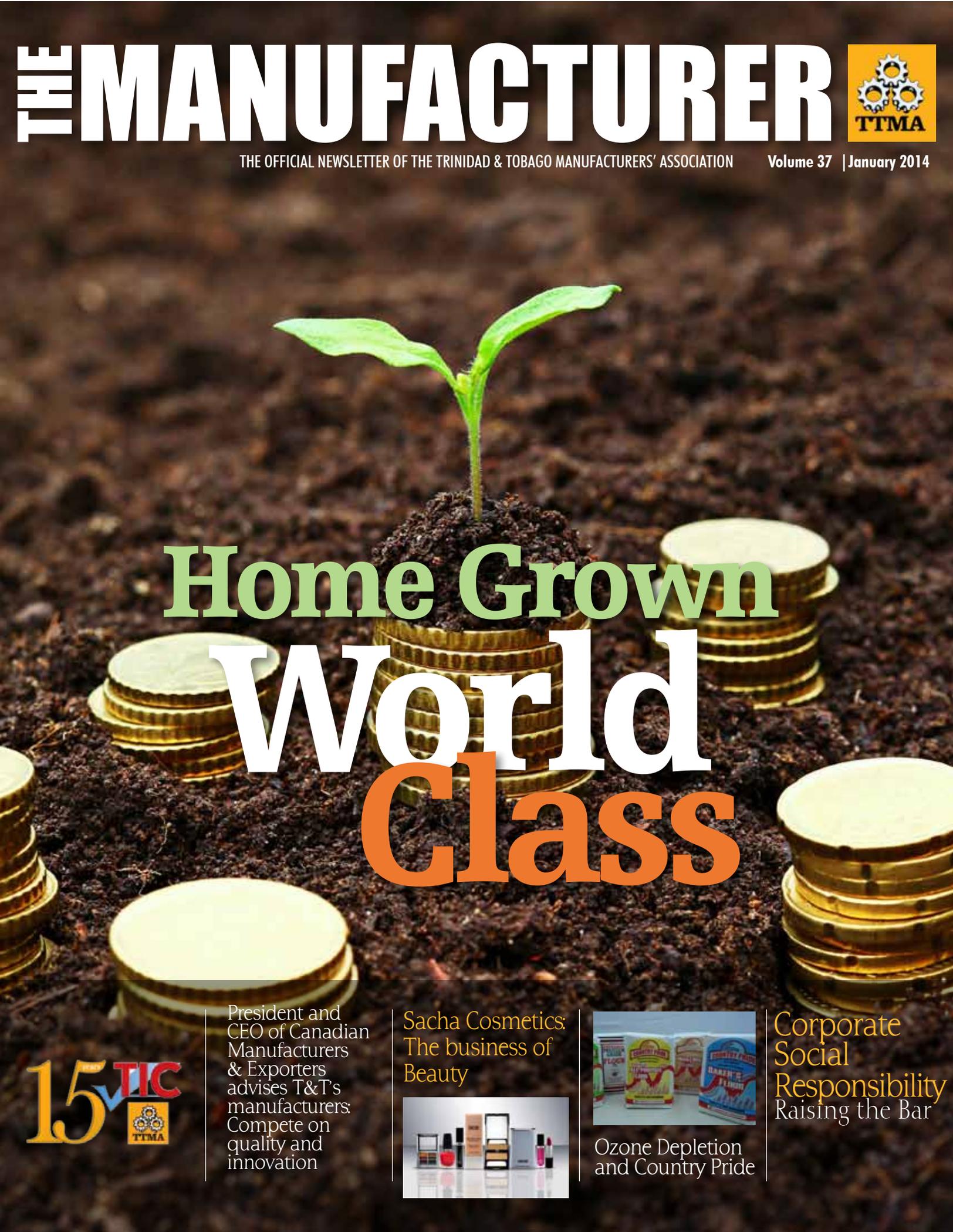


# THE MANUFACTURER



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION

Volume 37 | January 2014



## Home Grown World Class

President and  
CEO of Canadian  
Manufacturers  
& Exporters  
advises T&T's  
manufacturers:  
Compete on  
quality and  
innovation

Sacha Cosmetics:  
The business of  
Beauty



Ozone Depletion  
and Country Pride

Corporate  
Social  
Responsibility  
Raising the Bar





# From the Desk of the President



## Vision STATEMENT

To be the voice of manufacturers in Trinidad and Tobago, creating value and providing world class service to our membership.

## Board OF DIRECTORS

- Mr. Nicholas Lok Jack  
(President)
- Mr. Paul Quesnel
- Mr. Craig La Croix
- Mr. Robin Lewis
- Mr. Robin Phillips
- Mr. Darren Leigh
- Mrs. Genevieve Jodhan
- Ms. Franka Costelloe
- Mr. Roger Roach
- Mr. Anthony Farah
- Dr. Rolph Balgobin
- Mr. Ashmeer Mohamed

The start of each New Year brings renewed optimism and energy to move forward with plans and initiatives aimed at business growth. As we move forward into 2014, the TTMA remains confident that the manufacturing sector will experience greater expansion over the course of the year. The Association is moving ahead with initiatives aimed at pushing the growth of this country's manufacturing sector and transforming it into a major driver of economic growth.

We look forward to working with our members in addressing the concerns that affect their businesses, and with the various government Ministries and agencies with regard to resolving some of the persistent issues hampering the growth of the sector. These include the need for a reduction in government bureaucracy, improvement of the infrastructure and regulatory framework, dealing with the shortage of labour, and the issue of crime and security.

According to statistics from the Central Bank, the non-energy sector continued to expand in the third quarter of 2013. However, after posting strong growth of 4.6 per cent in the second quarter, activity in the manufacturing sector was flat in the third quarter of 2013.

Several of the challenges to business in Trinidad and Tobago remain unresolved, but as former

CEO of GE Jack Welch points out, "An organization's ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly, is the ultimate competitive advantage." In 2014, manufacturers must become nimble and adapt to the rapidly changing business environment, in order to take advantages of the opportunities that lie ahead.

TTMA believes that investing in strategic developmental activities and government policy must become the priority. We trust that the Government recognizes that a vibrant manufacturing sector is important to our nation's economic recovery and long-term growth and prosperity.

In the coming months, TTMA will continue to lobby for initiatives to assist manufacturers to sustain market share locally and regionally, to develop innovative capacity and ensure T&T's economic survival.

A reduction of government bureaucracy and improved efficiency will increase our members' ability to compete locally and globally. This country's manufacturers have the capacity and expertise to compete in certain areas, but the inefficiencies of the Ports and Customs, and other regulatory agencies such as Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division (CFDD) hinder trade. Institutional strengthening is a fundamental issue that must be addressed in 2014 through the improvement

of Border Control agencies to create a facilitating environment for manufacturers.

Another issue of concern to manufacturers is the timely payment of VAT refunds. The issue of outstanding VAT refunds has severe cash flow implications for members of the manufacturing sector and is a tremendous hindrance to the local business community. The Association has been advocating for a resolution to this ongoing issue for the last five years and proposed to the government the long-term solution of removing VAT on inputs to manufacturing during National Budget consultations last year.

TTMA recognizes the need to source new markets for locally produced goods. Manufacturers must be prepared to face stiff competition not only from regional companies but also from major international corporations targeting emerging markets. Boosting efficiency is critical for manufacturers, especially in light of rising input costs.

