

TRADEWATCH

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SACHA COSMETICS: Significantly Improving the Lives of its Users

On April 16th, Sacha Cosmetics became the winner of the Caribbean Exporter of the Year 2015 award at the inaugural award ceremony in Montego Bay in Jamaica.

"We don't make cosmetics, we make women look more beautiful. In fact we do not sell cosmetics, we sell hope" Mr. Kama Maharaj, Managing Director of Sacha Cosmetics told the audience as he accepted the award on behalf of the company. "When we started out, our philosophy was that makeup has to make women look like a better version of themselves. We were walking around looking at women and they were looking worse when they wore makeup [than without it], and I said to myself, surely somebody in this world can create a brand that will make all women in Trinidad with any skin tone look naturally more beautiful".

Sacha Cosmetics started 35 years ago as a family-owned business, passionately committed to the philosophy that a woman's makeup must enhance her natural beauty, not hide it. The first step in fulfilling this vision was to develop a line of foundations that were so natural looking it would fit like a second skin on any complexion. For years their

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chemists worked hand in hand with their makeup artists pursuing this seemingly elusive dream. Formulating foundations to perfectly match different skin tones and skin types was an enormous challenge. However, creating products under the bright tropical sunlight has ensured that they developed products and colours that look exquisite under the harshest of conditions. As a result, their unique blend of pigments and under-tone colourants has given them the results that no one can match. After years of experimentation they were finally satisfied with the results and launched their line of 'Second Skin' foundations which they believe matches today's diverse skin tones more perfectly than any other brand on the market. Impressively, their foundations and powders perfectly match from the lightest to the darkest complexions and all the exotic tones in between.

Sacha has been the official cosmetics supplier of the 1999 Miss Universe Pageant, the 2000 Miss USA Pageant, the 2011 Miss Bahamas Pageant, the 2014 Miss Panama Pageant as well as several other international beauty events.

"Having developed that brand as a premium brand of cosmetics and having successfully outperformed all the imported cosmetics brands that came into Trinidad combined, we felt that we were powerful enough to export our brand" announced Mr. Maharaj. "We started exporting throughout CARICOM, we then went to Cuba and we are going to be opening our first outlet in Panama in June". In fact Sacha is sold worldwide in retail and specialty stores, from the glamorous Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, California to the coasts of Africa and throughout the Caribbean. Over the coming months the company will be expanding into Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and throughout Central and South America.

"We also sell our products online and while most people are now thinking about e-business and e-commerce, we have been selling worldwide online for the past 17 years. Recently we signed an agreement with the worldwide online distributor Amazon.com. Only last night I got a call from our e-commerce department saying that we sold 100 orders online last night alone with an amazing conversion rate of visitors to buyers of 16%". Mr. Maharaj indicated that the reason that the products have been doing so well is because they make products that significantly improve the lives of their users.

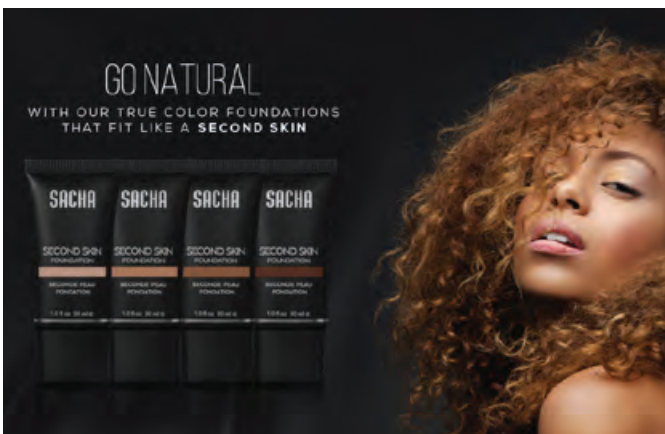
"While our makeup looks amazing on all skin tones, on darker skin it is absolutely transformational". Mr. Maharaj professed that the African American community has caught onto Sacha and is blogging about the



L-R: Mrs. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, Caribbean Export, Mr. Satayakama Maharaj, Managing Director & Owner, SACHA Cosmetics Ltd, and Mr. Mahindra Ramesh Ramdeen, Chief Executive Officer, Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturer's Association

brand. "If things continue progressing at the same rate that it is right now, in the next 2 or 3 months our number 1 export market will be our online sales. I hope that this gives inspiration [to other managers] to have faith in the young people in the organization because they are the ones that will drive this [ecommerce]". He encourages managers in turn to let the young people within the organizations benefit from the business experience of the older people.

After returning home and presenting the award to the staff at Sacha Cosmetics. Mr. Maharaj shared that "We are honored to be the recipient of the prestigious Caribbean Export Exporter of the Year Award 2015. The receipt of this award has been an inspiration to everyone at Sacha Cosmetics and has spurred us all to redouble our efforts to break in to new markets."



www.sachacosmetics.com

9 Steps to Get Your Brand Prepped for Export...

The Caribbean is filled with great products. However, without a convincing brand how can a product find its way into the busy export market?

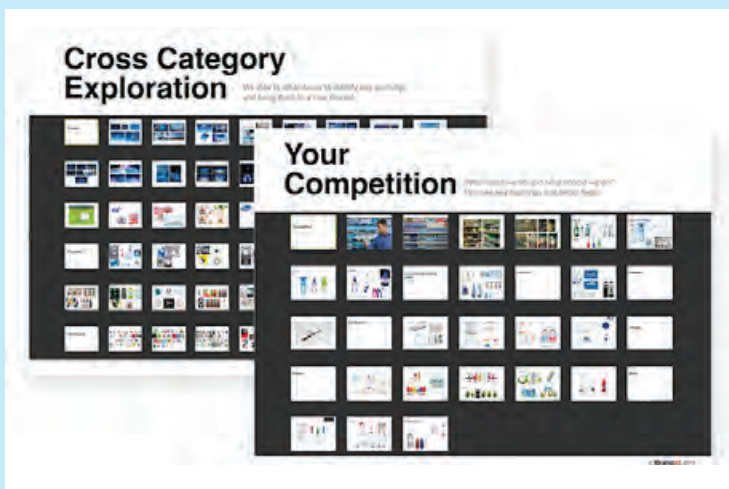
In 2015, a brand is the most important equity that any company can have. The biggest misconception out there is that a brand is a logo. In fact, a brand encompasses everything from the style of its packaging, every newsletter sent out to its customers, right down to the tone of voice employed by the company.

