



NEWS LETTER

May 2012

Issue 3

Dear Colleagues,

Your Association, in keeping with its commitment to the members, is happy to send you this third issue of “The Newsletter”. 2012 is proving to be a busy time for the Association as the Services Sector is featuring more prominently in both local and regional matters. Many of the negotiations taking place between regional and international government agencies have recognised that the Service Sector is playing an important role in our economies and has an increasing potential to positively impact the region. As a private sector body within this sectors it is our duty to ensure that we are positioned to offer input into these negotiations. Regionally, the private sector has been criticized for taking a less than enthusiastic interest in the continuing rounds of trade negotiations thus the onus is on us to participate fully and ensure that we help to refute these criticisms.

◆ News Items

Amended membership packet

The Board has been working to ensure that the “Application Package” for potential members is complete and fully supports the high standards to which the Association is fully committed.

As management consultants, we are all aware that recruitment plays an important part in the success or failure of any company or association. If the process is flawed then the knock on effect can create significant problems. We at the AMCS will do all possible to ensure that the quality of membership reflects the high standards that we expect from our present and future members and that we are positioned to offer our clients the highest standard of professional service.

The completed package is now available from Mr. Keith Millar the Secretary of the Association and the membership committee is fully functional thus ensuring a seamless process.

AMCS Social event

The AMCS held its first social event at the “Spice of India” Restaurant in Rodney Bay and the general opinion is that it was a success. Socializing outside the usual meetings and workshops has added another dimension to the equation and enhances the strengths of the AMCS.

Annual MC's seminar in Jamaica.

Five (5) members of the AMCS will be attending the Management Consulting seminar in Jamaica; they are Vasantha Chase, Agnes Francis, Stephen Louis, Geraldine Lendor Gabriel and Vimla St Hill. Members of CICMC from the AMCS will be encouraged to nominate an AMCS member to the board of the CICMC thus ensuring that we have a say in the business, at board level.

Meeting with the Minister of Commerce

The executive of the AMCS met with the Minister of Commerce, officials of her Ministry and The executive Director of the Coalition of Services. The meeting was cordial and allowed our Associative to better understand the role played by the Coalition. The Minister was supportive and mandated certain actions which will improve coordination between the Ministry, the AMCS and the Coalition.

The AMCS & The Coalition of Services

The AMCS has now, once again, paid its membership dues and become a full member of the Coalition. Our Association eagerly awaits the upcoming Coalition AGM, which will then allow us to fully determine our role within the Coalition of Services. We sincerely believe that we can be a benefit to the coalition and have reiterated our willingness to be an active and positive member of the organization.

Vat Seminar

The Saint Lucia Coalition of Services in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investments and Consumer Affairs has invited the Membership of the Association of Management Consultants to a sensitization session with the VAT Implementation Office on June 4th, 2012 at the Royal St Lucian from 9 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The aim of this activity is to update service providers on the concept of VAT, accounting for VAT and other related VAT topics. Following the presentation, participants will have an opportunity to discuss with the experts the sector’s concerns and interests. It is suggested that our membership take advantage of this opportunity as VAT will play a part in our business environment.

AMCS Strategic Planning Workshop.

The Association of Management Consultants Saint Lucia (AMCS) has recently undertaken an exercise it continually advises its clients to embark upon. The weekend event was a workshop on Strategic Planning, which would ensure that the work of the Association for the next 3 years is carried out in a structured and strategic manner.

The Board and the membership spent a full day charting the way forward for the Association, focusing on the lessons learned, over the past seven years of its existence, to define its strategic direction and objectives for the next three years. The development of the Management Consulting Profession within the country, the adherence to professional ethics, advocacy and the development of its members were amongst the areas of importance highlighted at the strategic planning session.

Management Consulting is a profession which is gaining heightened recognition in national, regional and international circles and the management consultants themselves have to constantly reassess their performance and capacity to advise clients in an increasingly competitive global business arena. Associations such as the AMCS are a vital part of the professional services sector development.