Manufacturers must take steps to ensure their companies are responsive, productive and flexible, which will put them in a better position to face the challenges 2014 will bring.

**NICHOLAS LOK JACK**  
PRESIDENT

**DO YOU NEED TO CONTACT US?**



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## TTMA LAUNCHES THE 15TH ANNUAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT CONVENTION

The Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) launched its flagship annual event the Trade and Investment Convention (TIC). The Media Launch was held at the Grande Riviere room of the Courtyard at the Marriott, located in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The launch was well attended by Government representatives, members of the Diplomatic Corps, major sponsors and media personnel.

The speakers at the launch included Rakesh Goswami, Executive VP of Enterprise Services, TSTT and Larry Nath, CEO, First Citizens. The Feature speaker was Minister of Trade, Investment and Industry, Vasant Bharath, his message spoke about the government's pursuit of diversifying the economy by enhancing the environment in which manufacturers can do business - a message that underscored support for TIC 2014. The event was hosted by Nicholas Lok Jack, President of TTMA. Ramesh Ramdeen, CEO of the TTMA was the afternoon's master of ceremonies.

This year marks the 15th Annual convention and the theme is **"Creating Opportunities, Driving Growth!"** TIC will take place from the 2nd to the 5th July at the Dr. Joao Havelange Center of Excellence. It provides a unique forum where local, regional and international exhibitors showcase thousands of products to qualified buyers seeking new goods and services.

More than 500 international buyers and investors from around the world flock to this Convention every year to take advantage of lucrative investment opportunities and trade deals. Over the years, TIC has facilitated more than US\$450 million in trade deals, hosted thousands of international buyers and exhibitors and earned a reputation as the Caribbean's largest business-to-business event!

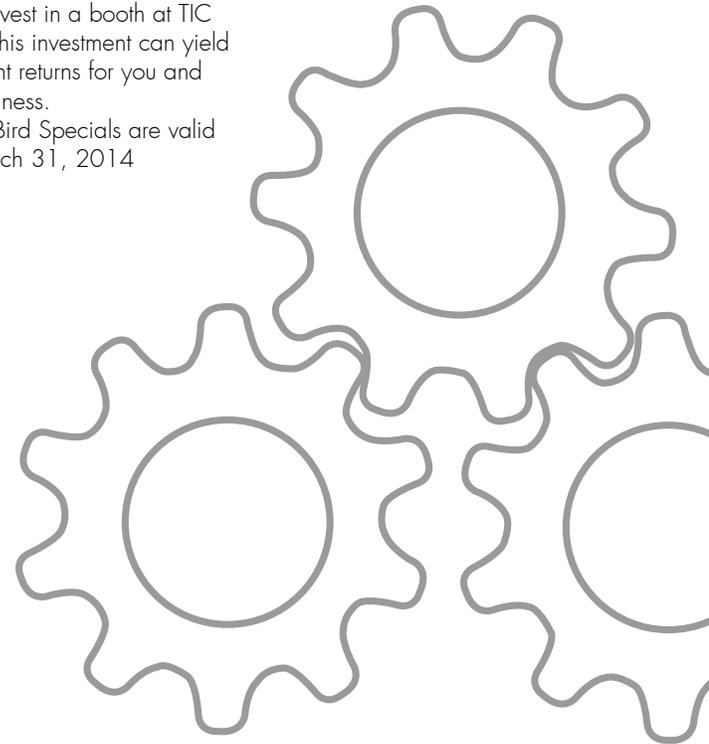
TIC takes place at the crossroads of the Americas, in Trinidad and Tobago, the region's financial capital and the largest economy in the Caribbean, with strong links to Central and South American companies and businesses from around the globe. The convention is a prime vehicle for enabling market expansion both regionally and internationally. It is a hub for business to business matchmaking, business education and multiple networking opportunities.

The TTMA invites you to seize this opportunity to take your business forward. This multi-sectoral tradeshow brings together local, regional and international businesses. Exhibitors with thousands of products meet hundreds of buyers seeking new suppliers, goods and services.

With structured networking events, a cutting-edge business education programme and assistance from an experienced team on hand to provide expert guidance and matchmaking services, TIC is the perfect opportunity to showcase your high quality, value added products and services. Let the international community see what you have to

offer – Invest in a booth at TIC 2014. This investment can yield significant returns for you and your business.

Early Bird Specials are valid until March 31, 2014



“Over the years, TIC has facilitated more than **US\$450 MILLION** in trade deals, hosted thousands of international buyers and exhibitors and earned a reputation as the Caribbean's largest business-to-business event!”

continued from page 3

## EXHIBITOR BOOTHS

3m x 2m - 1500 USD [Early bird price – 1300 USD]

3m x 3m – 1800 USD [Early bird price – 1600 USD]

3m x 4m – 2200 USD [Early bird price – 2000 USD]

## PAVILIONS

Small 6 x 3m x 3m – 9000 USD

Large 8 x 3m x 3m – 13,400 USD

Contact the TIC Secretariat for further details or to book your booth now!!

Tel: 1-868-675-TTMA (8862) ext 247 - Buyers; ext 223 - Sales

Fax: 1-868-675-9000

Exhibitors tic@ttma.com | ticexhibitors@ttma.com

Buyers ticsupport@ttma.com | ticbuyers@ttma.com

**Join us as we celebrate 15 years of creating opportunities for local, regional and international business!**



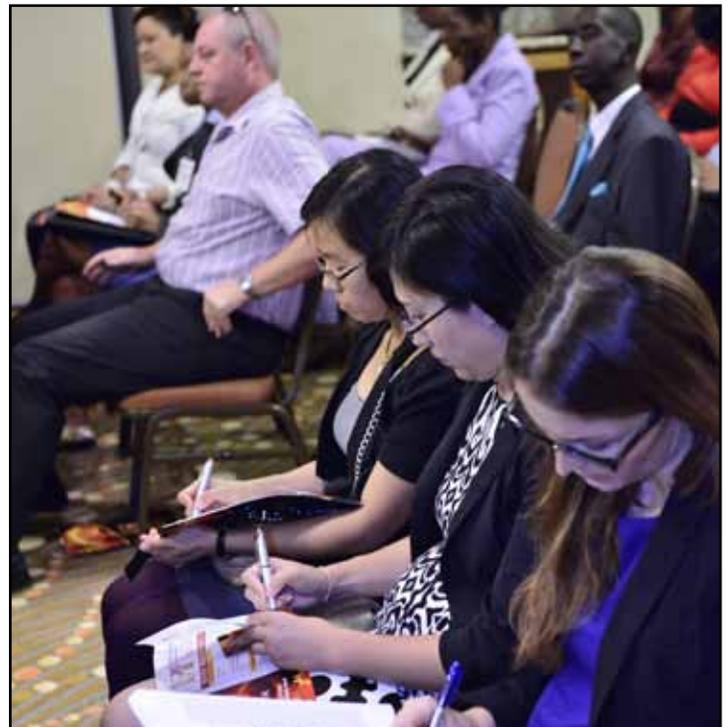
First Citizens CEO Larry Nath, left; Trade Minister Vasant Bharath; TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack; TSTT Executive VP, Enterprise Services Rakesh Goswami and Ramesh Ramdeen, CEO, TTMA.



Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment addresses guests at the TIC 2014 Media Launch



Mr. Ramesh Maharaj, General Manager, VenCaribbean receives his Exhibitor Appreciation Award from TTMA's President, Mr. Nicholas Lok Jack.



# PRESIDENT AND CEO OF CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS ADVISES T&T'S MANUFACTURERS: COMPETE ON QUALITY AND INNOVATION

Businesses in Trinidad and Tobago must adapt and focus on innovation in order to compete on an international level. That's the advice of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters President and CEO Dr Jayson Myers, who gave the feature address at the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association's President's dinner. The event took place on Wednesday 23rd October at the Hilton Trinidad.

Dr. Myers noted that local manufacturers need larger markets to be competitive and succeed. "Canada is a small economy. For a huge country, we're actually divided up, as you know, into regional markets. We've got a fairly small population compared to the United States, and here we were going into a free trade agreement with the United States, and we signed that free trade agreement in 1989," he said. "Between 1990 and 2002, manufacturing more than doubled. We couldn't have done that without the free trade agreement. The reason was you need a large market if you're going to specialise. You need a large market if you're going to succeed and take advantage of opportunities. You need a large market to achieve the economies of scale that are going to make you competitive."

Dr. Myers said manufacturers today compete in a global market with China and other developed economies that can outcompete

locals on price and volume. He advised manufacturers to see their business as providing solutions that customers need. "You can't compete on product and price alone. You have to compete on quality and innovation," he said.



Dr. Myers addresses the audience

The CME President noted that it's not about being competitive in a particular process or company, it's being competitive across the enterprise, across the whole business of manufacturing. "One of the lessons we've learned is that business as usual is not an option," Dr. Myers said. "If there's any company here that's doing business the same as they were five years ago, you're probably facing a lot of challenges. And if anybody in this room thinks that they're going to be doing business five years from now the same as they are today, good luck! Because the economy, the markets, the technology, the competition, is changing that rapidly."

He also noted that successful companies rely on a sound business strategy and leadership. "Successful companies position themselves as an integral part of their customers' success," Dr. Myers noted.

The CME President stated

that Canada has seen a lot of diversification in the last five years. "When I look at the successes in manufacturing, we've got great stories, we've got great products: I think of a young Hungarian who comes over in Windsor and starts fooling around with a young Scottish student and gets into IT and that's where this (Blackberry mobile phone) comes from. Or I think of a company that had to drag logs out of the forest in Quebec – I fly around in their planes today – Bombardier. All of these stories – Government didn't do it. Those were all stories driven by real entrepreneurs with the same type of spirit that I see here in Trinidad and Tobago," Dr. Myers said.

Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment, Vasant Bharath highlighted the critical role this country's manufacturing sector plays in the economy, noting that it is the second largest non petroleum sector. Minister Bharath noted that while the sector recorded a contraction of 0.4 per cent in 2012, it is expected to rebound, with growth estimated at 6.1 per cent in 2013. "The contribution to GDP of the manufacturing sector is projected to increase to 9.2 per cent in 2013, up from 8.8 per cent in 2012."



Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment

Minister Bharath assured TTMA members that his Ministry will continue to work with the TTMA to "remove all hindrances to doing business in Trinidad and Tobago and overcome those obstacles that hinder the growth of our non-energy sector".



TTMA President, Nicholas Lok Jack delivers his address



TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack presents award to Angostura Ltd.



TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack presents award to Bermudez Group



TTMA Director Franka Costelloe presents award to Bestcrete Ltd.



TTMA Director Franka Costelloe presents award to Caribbean Development Company Ltd.

To date, Trinidad and Tobago exports more than 80 per cent of Caricom's foreign trade and accounts for about 80 per cent of all intra-regional exports. To further increase this figure, arising from the proactive lobbying of the TTMA, Government has made provisions to improve the efficiency of the VAT refund system.”

-Bharath said.

“As an initial step in simplifying the VAT refund process for the manufacturing sector, the Government has made provision in the 2014 Budget statement and \$1 billion has been allocated for

all outstanding VAT refunds, with a view to ensuring that all future VAT refunds are made within the stipulated legal timeframe. “The Government will remove the VAT on all imported items of raw materials that goes into the manufacturing process.”

TTMA President, Nicholas Lok Jack praised manufacturers for driving the economy in the last two years. He noted, however, that business people must be aware of the current challenges, including a slowdown in demand for locally produced goods in the Caricom market. “Manufacturers must move nimbly and quickly to access extra-regional markets,” he stated. “To compete in these markets, however, we must drastically reduce our cost base. To do this, we must improve our productivity at the firm level, at the agency level, and at the country level.”

Mr. Lok Jack noted that the limiting factor of production is the availability of labour. “We must at least start the discussion on reforming and transforming our immigration policy with respect to the importation of labour,” Mr. Lok Jack said. “In a structured manner, before we find ourselves in a position where we have unwanted and undesired movement of people. We need to put a framework around it because the market forces will demand that it happens.”

The TTMA President applauded the initiatives of the Government

in driving free trade. “Free trade gives us access to larger markets,” he noted. “I’m calling on all manufacturers to go out there, do your market research; find a point of difference beyond price. Do not undersell ourselves, do not under-price our products, but go in there boldly.”

At the event, the TTMA honoured its founding member companies - Angostura Limited, Bermudez Group, Carib Glassworks Limited, the Caribbean Development Company Limited (Carib), Bestcrete Limited (now ABS Building Solutions) and B.H. Rose Limited.

The TTMA President’s Dinner was sponsored by RBC Caribbean Banking (title sponsor), Methanex Limited (silver sponsor) and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment (silver sponsor). TTMA also partnered with Canadian High Commission in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre on this event, which was attended by more than 200 representatives of TTMA member companies.

Dr. Myers toured a number of

manufacturing facilities, during his visit to Trinidad and Tobago, where he was shown examples of the capabilities of manufacturers in this country. Dr. Myers visited Methanex Limited, Abel/Bestcrete Limited, Angostura Limited, and Associated Brands Industries Limited. During the visit by the CME representatives, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two organizations, with the goal of promoting mutually advantageous commercial and industrial interests. The MOU establishes a general framework of cooperation between the two business support organizations to promote enhanced



The group of sponsors along with Dr. Jon Myers.



Charles Percy- Managing Director & CEO, Methanex, Dr. Myers and TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack



TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack, Dr. Jayson Myers and Robert Wong- CEO, Angostura



TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack shows Dr. Jayson Myers one of Charles Candy's production lines

economic relations between Trinidad & Tobago and Canada.

Among other areas to be defined by the Parties, the scope of mutual cooperation in this MOU includes:

- Promotion of trade and investment exchanges between the two countries;
- Exchange of printed or electronic information, reports and publications on issues of mutual interest;
- Mutual support for participation in commercial fairs, exhibitions, forums, conferences or similar events as jointly determined by the Parties;
- Organization of initiatives to promote business opportunities between entrepreneurs of both countries;
- Encouragement of the exchange of delegations and commercial missions, as well as visits of individuals or groups of entrepreneurs; and,
- Mutual support in the implementation of studies, research or surveys that could be valuable to each Party, with the realization of cooperative relations.