At Brand42 we believe that a brand is how people feel about you. Here are our 9 steps to ensure your brand is up to scratch before entering an international market:

1. The Exploration Phase: Deep Dive

Before you get started, it's essential to scope out your competition. You should know your export market like the back of your hand. This means asking yourself tough questions about how your product compares to what is already out there.

To do this thoroughly you will need to be in touch with your industry's trends. There will be specific ways in which your competitors design their packaging, craft their campaigns, shoot their products and target their consumers. By the end of this phase you must have explored every major magazine and site in your industry to get a global perspective of what you're up against.



When we were asked to re-design Top Gear, we dug deep and looked into sites from the automobile industry as well as other cross-category digital platforms within the high-end bracket.

For example, as a food brand, you'll want to be clued up on diet fads, restaurant trends and everything that the major food influencers are saying...

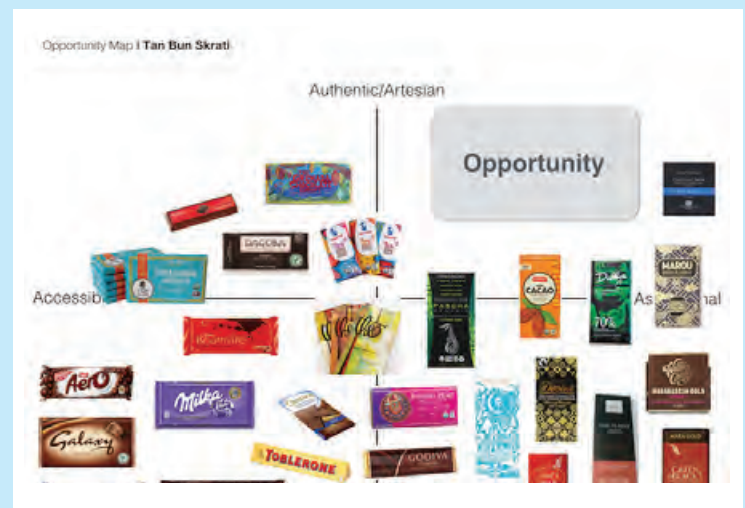
In general, it is crucial to identify key areas of research which are important to your brand and products.

2. Identify Your Opportunity

Once you have worked out who your competition is, it is very very important to differentiate yourself. Imitation is invariably a weak branding strategy.

Instead, identify which special attributes your competitors champion and carve out your unique area of specialisation. Once you have found a niche for your brand, you may have to tweak your offering to fit the opportunity.

We like to create a simple graph so that the opportunity pops up in a linear and logical manner. When we were planning for Tan Ban Skrati, we found an exclusive space for this homegrown Suriname chocolate amongst the factory brands and artisanal types...



Opportunity mapping is fundamental to your brand development.

Brand42

3. Set your Brand Essence and Identify your Unique Selling Point.

Setting your Brand DNA is arguably the most important part of the exploration phase. Before you even think about the style of your packaging, you need to define the backbone of your brand. Each brand has a unique selling point which makes them fundamentally, totally and utterly different; your brand essence should highlight this unique selling point.

Creating a statement of onliness can help you crack what is truly distinctive about what you are offering. Without this stage, your brand will just be an indistinctive drop in the export market.

4. The Creation Phase Define your Look and Feel

This is a crucial stage in your brand development. Your 'look and feel' must reflect everything that you have acquired from the exploration phase. This will be your visual tone of voice to express your brand's unique selling points. This will also be the main influence for your packaging and must give your product striking shelf appeal for international export.

It's important to test out several routes before choosing one which fits your brand identity exactly.

It's very simple; boring products are left behind. A Yankelovich Consumer Research study has predicted that we ingest up to 5,000 pieces of communication everyday but our brains can only absorb a tiny proportion of this visual overload.

With odds like that, be remembered or wither...



We choose a clean, bright and minimal visual feel to revamp Caribbean Blue Naturals.

5. Build a consistent brand narrative

Building a convincing brand narrative is a way of sealing your brand essence. Your narrative should emphasise your brand onliness and thread consistently through every piece of communication that you produce.

Take the time to express what makes you rare. A story is not merely expressed through words, your narrative should weave through every campaign, sound, picture, colour and idea that your brand produces.

6. Future Proof Your Brand Architecture

If you are in the business for the long haul, it is crucial to make sure that your brand architecture is malleable enough to survive. You have to ask yourself a key question during the creative phase: is your brand future proof?

When your brand is booming, you may want to extend your product range. If your look and feel is simple yet distinct, then your brand will be able to be applied to anything without too much hassle...

Over-complicated brands without a clear narrative will be much harder to diversify.



When we worked for CNN, we created a style guide so that any new services could easily be adapted to the brand look and feel.

7. The Development Phase Maximising your Package Effectiveness

We wish that branding and packaging was all about the creative stuff but unfortunately the best-looking brands can get left behind if practical criteria are not fulfilled.

Optimising your packaging ensures that your margins are still high despite the cost of palletisation. Stackable packaging can be loaded more tightly into a container so that higher volumes can make their way overseas. No one wants to be paying to ship air halfway across the world. This is particularly relevant since an effective shipping strategy will reduce your brand's carbon footprint. Cutting carbon emissions is increasingly becoming a global priority so if you want to avoid high shipping charges make sure your process is efficient and environmentally friendly.

Luckily, endless options are out there, from bespoke packaging to stock options. When choosing, balance the practicalities against your brand DNA. A premium brand will not survive without a refined bottle but many brands are ingenious with their choices. Choosing stock packaging which is not directly associated with your product can help you differentiate without spending extra.

'Pain is good' is an independent sauce brand from Louisiana with quirky packaging. To create a bespoke feel on a small budget, they opted for a stock whiskey bottle for their sauce. As a fiery sauce with a 'daredevil' brand feel, the whisky bottle compliments their brand image. This is a brilliant example of the stock bottle being taken out of context and cleverly re-purposed, giving this brand an edge on the shelf without putting them out of pocket.

