and almost all public sector organisations to open themselves to a third party survey of their people. This could be seen as an indication of the

unwillingness of many leaders and managers to really listen to their people for deep understanding to inform practical improvement.

Our leaders cannot afford to lose sight of the importance of connecting with their people! It is only through engaging with the team that you can truly leverage their strengths to the benefit of the organisation.

We turn now to some features of the survey over the past five programmes. We have embedded in the survey elements which measure

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION and ENGAGEMENT,
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS and PRODUCTIVITY.

This year, in keeping with our theme of Unleashing the Power of Motivation – A Predictor of Success!, we included descriptors that seek to assess levels of personal accountability. These were based on Cy Wakeman's text, "Reality based leadership".

As leaders we must focus on effectively leading, creating a culture of personal accountability and truly engaging our teams so that we can unleash a genuine sense of pride and industry - creating our competitive advantage.

Let us now have a look at the Average LEADERSHIP Indicators by category and finalists with 2018 compared to 2016. With the exception of the Small Category, there was a decline in the averages for the Medium and Large Categories and All Finalists. A point to note is that there was an increase in the number of participating companies in the Small category in 2018.

Looking now at the trends in the ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS by category from 2016 to 2018 again there were declines in every category except Small.

Drilling down a bit: THE REALLY SWITCHED ON, the Actively Engaged and Engaged group increased significantly in the Small Category, by 15.5% but declined in all other Categories and in the Finalists.

The OPPORTUNISTICs. Those who tend to be the “selfies”, focusing mainly on what benefits them. The only category that showed any real positive change was in the Small Category which declined by 5%.

The real job is to move the OPPORTUNISTICs to ENGAGED/HIGHLY ENGAGED. The tools to be used for this job are all in LEADING A CULTURE OF AUTHENTIC TEAMWORK.

The DISENGAGED statistics show again that the only category trending in the right direction is the Small. This is concerning because it indicates that there is a growing level of disengagement in all other categories including the Finalists.

All leaders need to monitor this aspect closely and work to re-engage this group otherwise they can be quite toxic.

If you haven't registered for tomorrow's breakfast seminar on the Neuroscience of Employee Engagement, we would suggest that you do so at the end of the event. We have a few spaces available!

Now let us look at the PRODUCTIVITY Indicator, comparing 2016 to 2018. The overall average for the Small Category increased by 7% from 3.78 to 4.03, whereas all other averages declined, including the finalists.

Looking at the levels of Accountability among the participants, 60% of team members in the Small Category rated themselves as highly accountable. In the Medium category it was 54.5% and in the Large category it was 43.4%. Among the Finalists, 63.4% of team members rated themselves as highly accountable. Cy Wakeman's research shows

that leaders should first pay attention to the feedback provided by those who rated themselves as highly accountable.

The Small Category has led in every indicator! When we look at all of the participating companies in the Small category, two commonalities are the frequency of communication and the involvement of the team. This does not mean that these do not happen in the Medium and Large Categories – it just takes more work!

Also it is hard to ignore mediocrity in a small business. It is therefore important that leaders, especially in larger companies have the courage to address mediocrity and those behaviours that can affect the productivity and harmony of the team.

We will now share a few gems that the nine finalists are consistently practising.

Common threads woven among the nine finalists are:

Caring and compassionate leaders

Leaders and Managers who genuinely listen and take action

Frequent communication between management and team members

Involvement of the team in aspects of decision making, as appropriate.

Opportunities for continuous learning and development

Looking at these areas, what resonates with you? Neuroscience

reiterates that *“The brain is a social organ. ...we are all born to connect.*

We cannot expect the best results if we see people as impersonal

machines and employment as a place full of isolated tasks” (Why

Leaders should care about neuroscience)

What are the next steps for the twenty-nine participants of BBE 2018

after these celebrations? The Caribbean Catalyst consultants will

debrief with the management of each of the participating companies to

share the survey results and recommendations for continuous improvement.

In addition to each company's survey results, participants will be able to see how they did in each of the eight areas surveyed compared to their own category average and the average of all twenty-nine participants.

Similar comparisons will be shared on the LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS, ENGAGEMENT and PRODUCTIVITY indicators. We will also provide information on the level of accountability within each company.

The companies who have participated in more than one BBE programme will have additional comparative information. Looking at their results over multiple surveys will provide useful insights. Repeated participation helps companies to build specific information on their own trends and inform specific continuous improvement in vital areas.

We want to reiterate that being a finalist is a stamp of excellence in people practices; the key resource in building a truly sustainable organisation, be it private sector or otherwise.

The team at Caribbean Catalyst would like to congratulate all the finalists and the 2018 winners who will be announced soon. We are proud of you ALL. Thank you.