Dr. Myers at the Control Room at Methanex



Dr. Myers and TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack shake hands after signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters



Dr. Myers, ABEL Managing Director, Jason Mohammed, TTMA President Nicholas Lok Jack and Craig La Croix- Deputy Managing Director, ABEL Building Solutions

**ABOUT DR. MYERS**

Dr. Jayson Myers is the president and CEO of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Canada's largest industry and trade association. CME is dedicated to improving business conditions for Canada's manufacturers and exporters and helping its more than 10,000 members compete and win in domestic and international markets.

Mr. Myers is also the chair of the Canadian Manufacturing Coalition, a coalition of more than 40 industry associations that have come together to speak with a common voice on priority issues for Canada's manufacturing sector.

Mr. Myers is a well-known economic commentator, and is widely published in the fields of Canadian and international economics, as well as technological and industrial change. He has been recognized by consulting firm Watson Wyatt as the most accurate economic forecaster in Canada.

Mr. Myers sits on special advisory councils to the Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Industry, Immigration Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Canadian Border Services Agency. He is co-chair of Canada's Roundtable on Workforce Skills and Vice-Chair of both the Ontario Manufacturing Council and the Great Lakes Manufacturing Council.

Mr. Myers studied at Queen's University, Kingston, and the University of British Columbia in Canada, and at the London School of Economics and Oxford University in the United Kingdom. He has held teaching and research positions at Oxford University and Warwick University, also in the U.K.



# SACHA COSMETICS THE BUSINESS OF BEAUTY

By: Giselle Roberts, Team Lead, Business Development Unit, TTMA

Inspired by his mother, Madame Maharaj, the Grand Dame of Beauty, who owned a beauty salon with her bright red hair and astute business sense, Kama Maharaj started Sacha Cosmetics Limited in a shed behind his family's house 35 years ago in Freeport, Trinidad. Kama Maharaj was a 26 year old teacher with a degree in Economics and meager savings. Kama has today defined Sacha Cosmetics Limited as a regional powerhouse and an internationally recognized market leader in makeup for women of exotic skin.

**"WE DO NOT SELL COSMETICS; WE MAKE WOMEN LOOK BEAUTIFUL."**

Kama Maharaj offers 35 years of expert knowledge and insight into Customer Satisfaction and Relationship Management as keys for local businesses to become globally competitive. His business philosophy is based upon brand development in a niche market and differentiating his brand and products in tangible and meaningful ways. Kama states that the easy part in making a business successful is to identify a need and satisfy it; but satisfying the need is based entirely upon customer satisfaction. For instance, to satisfy the needs of Islamic women, the Company proactively worked with the Islamic certifying authority and today,

Sacha is the world's first cosmetics brand that is Halal certified.

**"AIM TO BUILD A BRAND FOR A NICHE MARKET. IN A NICHE MARKET COMPETITORS ARE LIMITED AND COMPETITION DRIVES DOWN PRICES. IN A NICHE MARKET, WITH FEWER COMPETITORS, PRICE IS NOT NECESSARILY CO-RELATED TO INPUTS BUT MORE SO TO WHAT THE CONSUMER IS WILLING TO PAY."**

Sacha Cosmetics Limited positions the satisfaction of the customer as priority and as such it takes precedence in every facet of the business. Kama explains that many companies tend to innovate and develop product lines by improving on something that already exists. However, in developing a line exclusively for women with exotic skin, there was nothing to copy so this required true innovation. Kama recognized that no brand catered specifically to this niche and felt confident that there was an unfulfilled market need which he could successfully satisfy.

In targeting this specific niche, Kama had to innovate to ensure that he had a globally competitive product that could be worn by all women with exotic skin, regardless of ethnicity. In spite of many successes and accolades, Sacha Cosmetics is always improving their product offering. Kama's philosophy

of trying to offer maximum satisfaction to the customer reigns supreme and has demanded many years of research and development.

**"COMPETING AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DEEP POCKETS IS HONESTLY LIKE DAVID AND GOLIATH EVERY DAY. DO NOT TRY TO COMPETE ON GOLIATH'S TERMS; CREATE YOUR OWN TERMS AND LEVERAGE YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES."**

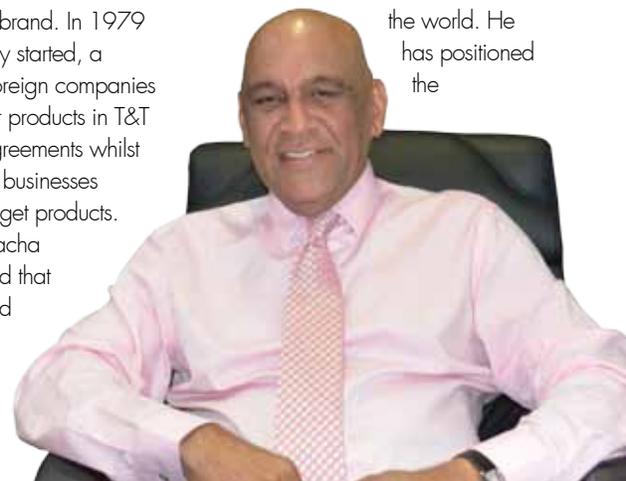
With international powerhouses like Revlon; Maybelline; MAC; Estee Lauder and many more, competing in the global Cosmetics Industry is challenging to say the least. Competing against companies with marketing and brand development budgets the size of a small country's national budget may seem daunting and perhaps ludicrous to many entrepreneurs. However, Sacha Cosmetics has been able to rise to the challenge and stand firmly rooted as a profitable, quality brand. In 1979 when the company started, a number of these foreign companies manufactured their products in T&T under licensing agreements whilst the local cosmetic businesses manufactured budget products. From inception, Sacha Cosmetics believed that their product should represent quality and refused to

compete in the budget category.

Sacha Cosmetics confirmed a deal with April Love Pro Makeup Academy in Los Angeles in 2011. Owner and Master Educator, April has been in the beauty industry for over 18 years. From salon management, to hairstyling to global education – she has done it all. April Love has made it mandatory that all students use the Sacha Cosmetics designer makeup kit with an array of Sacha's cosmetics. The school conducts their training with products from Sacha Cosmetics. April Love also sells to other major makeup schools across Los Angeles. The demand for Sacha's products is high amongst makeup schools in California as there is a high prevalence of Latina women, all with exotic skin.

Kama Maharaj has been able to tap into a niche market in Los Angeles which is one of the most sophisticated and quality-conscious

cosmetics markets in the world. He has positioned the



Mr. Kama Maharaj, Managing Director, SACHA Cosmetics Limited



company's products with the leading makeup academy. California represents 40% of premium cosmetic sales in America and Kama has been able to maximize his competitive advantage by entering the market targeting the makeup schools that are looking for a single line that works equally well on all skin tones.

Sacha has been selling its brand online, primarily in the USA for over 15 years and has a number of retail customers and resellers throughout the country. However Los Angeles, with its large and growing Latin population, has been targeted as the company's first venture into physical outlets.

According to Kama, Latina women wear 5-10 times more make up than Caucasian American and European women. Although sales in the Caribbean community have been very positive for the company, these are small markets with limited incomes and the true potential for growth lies in Latin America. Sacha Cosmetics is presently focusing on the Central and South American markets and will soon be opening their first self-owned kiosks in Panama. Panama represents a haven for the business with some of the world's most beautiful women but more importantly – the market is mixed with a plethora of exotic skin types. With duty free shopping; direct flights between Trinidad

and Panama; access to Central and South America as well as the expansion of the Panama Canal – Sacha Cosmetics anticipates that this will be a very profitable venture since the company will enjoy significant margins as a low-cost manufacturer selling at premium retail prices.