Opting for a smaller bespoke package is another way of keeping on the right side of the price-quality equilibrium



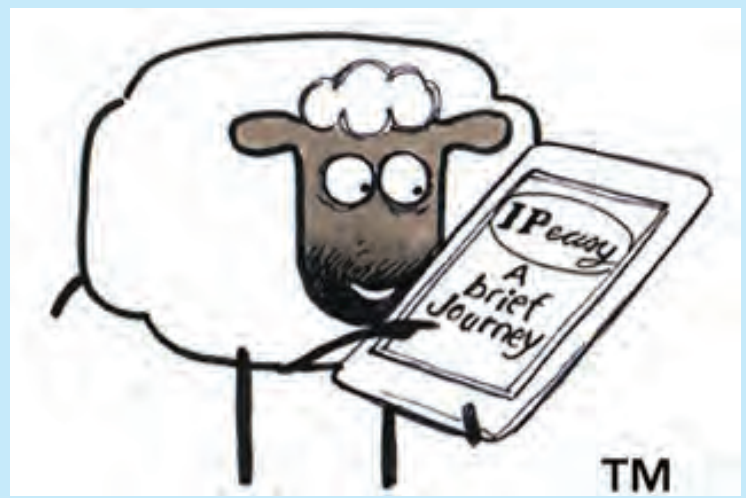
8. Meeting International Standards

Each country will have its own authorities and standards. Make sure that you tick all the formal boxes so that your brand does not slip through the cracks in the system. Explore the EU rules to make sure your packaging includes all the required elements:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/import-and-export-rules/>

9. More than Packaging

In the development phase, you also need to think about addressing the wants and needs of a highly demanding market. Millennial consumers value convenience, originality and interactivity above all. Your digital presence will be as important as your packaging. 'Prosumers' like to be given a platform to contribute to the brand conversation. We know all too well that a brand with an international scope needs to have a firm marketing strategy and innovative campaign ideas that feel reactive.



IPeasy - A Downloadable APP that takes you on a brief journey through branding & intellectual property. **DOWNLOAD HERE**

Rules of Origin

"Rules of origin" are the criteria used to define where a product was made. The concept encompasses the laws, regulations and administrative procedures which determine a product's origin. It is essential to determine a product's origin as a number of policies discriminate between exporting countries: quotas, preferential tariffs, anti-dumping

actions, countervailing duty (charged to counter export subsidies). Rules of Origin are an important component of any trade agreement as they determine which goods would benefit from the preferences granted under such an agreement. A product's origin is also important when compiling trade statistics.

Trade Benefits for Cariforum

It seems from the trade performance of specific CARIFORUM countries for garments and for fisheries products that the relaxations in the RoO provisions under the CARIFORUM-EU EPA have resulted in export growth for these products.

The new rules for RoO under the EPA have made it possible for CARIFORUM States to enhance trade and exports in a number of sectors and for some specific products, at the same time that it provides a strong incentive to move production up the global value chain – especially in the case of garments and or fish products.

CARIFORUM exports for garments totaled US\$31 million in 2013 mainly on exports from the Dominican Republic and Haiti who together accounted for roughly 96% of all exports of garments from CARIFORUM to the EU. Exports in these products saw significant increases in exports to the EU between 2010 and 2013 suggesting that the new provisions of RoO under the EPA are providing immediate benefits and that the DR and Haiti are taking advantage of these opportunities.

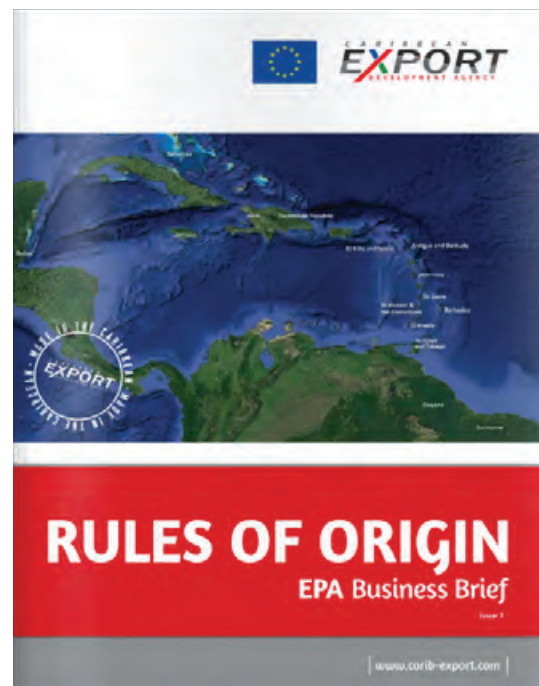
For the fisheries sector, in 2013 CARIFORUM exports of fish products totaled approximately US\$70 million in 2013 with Suriname, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica and Belize – in that order – being the main exporters. The main fish products exported from the region are frozen and fresh whole fish and while fillets and pieces and cured and smoked fish had decent exports in 2006 those have fallen off completely and were only nominal in 2013.

The new RoO provisions on fisheries give exporters an opportunity to enhance their exports of fish products on the basis of exports of farmed shrimp and tilapia amongst other types of farmed fish. This could already be the case for The Bahamas, Guyana and Suriname who experienced significant increases, on average, in their exports to the EU between 2010 and 2013, while Jamaica and Belize saw some decline, though Belize's total exports in 2013 was about 1.5 times that of 2012. Although Dominica and Saint Lucia do not feature as key exporters of fisheries products to the EU, there is a real opportunity for them to grow their exports of catch fish products to the neighboring markets of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

For other products such as jams, jellies, biscuits CARIFORUM producers and exporters can benefit from the expanded list of countries in terms of 'cumulation' in order for a product to be considered 'wholly obtained'. These products can also benefit from new flexibilities on alternative origin requirements for certain agriculture and related products.



Take a look at all of our publications



Click here to read the full Rules of Origin EPA Business Brief

Understanding how the Trade and Business Intelligence System will Overcome Barriers to Export

In an era of intense global competitiveness, a pervasive economic crisis and eradication of all preferential treatments, the Caribbean is forced to compete with more developed economies and its much larger neighbours in Latin America. Further, the Region is plagued by sluggish economic growth coupled with an impeding business environment, which has rendered its exports largely uncompetitive. In this regard, the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional Private Sector Development Programme (RPSDP) is implementing a number of programmes geared at improving the region's export competitiveness and the sustainability of its exporting sectors.

One such programme is the Trade and Business Intelligence System (TBIS). The overall objective of the regional TBIS is to provide high quality information services to stakeholders based on large data sets collected from historical performances, and markets of interest. The information provided is either quantitative, such as trade performance, prices, GDP per capita, growth rate, and population demographics, to name a few, or qualitative in nature consisting of business contacts, market entry requirements, and doing business guides. The success of the TBIS is however threatened by the lack of high quality data sets and as such, is largely dependent on a complementary relationship with stakeholders.

The primary stakeholders of the TBIS consist of two main groups: firms (exporters or potential exporter) and business support organisations (BSOs) (including Trade Promotion Organisations). Additionally, interventions are streamlined based on a number of needs assessment surveys conducted by Caribbean Export, as well as priorities identified during stakeholder consultations.