◆ Consultants Profiles

As an Association, it is important that we know about each other, so in this and each subsequent issue, we will profile Three of our members and give you a brief insight into their professional life. This does not only keep us informed but also develops our networking capacity. If we, as members of AMCS, hear of opportunities that do not adhere to our specific areas of expertise, we have the opportunity to refer these to our fellow members who “fit the bill”. This is a valuable resource for us all.

In this issue we feature with Our Past President, Mrs. Agnes Francis, Mrs. Vimla St. Hill, our Treasurer and David Coathup, our Pro.



Agnes Francis



David Coathup



Vimla St. Hill

Agnes Francis holds a Bachelors Degree in Management Studies from the University of the West Indies and a Masters Degree in Tourism Planning and Development from the University of Surrey, England. She is also an internationally certified Project Management Professional (PMP). Her public sector experience includes serving as St. Lucia's first female Director of Tourism, a position she held for three and a half years. While in this position, she served on several technical committees of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation. She was also at the forefront of St. Lucia's flight into community based nature heritage tourism.

She is an active participant in the private sector having established the first full service public relations agency in St. Lucia in 1997. This evolved into Accela Marketing, the largest and only fully integrated marketing communications company with a presence in most of the OECS islands. With Clients in almost all spheres of business including retail, banking and finance, insurance, utilities, tourism and services, she has her finger on the pulse of the business environment. This is further supported by her company's ongoing market research services which keep her fully cognisant of the issues, challenges and opportunities which characterise the business landscape. She also operates a business consultancy firm

Agnes Francis has been at the forefront of business organisation having served on the board of the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, and was one of the pioneers behind the establishment of the Association of Management Consultants of St. Lucia, a trade association designed to improve service standards thereby improving the performance of business entities served.

In addition she has served as a director on several local boards such as the St. Lucia Tourist Board, Sports St. Lucia Inc, St. Lucia Development Bank, the National Development Corporation (the island's investment promotion agency) including being the Chairperson ,and the St. Lucia Fish Marketing Corporation. She has served on the St. Lucia Bureau of Standards Technical Committee and currently is a member of the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association.

Vimla St. Hill has worked in the banking and financial sector for 19 years. Her banking career started in Trinidad and she has worked in several OECS islands including St. Lucia. She was instrumental in setting up the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago in St. Lucia which was previously known as Caribbean Banking Corporation Ltd and during her stint in St. Lucia she was responsible for both the personal and commercial lending departments of the branch.

In 1999, Vimla commenced her consultancy practice and provided financial counseling to some of her clients with whom she had developed long standing relationships during her banking career. She has now expanded her practice to include SMEs, NGOs and private and public sectors. With her strong business, banking and administration background, Vimla has adopted a very practical and hands-on approach to solving problems. She has a passion for upgrading and updating policies and procedures within organizations and also brings new ideas to the table and provides creative solutions to various business issues.

Vimla's consultancy work include the preparation of diagnostic studies and business plans for several SMEs, an invoice financing project for a financial institution, a Mentoring Project funded by the European Union, providing ongoing financial advice to an insurance company, setting up procedures and systems for a credit union as well as the preparation of a Strategic Plan for the largest Credit Union in St. Lucia.

Vimla graduated from the University of the West Indies St. Augustine, with A Bachelor of Arts Degree majoring in Economics and Management. She also holds a Certificate in Event Management from the George Washington University and has completed a range of business courses both locally and internationally.

David Coathup is the principal of CIS Limited, a Caribbean consulting firm based in St. Lucia. His career in management and consulting over the past forty (40) years in the people-driven services sector, gives him the expertise to effectively assist a broad spectrum of clients both in the private and public sectors in strategy, planning and hands-on management.