The Latin American market has also been of particular interest to the company as the response to the brand by potential retail chains in Venezuela, Columbia and Cuba have been very positive. The Cuban market offers great opportunity for local manufacturers and the cosmetics industry is no different. Sacha Cosmetics had an exclusive arrangement in the Cuban market four years ago with one of the country's leading distributors. This distributor however suffered financial difficulties and the company has successfully secured a new arrangement with a new distributor TRD Caribe, the largest distributor in Latin America with 2179 outlets. TRD Caribe will exclusively sell Sacha's products and no other cosmetics brand in Cuba, giving the brand a significant presence throughout the country.

Sacha Cosmetics has strategically positioned their product in markets where customer demand for beauty products for exotic skin is in high demand. Customer satisfaction is based upon quality and

performance and not price and the company continues to build upon this competitive advantage.

**"THE PERCEPTION OF T&T IS PREDOMINANTLY POSITIVE. PRODUCTS HERE ARE GENERALLY HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM AND OF HIGH QUALITY."**

Kama Maharaj speaks very positively of Trinidad and Tobago as a destination for business. Kama encourages local entrepreneurs to recognize the beauty of our islands for product testing. The various religious backgrounds and ethnicities of our islands facilitates easy research, development and testing. Kama suggests that one of the toughest markets in the world to be successful in is Trinidad and Tobago. The perception by locals that local products are not good or lack quality compared to foreign brands is a real challenge to every entrepreneur. Sacha Cosmetics faced this challenge and tackled it head on. The company acknowledges that they had to ensure that they manufactured products of the highest quality possible to positively impact the perception of the local customer. Kama Maharaj suggests that once a company can perform successfully with the foreign competitors in the local market, at the same price range, they can do so in any other market. If they can't, then they ought to ensure that they do before they

attempt to export since everywhere else you will face the same competitors. In this regard, T&T is an ideal testing ground. Today, Sacha has stores across the country as well as training programmes to improve the skills of professional makeup artists as well as for personal use.

In 1926, when Stanley Marcus started to work in Neiman Marcus, the store co-founded by his father, Herbert Marcus, he was given this advice: "There is never a good sale for Neiman Marcus unless it's a good buy for the customer." Sacha Cosmetics has been able to differentiate their product from internationally acclaimed brands due to extensive detail to research and development with quality and customer satisfaction at the forefront of their business. Kama Maharaj remains committed to working on his value proposition to customers and believes that he will be able to expand market share extensively in coming years.

**"THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS AND ENTERING NEW MARKETS IS EXPENSIVE BUT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IS A TERRIFIC PLACE TO DO BUSINESS SO FORGET THE NEGATIVES AND FOCUS ON THE POSITIVES, OF WHICH THERE ARE MANY. NO ONE HAS EVER QUESTIONED SACHA'S QUALITY; NO ONE HAS EVER QUESTIONED THE MADE IN T&T BRAND."**

# INSIDE THE MIND OF KEVIN AYOUNG- JULIEN

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, KAJ DESIGNS



*Kevin Ayoung-Julien carefully drapes fabric as he creates a look in the Kaj Resort 13/14 collection, Tribu Sauvage.*

*Photo courtesy estuary PR*

## WHEN DID YOU START DESIGNING CLOTHES?

I launched Kaj Designs in 2005 with my debut as a designer at Caribbean Fashionweek in Kingston, Jamaica. My premiere collection, Chachalaca, which paid homage to my homeland, Tobago, featured combinations of feathers, coconut shell and burlap. This was my first attempt at creating garments and designing a collection.

## WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY/VISION?

I like to think of the fashion and design process as an extension of myself - an emotional reaction in expressing thoughts, feelings, taste, and flair, but most importantly, creating a vehicle for the self-expression of others. As such, it can be a nerve-racking process with the understanding of how the translation of my musings may impact culture, trends and markets. I like to challenge myself to produce a design that intimates my Caribbean origin, whilst rendering creations that are sophisticated, impeccably made and translate well in any cosmopolitan setting. I'm steered by the fine details.

Often, sensuality, movement and flirtation intrigue me. This fuels my enchantment with how these elements inter-relate. I'm also equally fascinated with cross-cultural history and iconography. The inter-mingling of these elements, coupled with a contemporary approach using classic silhouettes usually form the basis for birthing the Kaj concept.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE KAJFAB?

KajFAB is a term that we have coined to describe any person or energy that exudes the essence of Kaj Designs or the FABulosity that is Kaj Designs.

KajFAB is about elegant glamour that is NOT in your face or intrusive or gaudy. It is about being subtle yet assertive. It is about being confident...it is about the woman who gets what she wants exactly when and how she wants it. It is about living the life you love and loving the life you live. Being FABulous is a lifestyle.

## HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A FASHION DESIGNER?

No. I got my calling and never turned away from it.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO MAKE ACCESSORIES IN THE FUTURE?

Accessories are already included in our product line, however in recent years we have not focused on producing accessories. It is our intention to develop production of accessories in the future so that accessories are a consistent part of our product offerings.

## WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGNERS THAT INSPIRE YOU?

I am inspired by the work of Mara Hoffman, Zac Posen, Alexander McQueen and Meiling.

## HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CARIBBEAN WOMAN'S STYLE?

I find that we in the Caribbean are still in a place of defining our own style. We are often influenced by the trends of foreign cultures and landscapes.

## WHAT MOTIVATED YOUR MORE RECENT DESIGNS?

I have always been fond of prints but I wanted to present it in a way that is current, relevant and easily wearable when applied to the lifestyle of the sophisticated, confident and traveling woman. It was important to me that the designs could translate from a resort to a contemporary urban context and in so doing, challenge the traditional view of resort wear.

## WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU HIGHLIGHTING FOR NEXT SEASON?

I am leaning toward revisiting and expanding on previous silhouettes presented by Kaj, which I feel were not explored enough given prior limitations.

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE EXPERIENCE AS A DESIGNER?

My brand being exported and receiving recognition on the international fashion landscape.

## WHAT MAKES YOUR DESIGNS UNIQUE TO YOU?

My ability to use classic silhouettes to give a woman an elevated experience, which is derived from a heightened sense of femininity and sensuality.

## WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING ABOUT DESIGNING AND PRODUCING LOCALLY?

The local framework makes the process of design and production very prohibitive. The

Sleeveless raglan maxi dress



system is stuck in what was and there is a feeling that there is little space for a new dispensation in fashion. It leaves one with a sense that their voice is silenced. It is difficult to be heard... it is a challenge to present a new note. You do not receive merit for innovative ideas and novel initiatives. Our resources are limited, which forces us into having to dig deep and be creative in order to achieve our objectives.

### WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT IS YOUR NEXT SET OF GOALS?

Our main focus is on securing long term financing to be able to effectively activate our business and marketing strategies.

### WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU HAVE LEARNT BEING IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY?

A sound module must be designed and adhered to. Consistency is key to success.

### WHAT PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING OUT AS A DESIGNER?

It is not always a theoretical decision. It is something you have to be passionate about. You have to be open to learning and adapting. Things change quickly so you must be able to adapt easily while also staying true to your vision and who you are.