For firms, the TBIS produces several tailored services, each catering to a specific need identified. These services include market opportunity briefs, the market intelligence portal, helpdesk facility, and the delivery of training.

The market opportunity briefs have proven to be indispensable in the presentation of data collected in the market intelligence process. They provide key insights on the demand conditions for a particular product in both traditional and non-traditional markets, and analysis on various trends such as market size, market growth rate, market consumption capacity, wholesale and retail trends, social factors affecting demand, supply factors, and opportunities for regional companies.

Caribbean Export's market intelligence portal is a web based platform, designed to give users the ability to obtain market reports on products, sectors and countries of interest. The portal will also provide key trade and other economic data, market profiles and reports, tariff and non-

tariff data, a regional exporters' database, trade agreement analysis, directory of BSOs, trade regulations and related documentation with links to important data sources.

Similarly, the helpdesk facility is a dedicated platform where experts can provide information to exporters with export related questions. It also affords regional exporters the opportunity to learn from each other.

Caribbean Export also continues to partner with BSOs as part of its existing programme to support these organisations in the delivery of value-added services, such as the TBI training workshops, to their members. This training provides participants with a basic understanding of TBI and introduces them to the market pointer tool which allows them to access information relevant to their TBI needs.

In the case of BSOs, the aim is to build capacity in these organisations to better support their private sector stakeholders. As such, the Caribbean Export provides capacity building services to BSOs in the areas of training in trade information management, and attachment programmes.

Training in trade information management and the delivery of value added trade information services to firms is a structured training of trainers programme. The intention is to develop BSOs into experts who will in turn build capacity in their own organisations and train local private sector firms to have a better appreciation of TBI.

The attachment programmes involve mutually beneficial capacity building exercises among regional BSOs, based on matchmaking undertaken by Caribbean Export. BSOs in the region exhibiting strengths in identified areas will be asked to host other BSOs whose capacity needs to be enhanced and provide training in best practices through workshops and one-on-one training sessions. Caribbean Export will collaborate with BSOs to develop a comprehensive training programme to ensure an effective attachment programme is achieved.

Notwithstanding the embryonic stage of the TBIS, it is strategically geared at improving the relative competitiveness of the regional private sector with the hope of enhancing export performance. The long term success of this system is however built on a complementary relationships established between firms and BSOs. In addition, the impact of the TBIS is dependent on the quality of information supplied and as such the commitment of all relevant stakeholders.

Empowering an Entrepreneur: Denese Palmer the Caribbean Export Female Exporter of the Year



L-R: Mr. Robert Scott, Vice President, Trade & Business Development, JAMPRO, Ms. Denese Palmer, Owner, Southside Distributors Ltd. and M'Hamed Cherif, Director of the PMU, BizClim



Jamaican Denese Palmer, owner of Southside Distributors Ltd is the proud winner of Caribbean Export's Female Exporter of the Year 2015 award which took place in Montego Bay in Jamaica on April 16th. Caribbean Export had a chance to meet with Denese to discuss her feelings about winning this award. "It means a lot to me personally because it shows me that there are no boundaries I cannot cross; I can grow by leaps and bounds and make a difference. It has empowered and inspired me to push further and continue to grow" stated a very enthusiastic and passionate Denese. "I feel like one of the strongest women in the world. The only thing that I cannot do is fly, anything else, I can do it".

Denese passes her enthusiasm to her staff, which she calls her team, and empowers and motivates them to do better. She recognises that the award is not only hers "it is ours, we have achieved this and we can achieve far more. We can move mountains, we can break the glass ceiling and Caribbean Export has reinforced this. Of all the awards that we have received, this is the most significant one. I am very proud of this one" stated Denese. Her goal is to achieve 10 awards by next year when she celebrates the 10 year anniversary of the company. "We now have 7 awards and we have 3 more to go so we are counting down".

Nine years ago Denese was working in the agro-processing industry and approached her then directors to diversify into a new product range of jerk seasoning, they declined. By then she had already gone to the Scientific Research Council (SRC), completed the formulation and produced some samples. She gave out a few samples and received an order for 30 cases. "I was not about to pass up that opportunity, I was going to do it" declared Denese. She rented a little shop, hired her first

employee and trained her on how to prepare the jerk seasoning, and they filled that order. The demand started to rise and within 3 months the company started paying itself, by then she had a driver and two other employees. Soon they were selling to local distributors with a wide range of products from condiments and canned foods to juices and syrups.

Now the company has 28 full time and 34 temporary employees. "For the first 3 months of this year we are almost at half of our sales for the whole of last year. Our target for 2015 is to be 100% over last year's sales but we are confident that we will achieve 80% if we continue on this same trend". She continues to make steps to advance the business, currently she is in the process of purchasing new equipment which will increase her production of callaloo and she is going through a rebranding exercise which she expects to launch in time for her 10th anniversary.

Although she continues to increase her penetration into the Jamaican market, 56% of her products are exported to US, UK and Canada and she intends to increase her market share internationally this year. "Any opportunity that comes our way, we will try to grab it" she avows. She has taken advantage of various initiatives with Caribbean Export. She has received two Direct Assistance Grants, attended ProNet Training in marketing and management and was a contestant on Breakpoint in London. She plans to take advantage of the trade shows that are offered by Caribbean Export to enter the European and the Caribbean markets and to increase her penetration in existing markets. The company has attempted to enter the Caribbean market previously and sent some samples to various distributors, however although the feedback was

EXPORT SUCCESS

positive, to date they have yet to receive an order. Recently she has been communicating with a company in The Cayman Islands and is optimistic that they will place an order.

The challenges that she now faces are mainly bureaucratic. For every product that is produced for export, a process schedule is required. A consultant inspects and details the manufacturing process from start to finish and makes recommendations for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). "They take a long time" she said, in fact the process schedule for ackee took two years for SRC to complete. "When ackees were in season, they didn't have the equipment to do it, when ackees were not in season, then they were ready but we didn't have the ackees" to manufacture. She needs the process schedule to be fully compliant in order to gain FDA approval to export to U.S. Denese is now

trying to get the process schedule for Callaloo and for Solomon Grundy which she is trying to get into Walmart. Other issues that she faces are infrastructural, with poor water supply and poor road conditions for transportation, which she recently addressed with a member of parliament in Jamaica.

"Where every we go, we fly the Jamaican flag high, the Caribbean flag high, we make sure that we conform to standards and are compliant... tax compliant, food safety compliant. We have the potential and when I see customers responding that positively to the quality of our products it tells me that we are doing things right". Denese admits that there are still things that they need to work on but she focusses on training herself and her staff in order to improve and meet the challenges ahead.



