

New Role Emerging from the Office

Director of the Office of Public Sector Reform, Michael Archer indicated that continuous dialogue with stakeholders and senior public sector managers has shown that there are common issues that need to be addressed in order to facilitate speedier implementation of reform initiatives service wide. As a consequence, the Office is seeking to attack these issues by conducting relevant and timely workshops and seminars. The Office recognises that managers often need technical assistance in various areas but are frequently engaged in day-to-day activities, thus, they are unable to address problematic issues in a timely manner. The current set of workshops and seminars seek to aid managers in their decision-making.

Improving Labour Management Relations in the Public Service

Managers and union leadership recently benefited from a two-day workshop hosted by the Office of Public Sector Reform in conjunction with, the Productivity Council entitled, "Seeking to Improve Labour Management Relations in the Public Sector." In his opening address, Rawle Eastmond, Minister of Labour and the Civil Service, stated that, "As changes continue to manifest themselves government would support all the managers by promoting good labour relations, by protecting employees' rights and benefits and by enhancing occupational safety and health standards." He maintained that, "in the new era of international business, characterized by the movement of multinational Corporations, a stable industrial relations climate would be one of the most critical factors affecting establishment of business. He indicated that, government in preparing such a climate must be sensitized to the needs of workers and would seek to address all workers' rights and issues through regular tripartite discussions and dialogue."

Day one of the workshop saw Industrial Relations Consultant, Mr. Collis Blackman, address participants on creating a culture/conductive conditions for improving labour management relations. He also identified practical initiatives that could be utilized to encourage managers to be more aware of their importance in industrial relations.

During the workshop, roundtable discussions were held in relation to (a) the relationship between persons at the workplace, both formal and informal, (b) how relationships can be kept on an even keel and (c) how they can be improved. A union representative headed each 'breakout' group. All the groups sought to come up with solutions that would enhance labour management relations.

Another major issue addressed at the Seminar was Health and the Employee in the workplace presented by John Licorish, Senior Medical Officer of Health. The senior officer gave a very comprehensive examination of health, its relationship with occupational outcomes, in addition to, a review of the traditional medical/administrative approach to health and safety, risk management and a new administrative approach to health and safety in the workplace.

Developing Service Standards

The Developing Service Standards workshop coordinator, Ms. Morinda Stuart, Management Development Officer, in the Office of Public Sector Reform, indicated that the establishment of Service Standards was now an integral part of the reform effort. She stated that the office is mandated to aid government agencies with the development of their Service Standards, which she believes will evolve into committed customer charters. She stressed, that, many of the participants from such agencies as Customs, the Post Office, Land Registry, and Town Planning, amongst others, are currently seeking to deliver services to their clients in a more measured and focused fashion.

Participants of the Seminar were carried through their paces by personnel of the Office of Public Sector Reform, who guided them in areas such as *The Role of Process Analysis in the Development of Service Standards* and *The Monitoring and Evaluation of Service Standards*.

Mr. Dick Stoute, President of the Chamber of Commerce, told participants in his feature address that, in setting standards we have to ask, what is important? What are the opportunities for improvement? And then work with the answers we get. He further maintained that, “standards do not remain the same, they are continually being upgraded, revised, simplified or made obsolete and the pace of doing this is increasing.” The President said that, “reviewing standards can be a fun affair and it is likely that a lot of the work that is presently being done as part of the business process can be omitted, as it may no longer be relevant to the current standard.”

What standards do we need today?

Stoute noted that NISE had commissioned a research study to benchmark Bajan's opinions about service quality. The results can be summed up in one word "*Attitude.*" Stoute also told participants that attitude couldn't be imposed on anyone. He maintained that each of us determines what our attitude is. "Our environment influences us, but that is all it does - we decide all on our own what our attitude will be and we can change our attitude at will, whenever we want to." Mr. Stoute told participants that they must think this through for themselves and then make their own declaration of independence of attitude.

The final day of both workshops was devoted to Errol Griffith of the FreeMind Institute. "The Achieving Personal Excellence" Module sought to share with participants the importance of taking responsibility for their actions as individuals and professionals, in addition to, highlighting the need for persons to create a vision for their lives and respective organisations. This approach was very much in keeping with the thrust of all the Offices workshops.

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