### KAJ DESIGNS – BRAND ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2007, the label's couture swimwear was featured at the 2007 Miss World pageant.
- In 2009, during Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival season the label's work was featured at all-inclusive events island-wide as Carib Beer models sported Kaj creations in the promotion of Carib Brewery's 2009 Brew House campaign.
- In April 2009, Select pieces

from Kaj's 2008 collection, WILD THINGS, featured at a private showing for the spouses of diplomats and heads of state during the 5th Summit of the Americas, held in Trinidad and Tobago.

- In February 2011, Kaj Designs outfitted Antigua's soca sweetheart, Claudette "CP" Peters, for her feature performance on the musical TV programme, De Mo Kat Not, which aired on Guadeloupe's leading TV station, Guadeloupe 1ère, and in France on France TV.
- In June 2011, Kaj launched in the French Caribbean with the placement of the Kaj Resort line at Guadeloupe's exclusive Caribbean boutique, KOD.
- In 2012, The Kaj Resort 2010/2011 collection, Shore Culture, featured in London at an exhibition held at The Charing Cross Hotel while select pieces featured at a private showing at the Corinthia Hotel as part of the Caribbean Collections which was presented in the inaugural International Fashion Showcase at London Fashion Week A/W 2012.
- In May 2013, Kaj exhibited at Intermezzo in New York City.
- In May 2013, the label lead the Caribbean as the first brand to exhibit and show at Singapore's foremost fashion tradeshow, BLUEPRINT, during Singapore's fashion week, Asia Fashion Exchange.
- On May 16, 2013, the new Kaj Resort 13/14 collection, Tribu Sauvage, made its runway debut at the fashion tradeshow, BLUEPRINT, during Singapore's fashion week, Asia Fashion Exchange, to an audience of buyers and media including David Jones of Australia, Harvey Nichols of Hong Kong, Edition of Japan, Vogue Japan, Vogue Italia,

Harper's BAZAAR UK and Senken Shimbun of Japan.

- On August 31, 2013, the Kaj brand was the only Caribbean brand to show in Bali at the inaugural Fashion Festival Bali.
- By the end of the first quarter of 2014, the Kaj brand will be available for online retail at Global Runway via www.global-runway.com.
- **The Kaj brand has been featured in the following international publications:**
- The Independent Magazine (a publication of Britain's daily newspaper, The Independent)
- The US magazine, Sister 2 Sister
- New York's exclusive publication, Ins&Outs Magazine
- New York's international fashion blog, Au Courant
- New York's Caribbean newspaper, New York Carib News
- Guadeloupe's newspaper, La Gazette Des Caraïbes
- Guadeloupe's daily newspaper, France-Antilles
- Jamaica's daily newspaper, The Observer
- Caribbean Airlines' in-flight

magazine, Caribbean Beat

- Primaris Airlines' in-flight magazine, Caribbean LIFE
- The international fashion publication, Ocean Style
- Leading Caribbean magazine, SHE Caribbean
- Fashion blog, BeautyPulseLondon
- Online fashion magazine, ComplexD Magazine
- Lifestyle blog, Existrospectives by Exist Media
- International fashion and lifestyle blog, Esther-Lee.com
- Fashion and style community website, Fashion Hungry
- Miami's daily newspaper, The Miami Herald
- Boston's daily newspaper, The Boston Globe
- International business publication, International Business Times
- CBS's financial publication, CBS Money Watch
- With its humble Intermezzo debut, Kaj successfully captured the attention of New York's leading fashion industry publication, The Daily Front Row. Amidst more than 900 of the world's foremost fashion brands, Kaj was featured in TheDailyFrontRow.com's haute highlights alongside Alice and Olivia, Nicole Miller, L.A.M.B. and Rebecca Minkoff.



Raglan tee with classic trousers with pocket accents



Kevin Ayoung-Julien is interviewed for Ocean Style TV at the 2012 Ocean Style Fashion Showcase. Photo courtesy Mark Gellineau

# Trade show solutions



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with you to thoroughly analyze your trade show display needs and help you select the optimum booth design and graphics to meet your event requirements, budget and sales goals. You only get one chance to make that first impression, so it's important to ensure that it accurately reflects your company identity and values. Let us help you create that 'WOW FACTOR' at your next Tradeshow.



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# FLAVORITE FOODS LIMITED

## LOCAL PIONEER IN THE USE OF HYDROCARBON REFRIGERANTS

By: Anthony Banfield, Technical Manager, Flavorite Foods Limited

In the mid 1980s British scientists confirmed the hypothesis put forward in the early 1970s by two atmospheric chemists that the man made synthetic refrigerants called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) which were used to cool our refrigerators, air conditioned spaces, automobiles and other refrigerated domestic and commercial appliances and equipment were destroying the ozone layer. The ozone layer is a layer of gas in the atmosphere that prevents ultraviolet radiation harmful to life from reaching the planet's surface.

In order to arrest and try to reverse the loss of the ozone layer an international treaty was designed in 1987 called the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone layer. This environmental multilateral agreement was entered into force in 1989, and it set forth a timetable by country for the reduction in use and eventual band of production of substances believed to contribute to the destruction of the ozone layer.

With CFCs becoming scarce in Trinidad and Tobago around the early 2000s Flavorite Foods Limited had to seek alternative refrigerants for use in its point of sales ice cream freezers in the market place. The popular and most talked about alternative refrigerants at that time were hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Changing over a CFC refrigeration system to use either of these two alternatives is not a simple straight forward conversion; it requires replacing certain components in the system and also the lubricant used, it is time consuming and costly.

Also to be taken into consideration was the

environmental and climate impact of these alternative refrigerants. CFCs which were being phased out, in addition to contributing to the destruction of the ozone layer is also a potent greenhouse gas, meaning it causes global warming. In consideration of the other two alternatives HCFCs will continue to destroy the ozone layer although to a lesser extent than CFCs and both HCFCs and HFCs are potent global warming gases.

Another alternative refrigerant was also available, the use of a hydrocarbon (HC) refrigerant. At that time this refrigerant was not being used in Canada nor the United States but was being widely used especially in domestic refrigerators in Europe and Australia. Hydrocarbon refrigerants are natural refrigerants derived from petroleum refining operations. They include propane, iso-butane and blends of other hydrocarbon gases. These refrigerants do not cause ozone depletion and have a negligible effect on global warming. Also changing over a refrigeration system that initially used a CFC refrigerant to use a hydrocarbon refrigerant designed to replace that CFC is straight forward requiring only the replacement of the refrigerant, therefore not expensive and using the HC refrigerant requires about 35% to 48% of the initial CFC refrigerant charge. In addition an HC refrigerant system results in the system operating more efficiently and can consume about 10% less electrical energy. The only concern with HC refrigerants is that they are flammable substances. But with proper training given to refrigeration technicians these refrigerants are safe to use and work with.

Flavorite Foods Limited had



a decision to make, (1) switch to the HCFCs which are also ozone depleters and will eventually be phased out under the Montreal Protocol, which will then mean having to replace refrigerant and alter the system again, (2) switch to HFCs which are climate harmful and under scrutiny, or (3) switch to the HCs which are both environmentally and climate friendly natural refrigerants.

Flavorite Foods Limited took the decision to switch to HC refrigerants directly due to its economic advantage, more efficient operation, lesser electrical energy consumption and also wanting to play its part in contributing positively to the impact on the environment. Maintenance personnel responsible for ice cream freezer repair were given in house training and guidance on the safe handling and use of these refrigerants and the first conversions were done in house in 2007. These conversions allowed our refrigeration technicians to gain experience and confidence working with these flammable refrigerants.