Ms. Denise Palmer, Female Exporter of the Year award winner talks about her experiences working with Caribbean Export.



Fresh Start Limited: Reaping the Reward of Success



The Caribbean boasts a huge variety of fruit, many of which are unique to the region, thus placing them in high demand within the global market. In Trinidad and Tobago, one small company successfully harnesses the exotic nature of Caribbean fruit flavours such as tamarind, mauby and passion fruit, and blends them exquisitely with classics like orange, pineapple and grapefruit to create a line of fruit products that is truly representative of the vivacity of West Indian culture.

Fresh Start Limited is a family-owned business that overcame national unrest and subsequent bankruptcy to emerge as one of Trinidad and Tobago's finest providers of fresh fruit juices and fruit cordials. Marketing Director, Marcus Sun Kow, shared that his father was motivated by necessity to start the company in 1994, as means of creating a fresh start for the family.

"My father owned an import export company called LSK Sales, which sold dried goods to the local market. We then diversified and started a farm, which grew cantaloupes, sweet peppers, corn and other foods

that were not readily available in Trinidad in the late 80's. In 1990 there was the insurrection and things changed dramatically because of the curfews that were instituted. We ended up losing some \$400,000 worth of produce and about \$300,000 on the sea at the time. Today, that would equate to just over a \$2 million, so it was a significant loss. This eventually caused the downfall of the company as the bank took everything, including our home, vehicle and business. We were left with \$3,000 and that is how Fresh Start came into being. It was really a fresh start for us, and hence the name of the business."

During the initial stages of start-up, access to finance was one of the major challenges that Fresh Start faced.

"Finance was a huge problem because of our poor credit rating at the time. So the business grew organically based on the turnover and what little we could save. There was never any real capital injection at that time, and all the money that came in went back out in salaries and other operating expenses."

Despite this, the company was able to find its niche and corner the market with relative success.

"Agro-processing was always a part of the future plans for LSK sales, we started with very small pieces of equipment like a household juicer and a kettle, but we always persisted. Securing a contract with the Hilton Hotel worked in our advantage, and it was then that we discovered we had an opportunity that could not be missed."

In the beginning stages, there was little competition in the food beverage industry so it was easy for Fresh Start to gain a competitive advantage, but since then the market has evolved, which resulted in more companies offering similar products and sometimes at lower prices.

"This presented its own challenges for us because in some cases, the quality of other products were not always the same and their prices were sometimes significantly lower. But we stood firm to our standards and kept delivering quality products, which our customers have come to recognize and appreciate."

Today, the 100% homegrown business employs 24 persons and offers 13 flavours of fresh fruit juices and eight varieties of concentrate for local consumption. The company has plans to expand to the regional market, specifically Saint Lucia and Barbados, within the next 12-18 months; in addition to gaining a share of the diaspora market in New York shortly after.

Fresh Start's commitment to success over the years is also reflected in Marcus' approach to business. Describing himself as an entrepreneur at heart, the water-sports enthusiastic, always found the opportunity to make a sale despite the circumstances.

"As long as I can remember, I was a salesman. I would buy doubles and sell them at school for a profit. I also made speaker boxers from scrap material and sold them with a family friend. I actually started selling the ready-to-drink Fresh Start juices to the different cafeterias while on campus, and then turned this into a career after dropping out of University."

Marcus eventually re-enrolled into University, and gained a Degree in marketing, which served to supplement his already natural ability as a sales person. Having never worked formally for another company for any extended period of time, Marcus believes that the experience and success he has garnered came from working with his family's business.

"It takes a lot of dedication to run a business successfully, and while we have been able to achieve this it has not come without assistance."

Marcus shared that some of the achievements that company has gained is due in part to the support received from the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export). In 2013 Fresh Start received a direct assistance grant from the Agency, which was used to purchase new production equipment.

"We applied for the grant from Caribbean Export because we recognised the need for equipment to increase our production. This was around the same time that the company had gone through a rebranding of its products including changing the logo, labels and designing a new bottle mould. As a result we were able to increase the production output, expand our distribution throughout the country and build a better brand presence for ourselves on the market, thereby increasing brand equity."

Fresh Start also credits the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturing Association (TTMA) with providing them with information about the grant and also assisting with the application process. In addition to the grant, the company has also won several awards and certificates of recognition for the work that they have done as a manufacturer in the food beverage industry. Their biggest achievement to date, however, was winning the 2014 Small Manufacturer of the Year award from TTMA in March 2015.

"When we were nominated for and won the award, I knew it was a phenomenal feat because it was cross-sectoral, so it meant we were coming up against other manufacturers, in different industries, across the country. Additionally, we have been selected to attend the Summer Fancy Food in New York as a part of the Trinidad and Tobago delegation."

Marcus' dream for the company is to establish it as a brand that is truly representative of the Caribbean. He also shared that this is possible for not only his business, but also others seeking to export, once the right infrastructure is in place to support growth.

"There is a need for more technical and financial assistance from local governments and business support organisations, especially



the smaller firms. We also need help with understanding and gaining the necessary certifications and standards that are required to export."

In the meantime, Marcus plans to continue his commitment to the growth of the company and by extension the Trinidad and Tobago agro-processing sector.

"I have a lot of dreams for Fresh Start and with each day I continue to work hard, be diligent and tenacious about the goals we want to achieve as a company."

After 20 years in business, it is this ongoing dedication to delivering an exceptional product made of purely West Indian fruits that has allowed Fresh Start Limited to make a name for itself throughout Trinidad and Tobago's households, supermarkets, restaurants, and hotels. With its rich history and promising future, there is no doubt that this company will continue to reap rewards of success.



www.freshstartlimited.com

Energy in the Palm of Your Hand

Palmis Enèji uses innovative solutions to put clean energy into the hands of ordinary Haitians and wins "Foreign Investor of the Year 2014" at the Caribbean Export and Development RIYA showcase.



There is a saying that if you teach a man to fish, he will feed himself for life. On the other hand, if you supply a man with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), you're allowing him to not only feed himself by cooking with clean energy, but you may also be equipping him with a means of income for life.

Palmis Enèji in Haiti is doing just that. In Haiti, deforestation is a major environmental issue that has no easy resolution. The electrical grid cannot adequately serve its population in its current state, so the alternative energy source is through the use of charcoal. The country therefore is crying out for a new solution to sever this umbilical attachment to wood for the creation of charcoal and hence prevent the rapid depletion of that country's forests.