David, a citizen of St. Lucia and the United Kingdom, was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the 26th January 1952 and brings a very useful international perspective to his consulting, having worked and lived in Europe, Africa, South America and the Caribbean. His career in hotel management and tourism consultancy, over the past 40 years brings to his assignments extensive practical knowledge of all aspects of Hospitality Management and Tourism Consulting with special emphasis on concept design, product development and operations.

David started his career as a management trainee with the prestigious Savoy Hotel group in the United Kingdom. After completing this intensive five-year programme he joined Hilton International working as an assistant manager. Five years later he joined the Zimbabwe Sun Hotels in Harare as manager of many of their properties. These included city hotels, resorts and game lodges thus giving him hands-on experience in the successful operation of business hotels, traditional resorts and eco-resorts. In 1986 he came to The Caribbean and formed CIS. Limited, the company he now heads.

David has successfully completed numerous assignments within the Caribbean for a wide range of clients, both in the Public and Private sectors.

◆ Light Relief



◆ 8 Qualities Business Owners Need to Be a Good Leader

1. **Have a vision for your company and communicate it effectively to your team.** It is not enough to just have a big vision. Involve your team in the development of this vision so that they feel connected to it. This will encourage them to work hard toward the fulfillment of that dream/vision. Show your team the big picture, the future prospects and where you want to see the company five years from now and allow them to help give it shape. Let your team members understand their role in making the vision come true. Communicate to them they are the pillars of the company and are not just cogs in the wheel.

2. **Lead by example.** Leaders are looked up to for inspiration. Be a hands-on leader, who offers help, pitching in where needed, guiding, mentoring and problem solving. Step in where you are needed but avoid stepping on toes. Don't be over-bearing, over critical or take over other's work. Your objective is to inspire your team, not to de-motivate your team.

3. **Know your employees.** Create a personal bond with your employees. This is especially important for small business owners as they have to motivate a small team to perform multiple tasks efficiently. Getting to know employees on a personal level helps increase productivity, lowers attrition at the workplace and encourages them to put in extra effort.

4. **Take ownership.** Good leaders delegate intelligently. Distribute work according to the capability of each employee so that you can enable the best results. Knowing each employee on a personal level also helps you to better understand his/her work capabilities. Don't accept under performance. It's your responsibility that all team members are performing at good levels. And when it comes to taking ownership and responsibility for the bigger picture, that's your responsibility, too

5. **Be a good listener.** Leadership does not mean doing all the talking. You have to be an equally good listener. You have to listen to others with patience and understanding to keep them motivated, know their problems, ask questions and keep updated on what your team is thinking.

6. **Be courageous and confident.** Being indecisive can spell doom for any business. Be a leader who has the courage of conviction, can make bold decisions (based on carefully considered alternatives) and has the confidence to lead from the front. Even if your decisions occasionally do not bring about the desired results, take the responsibility and acknowledge your mistakes. Learn from your mistakes so that you can avoid them in the future.

7. **Have a positive attitude.** A positive attitude, a smiling, confident approach and a warm, assuring persona is essential to be a leader who inspires his/her team. Don't let everyday challenges and problems make you lose your own positive attitude. If the captain of the ship despairs, his team surely will. Face every challenge as a speed breaker on the road, back your team 100% through thick and thin and be the voice of reason, not anger or stress.

8. **Pick up leadership skills from other leaders.** Leadership skills can always be honed and sharpened. The best way to do that is to confer with other business owners or undergo an executive coaching session. Executive coaching sessions on a one-to-one basis are great ways of identifying your own strengths and weaknesses. You can join an association or club where you get to meet fellow business owners who have faced and overcome similar kinds of leadership challenges. There is nothing better than a reliable club or association for getting hands-on tips from people who have "been there and done that"!

To close, I implore you to keep committed and connected. Always remember that our Association has no life of its own. Its life force is only as great as the individual effort made by each of us. Our AGM is coming up soon and the association is seeking committed members to make up the new board. Please seriously consider putting your name forward for a position on the board.