As problems arose with ice cream freezers in the trade that required refrigerant replacement HC refrigerants were used. To date we have about 100 of these

HC converted freezers operating in the trade in both Trinidad and Tobago, and we continue to convert when the nature of the problem is such that refrigerant needs to be charged into the system. After an ice cream freezer has been converted it is labelled with the HC refrigerant used for easy identification by our maintenance and servicing team. We have also converted some of our chill storage rooms on the factory compound to utilize the HC refrigerants. And have also purchased new ice cream freezers that use HC refrigerant.

Our manufacturing plant and main finished goods cold storage warehouse use ammonia in the refrigeration system. Ammonia is also a natural refrigerant that is very energy efficient, does not cause ozone depletion and has negligible global warming impact.

Being the largest ice cream manufacturer in the English speaking Caribbean customers and consumers can purchase our wide range of delicious products knowing that Flavorite Foods Limited is carrying out its operations while being committed to reducing its impact on the environment thereby striving to ensure LIFE IS GOOD.

# OZONE DEPLETION AND COUNTRY PRIDE

By: Stephanie Downing, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Coordinator, Nutrimix Flour Mills



## About Us

Wheat is believed to be the first food crop raised by humans. It is one of the basic ingredients used in Trinidad and Tobago for making breads, cakes, rotis, doubles biscuits and cereals. With this in mind, The Nutrimix Group of Companies incorporated Nutrimix Flour Mills with the aim of delivering quality flour and unrivaled service to industries, bakeries, supermarkets and local food vendors at affordable prices.

Nutrimix Flour Mills is a state of the art flour mill that has one of the world's best cleaning and milling systems, supplied and installed by Buhler of Switzerland. At Nutrimix Flour Mills, we take pride in our products and are strongly committed to supporting and stimulating sustainable agricultural practices. We are aware that agriculture accounts for a notable part of the environmental impact along the food chain, including impacts on water, air quality, climate, soil and biodiversity.

Nutrimix Flour Mills has carefully implemented cleaning and sanitization, fumigation and insect monitoring systems that make flour production not only food safe, but also adding minimal contribution to Ozone Depletion.

## Pest Management

Stored-product insect pests reduce the quality of stored grain and processed grain products around the world. Pest management is important not only to maintain consumer confidence, but also because federal laws regulate insect presence in processing facilities and insect fragments in processed goods. Pest Management, together with facility sanitization issues, present ongoing struggles for managers at flour mills, feed mills and other grain processing facilities. Nutrimix Flour Mills has placed major emphasis on its Pest Management Program by allowing the use of integrated strategies to reduce the need for chemical fumigations in order to control insect infestation.

## Cleaning and Sanitization

Nutrimix Flour Mills has invested much time and effort into our cleaning and sanitization and monitoring programs. This is done to minimize and identify the pattern of distribution of pest species.

## Product Testing and Approval

All of our grains imported out of the USA is inspected and checked by the United States Department of Agriculture (Federal Grain Inspection Service), to ensure and verify that all standards have been met. Consequently, an Official Export Certificate, as well as Phytosanitary Certificate, are issued and accompanied with all shipments. The cargo and documents are further

scrutinized by the Plant Quarantine Department at the port of entry before discharging operations. This ensures that no pest or diseases enter the country.

## Routine Inspections and Monitoring

Good inbound raw material product testing and monitoring, together with regular and prompt cleaning of spills and equipment are carried out. Routine inspections are also done on equipment which may lead to a source of infestation.

As a method of monitoring pest activity, Nutrimix Flour Mills has installed bait stations, moth traps and beetle traps throughout the facility. Each station or trap contains bait pheromones or attractant oil which are deemed "food friendly" or made of natural substances.

## Environmentally Friendly Fumigation Methods

If however, insect infestation does occur, fumigation is the primary tool used to manage it. Fumigation is the application of a chemical gas or smoke to an area for the purpose of disinfecting it. Methyl Bromide was initially one of the major fumigants used widely in food processing and storage facilities for the suppression of stored-product insect pests, however, it was gradually phased out as part of the Montreal Protocol. In abiding by this, Nutrimix Flour Mills has replaced Methyl Bromide with alternative

chemicals or gas fumigants and tablets that offer an effective and safe replacement to that of Methyl Bromide. These tablets, and/or gas, reduces flammability risks, produces no spent residues, and personnel safety is enhanced because of its remote application that eliminates the need to enter the fumigated area. It is also extremely effective against all stages of the target pests.

Nutrimix Flour Mills has also extended its efforts in promoting environmental friendliness by instilling fire safety measures that assist restoring the ozone layer. One approach is by replacing all fire extinguishers in and around the flour mill with dry chemical and carbon dioxide.

Flour milling is basically a dry process and produces negligible waste. Even though this is the case, Nutrimix Flour Mills has implemented



operations that ensure a prudent use of natural resources, an effective protection of the environment during the entire production process, and the production of valuable co-products in order to minimize waste and guard the ozone layer from destruction.

# RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE LOGISTICS AND PROCUREMENT



Dr. Zaffar Khan Programme Director MBA SEM and MBA ITLP and Kathryn Siram, Researcher, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, UWI.

Businesses in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) and the Caribbean are performing at the sub-optimal level which has an impact on countries GDP. This article aims to highlight challenges facing the supply chain activities of firms which contribute to their failure to attain optimal performance and strategies considered to improve business performance.

## WHAT IS PROCUREMENT?

Procurement is “the process of obtaining goods and services within a supply chain” and is often categorized into either ‘direct procurement’ or ‘indirect procurement’. (Chopra & Meindl 2013). The procurement process includes elements like purchase planning, price negotiations, supply contract management and inventory control.

## WHAT IS RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT?

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is defined as “processes that take place between an enterprise and its customers downstream in the supply chain” (Chopra & Meindl 2013). The aim of CRM is to create customer demand and aid placement and tracking of orders. CRM processes include marketing, pricing, sales, order management and call/service center.

Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) is defined as “processes focused on the interaction between the enterprise and suppliers that are upstream in the supply chain” (Chopra & Meindl 2013). SRM aims to organize and supervise supply

sources for goods and services. SRM processes include design collaboration, supplier selection, negotiations, buying and communication with suppliers.

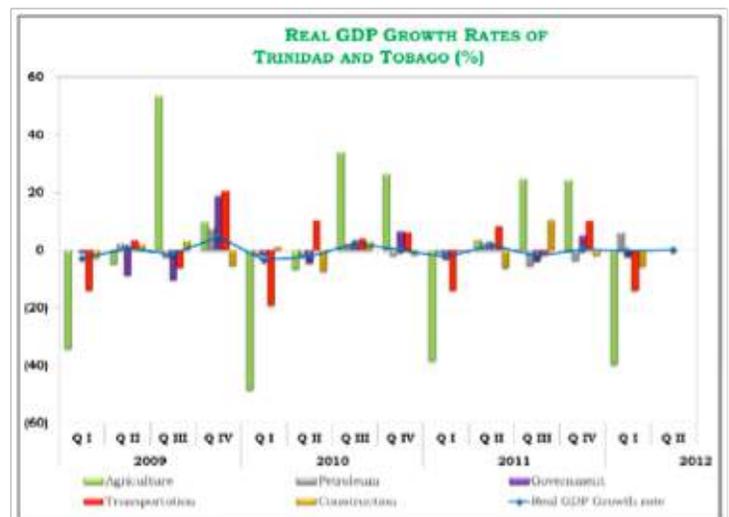
## WHY ARE THESE RELATIONSHIPS CRITICAL FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATION SUCCESS?