Jean-Christophe Duchier, CEO of Palmis Enèji, says "We [Entrepreneurs du Monde, the main shareholder of PALMIS Enèji] have been working in Haiti since 2003. As experts in local economic development, we identified the energy sector as crucial for Haiti. The huge consumption of charcoal is responsible for deforestation, waste of money for families, toxics fumes for users - killing millions of people in the world each year!" He continues, describing PE's solution based approach. "We decided to start a business making easier access to cleaner and cheaper sources of energy, including

improved cook stoves, solar lamps and LPG stoves." Environmentally speaking, LPG is the fastest, easiest and cheapest alternative for Haiti.

Palmis Enèji's goal will provide better access to cleaner energy to those who need it the most, those at "the bottom of the pyramid". The success of the work of this company is shown in the exponential rate at which the employment level within the company has increased. PE started modestly with only 3 staff members and though it currently provides work for 8 people that number is still projected to triple in the coming year. This is of course aside from the income it provides a growing network of entrepreneurs from its uniquely business centered LPG sales model.

The benefits of this technology will especially be felt by women, as they do the majority of the cooking and therefore suffer the most side effects from harmful by products from what is called "dirty" fuel.

PE is the leading provider of LPG outfitted cook stoves which are distributed to restaurants and homes thereby reducing the high levels of toxic fumes emitted.

LPG is the way forward as an alternative energy source in Haiti, not only an alternative means for food production but also for the illumination of homes and other building.

It's no coincidence then, that Palmis Enèji was recently granted the "Foreign Investor of the Year 2014" award for their work in developing LPG usage in Haiti. The Caribbean Export and Development Agency's Regional Investor of the Year Awards (RIYA) seek to recognize local, regional, even international businesses or entities in a range of categories, including for those that develop "the green economy".

Palmis Enèji is funded by Entrepreneurs Du Monde, the French NGO that initiated the project, Yunus Social Business Haiti, an ethical fund with bases in both Europe and in Haiti, and Grameen Credit Agricole, a European social investment fund with 15% of shares. Palmis Enèji is also supported by the Pan American Development Foundation, TOTAL Haiti and KIVA, a loans distribution network.

Going forward, the challenge of clean energy is going to be the biggest challenge for humanity, especially in small Caribbean states like Haiti. But the investment PE provides is a social investment because it equips people to run their own businesses and provides consumers with better home technology. In essence, it puts power directly into the hands of the people.

Palmis Enèji's model has already been proven in Togo, Burkina Faso (reaching 10,000 households last year) and Cambodia. Mr. Duchier looks to the future expansion of Palmis Enèji's work saying "In other countries, we are just starting the replication of PALMIS Enèji's business model but the needs are just as huge as in Haiti and we are expecting a very high demand." Promoting access to clean and renewable energy for the population, Palmis Enèji has already pumped \$105,000 USD into the economy projecting that a quarter of a million lives will be impacted by 2016.

Mr. Duchier states "Our awareness raising activities are based on a direct marketing strategy. We want to be in front of our clients in order to explain the environmental challenges in Haiti and the solution we provide. People need to see the products for themselves, attend demonstrations, test the features of the products they like best, and ask questions. That's why our promotional efforts are mostly focused on street events such as market demonstrations, lucky draws, etc." The company then establishes a dense network of retailers, entrepreneurs in the hundreds who are provided with marketing tools, and given stock loans and free training sessions – everything they need to hit the ground running.

Lamenting that the majority of Haitian people survive on less than \$2 USD per day, Mr. Duchier also outlines the microcredit strategies that have been developed with the microfinance partner PALMIS Microfinance Sosyal which makes repayments as painless as possible. These include financial services such as forward payments, deferred payment schemes and microcredits for the demographics that need it the most, making the aspect of diminished cost highly applaudable and integral to the success of the product.

The affordability of the fuel also allows families to redirect their limited resources into other living expenses including food, school fees, sanitation any other necessities.

In addition to the LPG gas stove solutions, Palmis Enèji is also supporting



solar powered lighting products, further decreasing the carbon footprint. The power of solar lighting cannot be underestimated: students may now study by night, which makes them more likely to succeed and continue their education. The unique sales aspect that PE integrates into their business model also equips entrepreneurs for a long lasting future.

By providing efficient solar powered lighting and LPG cooking solutions for the poor their goal is to provide clean and sustainable energy access in Haiti and actively participate in the fight against deforestation in that country. With their unique micro financing and entrepreneurial approach, Palmis Enèji is equipping Haitians to take charge of their own future, essentially, putting success in the palms of the people's hands.



Inward Buyers Mission (InBuyTT 2014): A Win for exporTT Limited



In 2013, exporTT Limited (exporTT) took up a new mandate of growing and diversifying Trinidad and Tobago's exports. This seemed like an insurmountable task at the time but the organisation was able to hit the ground running and execute a number of activities such as markets surveys, trade missions and the inaugural Export Development Forum. These activities yielded some returns but failed to deliver the level of results which can alter Trinidad and Tobago's export trajectory in a meaningful way. The company thus decided to try something different in an Inward Buyer Mission. The first Inward Buyer Mission, coined InbuyTT 2014, was held in September 2014 and helped to push the organisation a bit closer to achieving its mandate.

Now what is InBuyTT and why is it worth writing about you ask? This was essentially exporTT's response to difficult challenges faced with in terms of expanding current export markets and penetrating new ones. One of the major challenges was that potential buyers simply did not know of Trinidad and Tobago as a quality and reliable source for products and services. They were not aware of our manufacturing sectors and the companies which comprise them. This lack of knowledge often translated into lack of confidence in exporters' ability to deliver. The major benefit of an Inward Buyer Mission is that it allows to buyers to visit the country and see the various manufacturing facilities. This often delivers the shot of confidence required to get business going.

An Inward Buyer Mission is different from the traditional trade missions which facilitates meetings in the buyer country and only focuses on one market at a time. In this format, there can be multiple buyers from multiple markets attending the event at the same time. This makes it easy for exporters as they would not have to invest in visiting multiple markets to meet with potential buyers.

You are now sold on the rationale for such an event but the question what did it deliver? Well you can review some of the highlights below and be the judge.

- 16 buyers from CARICOM, Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica, Guadeloupe and Dominican Republic
- 35 exporters from the Hardware/Construction, Chemicals, Food and Beverage and Paper and Packaging Sectors.
- 192 Business to Business Meetings conducted
- 155 leads generated with 35 of those being classified as 'Class A' Leads which meant that there was an immediate prospect of transacting business with this buyer.
- Total of US\$153,000 in export sales as at May 2015 with the value projected to reach US\$250,000 by September 2015

This is not bad for a first event but put it into this perspective, PROCOMER (Costa Rica's Trade Promotion Organisation) did not generate any business in its first Inward Buyer Mission. It took some time to gain traction and it is now a mainstay with the organisation and forms a major component of their export promotions. It is hoped that 2014 was just the beginning and that the InBuyTT event will grow by leaps and bounds. If the event can grow to PROCOMER's level then that will be a great accomplishment. Just in case our word seems a bit subjective take a look below at what some participants of the event had to say.



RAWLINS AMAR, BRAVA INTERNATIONAL (EXPORTER)

"We had quite an experience presenting to a contingent from Barbados. If all goes well...in three weeks I see us having our first order!"

MARIKO & MIRANDA GILL, SUNSHINE INDUSTRIES, BARBADOS (BUYER)

"This is not the first show we have attended of this nature. We have been to Costa Rica and Miami, but I must say we are quite impressed with what we have seen thus far. I have met quite a number of producers who are willing to produce under our label."

CAROLYN ATÁN FROM ALIMENTTOS CHIPPS OF COSTA RICA (BUYER)

"I was very surprised by the quantity and diversity of the products I've seen thus far and I hope that I will see more tomorrow. I think that there are many opportunities [in Trinidad and Tobago] and the country has an important amount of products that can be offered in our [Costa Rican] supermarkets."

MONA SOOKMANEE-MEIGHOO. MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER CANTREX (EXPORTER)

"I was pleased in general. I did find a good potential with Cuba, my company has been trying to export to Cuba for years."

exportTT looks forward to another successful event and planning is currently underway for InBuyTT 2015. This event is carded for the 13th – 15th October 2015 and will take place at the Hyatt Regency, Trinidad. This time the event will have a slightly different approach in that exporters will have the option to conduct meetings with buyers at their facilities rather than just at the venue. Buyers will be able to view exporters' operations and thus be in a better position to make decisions about conducting business.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Caribbean Export for

their support as a platinum sponsor for InBuyTT 2014 and look forward to their support with InBuyTT 2015.

For more information on this event please contact us at dharrypersad@exporttt.co.tt or nrichards@exporttt.co.tt

Trinidad and Tobago: Moving beyond the Petro-economy



Trinidad and Tobago's economy is emerging slowly from a period of stagnation precipitated by the global economic downturn and weakness in the country's petroleum sector. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) the economy contracted by 4.4% in 2009, grew by 0.2% in 2010, but fell back again in 2011 by 2.6%. However, in 2012 recorded growth was 1.5%, and it is estimated at 1.6% in 2013 and projected to be 2.1% in 2014.

Growth in 2013 was assisted primarily by the non-petroleum sector, whose contribution to overall GDP was 60.2%—its highest share since 2005. Within the non-petroleum sector, services were most important, followed by manufacturing and agriculture. The petroleum sector, meanwhile, was projected to experience only very slight growth in 2013 (0.5%), but this would be the first expansion of the sector in the last three years. Increased production of natural gas, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and methanol together with higher export prices for oil and gas were the drivers behind the growth. Inflation and unemployment are low, and while the country is running a fiscal deficit that is feeding into higher levels of public sector debt, both are manageable in size.

In order to strengthen the fundamentals of the economy, the government is instituting several important policy reforms. One is the gradual re-directing of LNG exports away from the United States, which is becoming more self-sufficient, towards other markets. One such market is Asia. China began importing natural gas from Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, and volumes are increasing. Another market is Latin America, particularly Argentina and Brazil. Along with the exploitation of new markets there are growing diplomatic links with these regions. Other reforms include a number of new incentives from January 1, 2014 to encourage further investments in the energy sector; a new corporate governance code to promote more transparency and better company practices; amendments to the pension system; and the passing of the CARIFORUM— European Community Economic Partnership Agreement Bill. Further, the government has implemented a Public Sector Investment Programme to increase capital spending.

Another area in which the government has attempted to undertake reform is in relation to the petroleum subsidy. Trinidad and Tobago

has long provided assistance to local consumers so fuel costs can be contained. The subsidy has grown in recent years and the Kamla Persad-Bissessar administration has tried to reduce the current payments and the arrears on the account, with moderate success. However, in a report published in October 2013 the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) advised that Trinidad and Tobago should remove all fuel subsidies as they are undermining labour productivity and the development of a nonenergy business sector. The IDB argued that "Most of it [subsidies] goes to inefficient public enterprises, more than 130 overlapping social programmes, and the fuel and electricity subsidy." Trinidad and Tobago's gasoline at the tank costs about 25c (US) per litre— this is one of the lowest prices in the world. Some of the competitiveness problems can be seen with its below par position on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index. In 2013 Trinidad and Tobago was ranked 92 out of 148 countries. The government is alert to the problems but addressing them will take concerted action.

A further challenge to the government is gang related crime. A recent report by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), a Washington based US think-tank, highlighted the problem, and in another report the UN Development Programme (UNDP) concluded that a 1% reduction in youth crime would boost tourism revenue by US \$35m per year. As such, the need to address gang crime is extremely important.

In 2011 a state of emergency was introduced from late August to early December, and although 448 persons were arrested under the Anti-Gang Act during this period not a single gang member was charged and convicted. Indeed, concerns have been expressed in the local media and elsewhere about the low detection and conviction rates. In response the government has begun to introduce a range of anti-gang measures, including a watch list of gang members who receive contracts from the State; the creation of a Criminal Gang Intelligence Unit; joint patrols by members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and the police; and civil assets forfeiture legislation to cut off gang access to funding.

Overall, it is clear that Trinidad and Tobago has tremendous economic advantages and future potential, but more needs to be done to improve aspects of the economy and to reduce gang violence.

To read more articles from the
Caribbean Export Outlook

[CLICK HERE](#)

Jean Claude Mériné, Deputy Programme Manager, Haiti-DR Binational Programme



Caribbean Export welcomes Jean Claude Merine to the Agency as the Deputy Programme Manager for the Haiti-DR Bi-National Programme. Mr. Mériné joins us with over twenty five (25) years of experience. After receiving his Bachelor's degree in accounting and finance, Mr. Mériné worked for several years as an auditor for the firm Coopers and Lybrand in Chicago.

Returning to Haiti Mériné joined Sylvania Overseas Trading Corporation (GTE) which operates a 72,000 square feet plant in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. After Eight (8) years, he was promoted to CEO where he remained until 1991.

Mériné founded the first food packaging factory in Haiti (LOLITA Products) which Specialized in the packaging of sugar, rice and powdered milk. He is also the founding member of a local airline company where he occupied the CEO position for ten (10) years. Later, he was the director of the Haiti Hope Project where he was instrumental in the development and improvement of the Francisque mango value chain which benefited more than 25,000 Haitian farmers. More recently he was head of Business Development for the Ministry in charge of energy security.

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BI-NATIONAL DIRECT ASSISTANCE GRANT



Available to **Haitian firms** and **BSOs** who are looking to update their technology and production processes, implement quality control systems, and improve their marketing and promotion efforts, among other projects that seek to increase competitiveness.

Deadline for applications: July 15, 2015
www.carib-export.com/binationalgrants-2



Opportunities

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FDI INVESTMENT MAP FOR CAIPA

Inter-American Development Bank is looking for a consultant for the Development of an FDI Investment Map for CAIPA.

This assignment envisages the development of a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Map for inclusion on the Caribbean Export Intelligence Portal. This FDI Map will be an online facility that allows for the dissemination of key information relevant to the attraction of foreign investors to the Caribbean.

Caribbean Export now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

Interested persons are asked to view the full **terms of reference**.

DEADLINE JULY 09, 2015 4:30PM, BARBADOS TIME.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECTOR PROFILES FOR THE RENEWABLE ENERGY, NICHE TOURISM AND THE BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING SECTORS FOR CAIPA

Inter-American Development Bank is looking for a consultant for The Development of Sector Profiles for the Renewable Energy, Niche Tourism and the Business Process Outsourcing Sectors, for CAIPA for the Caribbean Region.

This assignment envisages the development of 3 sector profiles for the following sectors: renewable energy (with a focus on solar and wind), niche tourism and the BPO sectors. The information gathered should be relevant to the needs of potential investors seeking investment opportunities in the Caribbean.

Interested persons are asked to view the full **terms of reference here**.

Caribbean Export now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

DEADLINE JULY 10, 2015, 4:30PM, BARBADOS TIME.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

CAREER OPPORTUNITY: ADVISOR – COMPETITIVENESS AND EXPORT PROMOTION

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to the Manager, Competitiveness & Export Promotion, the **Advisor-Competitiveness & Export Promotion** will work closely with the Manager to purposefully engage regional private sector companies to increase their export sales through the facilitation of processes to enhance the development of innovative services and technological solutions. He/she will also have responsibility for conducting research and providing analysis, to ensure that relevant private sector companies understand and can take advantage of niche market access opportunities and engage in best practice. The position will also work very closely with the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme (DAGS) as well as play a supporting role to the programmes related to the capacity building of the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA).

Interested applicants are advised to download and review the full **job description** before applying. Applications must be submitted to **jobs@carib-export.com** with the job title for the position in the subject of the email.

DEADLINE THURSDAY 16 JULY 2015 AT 4:00P.M, BARBADOS TIME.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: PARTICIPATE IN THE 2015 EDITION OF THE HAVANA INTERNATIONAL FAIR (FIHAV)

FIHAV is the most important general trade fair in Cuba. This year will be the 32nd year that show has been convened. All sectors of the Cuban economy takes part in this event, which succeeds in putting together the most complete national and international trade exhibition in a space that enables exhibitors and visitors to establish commercial contacts, close business operations, exchange experiences and update in new technological developments.

FIHAV features more than 20,000 square meters of net exhibition area, around 4,500 national and foreign exhibitors from over 60 countries. This year it is expected that over 150,000 visitors including important foreign official and business delegations will be attending the fair. With the strides that Cuba has made in opening its trade doors to the entire world, the potential for doing business with Cuba is stronger than ever.

Caribbean Export would like to invite interested CARIFORUM firms to submit applications to participate in the 2015 edition of the Havana International Fair (FIHAV) 2015 in Havana, Cuba

DEADLINE JULY 22, 2015 AT 4:30PM, BARBADOS TIME
[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2015 EDITION OF THE SALON DU CHOCOLAT

Caribbean Export would like to invite interested firms from Haiti and/or the Dominican Republic to submit applications to participate in a bi-national trade mission to the 2015 edition of the Salon Mondial du Chocolat 2015 in Paris, France from October 28 to November 1, 2015.

One of the leading events in the chocolate and cocoa trade fair circuit, the Salon attracted more than 120,000 visitors last year and will provide a great opportunity for Haiti and Dominican Republic to increase their visibility as cacao producing countries and chocolate manufacturers.

Caribbean Export will sponsor representatives from Dominican Republic and Haiti in the following sectors to participate in the 2015 edition:

- Cacao bean producers/exporters
- Processed Cacao producers/exporters (e.g. butter, paste, powder, liqueur, etc.)
- Chocolate producers/exporters

DEADLINE JULY 27, 2015 AT 4:30PM, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TIME.
[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN DOMINICANA MODA 2015

Notice for Haitian Fashion Firms/Designers

Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF)-funded Haiti-DR Binational Commerce Programme, will be collaborating in the organization of Dominicana Moda 2015 (DM2015) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Caribbean Export is seeking fashion designers with readily available collections to be showcased in Dominicana Moda 2015 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic October 20-24, 2015. Selected designers will be able to participate in all activities revolving around DM2015 and present their collections on the runway.

DEADLINE JULY 27, 2015 AT 4:30PM, HAITIAN TIME.
[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

[View all of the opportunities available at Caribbean Export](#)

Upcoming Events

JULY 2015		
Regional Trade & Business Intelligence Trainer Certification Programme	Barbados	July 6 - 8
Workshop on The Development of Management Strategies for GIs/OLPs	Santo Domingo, DR	July 9-10
Angel Investor Engagement Training for Entrepreneurs in OECS Countries	St. Lucia	July 10
Sub-Regional workshop on the Development of Management Strategies for GIs/OLPs	Jamaica	July 21-22
AUGUST 2015		
Magic (textile event)	Las Vegas, NV, USA	August 17 - 18
SEPTEMBER 2015		
Design Caribbean @ Autumn Fair	Birmingham, UK	September 6 - 9
Caribbean Investment Summit	London, UK	September 10

For more information about all of our events visit www.carib-export.com

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Caribbean Export's Strategic Objectives

- Increase trade and business intelligence & research capacity
- Foster access to finance for export-ready SMEs
- Strengthen regional investment promotion capacity
- Facilitate export development and promotion
- Reinforce advocacy for an enabling environment
- Ensure sustainable corporate capacity building

We are very interested in your feedback.

Please email your comments to: tradewatch@carib-export.com.
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