All supply chain actions of a firm belong to CRM, SRM or Internal Supply Chain Management (ISCM) which are macro processes. For a firm to achieve optimal performance and organization success in relation to supply chain management it is critical that the relationship between these processes is well integrated as they direct the “flow of information, product and fund” necessary for generating, receiving and fulfilling a customer request” (Chopra & Meindl 2013). CRM and SRM processes can impact a firm’s financial operations “as measured by economic value added” (Lambert 2008). CRM can affect total expenses, sales, investment in inventory and fixed assets and cost of goods sold while SRM can impact strategic sourcing, procurement initiatives, costs and product innovation (Lambert 2008). CRM and SRM provide the crucial linkages throughout the firm’s supply chain.

## CHALLENGES

Challenges to developing and managing business relationships in T&T and the region include:

**Culture:** national, organizational and corporate culture is a critical factor which affects supply chain



relationships. Cultures often displayed incorporate elements of arrogance, bureaucracy and red-tape, unreasonable demands, inability to make decisions, poor planning, incompatible beliefs, customs, ideas and values and difficulty in achieving change.

## Power and Leadership issues:

managers are expected to be effective leaders but often differences in understanding of leadership occur due to firms’ varying “philosophies and approaches” (Lambert 2008). This can result in changing policies impacting suppliers, making decisions which are unclear or complex, establishing onerous terms and conditions and even corruption.

## Relationship management:

some business leaders, firms or different departments within the same firm do not focus on supplier and customer relationships which can result in lack of trust and biases.

## Weak in competencies important for supply chain management:

competencies include Negotiation; Contract Preparation; Contractor Resource Management; Inventory/Supply Management; Logistics and Transportation Management; Operations/Logistics Strategy Development; Intellectual Property Management; International Business and Multicultural Skills; Contract Administration and Management; Management of Working Relationships with Suppliers; Global Sourcing and Risk Management (HRSG 2013).

## Poor communication and integration:

this often exists between different departments in a business which handle the CRM, ISCM and SRM activities.

**Lack of coordination:** results in cost increases and occurs because of clashing aims at different stages of the supply chain or delay/

distortion of information between stages. Obstacles to coordination range from incentive, information-processing, operational, pricing and behavioral (Chopra & Meindl 2013).

**Poor State of Customer Service:** in T&T poor customer service management processes are known to affect business performance.

**Tension between unions and management:** is often the cause of business disruption in T&T and has resulted in confrontations and mistrust (Lambert 2008).

**High inequality indices:** the Caribbean region faces some of the highest inequality indices globally in addition to significant deficiencies in technology, competitiveness, innovation and infrastructure (ECLAC 2012). T&T in particular, requires institutional strengthening and a boost to innovation and productivity (TTMA 2012).

## STRATEGIES

Strategies recommended to address these challenges include:

**Enhance standard leadership skills:** supply chain professionals must have the ability to promote “close interpersonal relationships” which develop credibility for themselves and the supply chain function throughout the organization (SCMR 2012). Leaders are expected to build collaborative teams, manage people and communicate with stakeholders.

**Improve global business leadership skills:** to make a firm’s supply chain global, professionals must have the ability to operate in the international business arena which involves adapting to different cultures;

understanding how global risk will affect business; fully comprehend global supply chain logistics in terms of optimizing import and export flows, sourcing, and dealing with international labor issues (Dittman 2013).

**Develop negotiation and communication skills:** to allow persons to operate more professionally in a dynamic environment (Dittman 2013). An increase in negotiation and communication efforts has a strong influence on the success or failure of the supply chain.

**Advance integrated business planning skills:** to enable persons to deal with cross-functional and cross-enterprise matters which form a large share of supply chain management. This will also help supply chain professionals master the skill of planning and designing “the end-to-end supply chain” (Dittman 2013).

**Provide the link between supply chain performance and organizational success:** leaders in supply chain management must master combining “expertise in material flow management with outstanding knowledge of information and financial flow” (Dittman 2013).

**Offer education and skill training in core supply chain management competencies:** professionals must gain expertise in managing supply chain functions like inventory management, warehousing, transportation, production planning and customer and supplier relationships (SCMR 2012).

**Alter the way supply chain is viewed:** to achieve top performance, professionals need the ability to embrace the supply

chain as a “system” as well as understand the associations and interdependencies across “procurement, logistics, manufacturing, and marketing” (SCMR 2012).

**Enhance coordination skills:** lack of coordination impacts negatively on the performance at each stage and results in a loss of trust which ultimately hurts relationships at different supply chain stages.

**Improve customer service management skills:** to progress in the competitive business environment, firms’ must implement a customer service strategy and corrective measures to address situations before customers are negatively affected (Lambert 2008).

**Enhance managerial skills to promote trust and commitment:** in order to facilitate partnerships managers must have the ability to establish a level of trust and commitment, reduce conflict and create a balanced relationship (Lambert 2008).

**Impart competencies for conflict resolution:** to improve a firm’s CRM and SRM activities through more effective partnership management models and related implementation for example (Lambert 2008).

In the past, the role of a supply chain manager was primarily functional and depended on technical expertise in areas such as shipping routes, freight rates, fuel costs, inventory management and warehousing (SCMR 2012). Today however, the expectations of a supply chain professional have changed radically, well beyond a functional role. The supply chain process now

stretches end-to-end, inside and outside of the business to include customer and supplier relationship management. Professionals in this field are now expected to fulfill not only functional competency role but also process expertise role (SCMR 2012). The demand for supply chain professionals with these added competencies are increasing and will continue to rise as businesses strive for optimal performance.

In T&T and the wider region, businesses have been performing sub-optimally due to a number of challenges which impact supply chain management. The best way to address these challenges involve imparting the necessary knowledge and skills through education and workshops to supply chain professionals in order to enable this shift in role from functional to process focused and create leaders in the field.

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# TTMA HOSTS PRONET TRAINING FOR SMEs

By: Joy Francis, ProNet Training Consultant

Between November 25th to November 27th, 2013, The Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) hosted a training session referred to as the ProNet workshop. The workshop was designed to provide training and development for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Facilitated by ProNet facilitators or trainers, the workshop aimed to fulfil the goal of making regional SMEs export ready and positioned to take advantage of the opportunities available under various markets. This was not the first ProNet workshop hosted by TTMA in that two (2) training workshops were conducted previously in 2012. By providing such training, TTMA sought to promote export readiness and develop capacity that will allow increased competitiveness and sustainability of the SME sector. TTMA is determined to develop projects that lead to diversification and build the capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and hence the involvement in the ProNet project.

## So what is ProNet?

ProNet is a practical skills training programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The programme was

developed by Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Based on experiential learning methodology, ProNet allows for participants to accumulate knowledge through learning from practical business experiences. In terms of background of the project, ProNet came out of the findings of onsite visits to companies during an earlier INWEnt (now GIZ) and the Caribbean Export Training Initiative. In 2010, InWEnt implemented a programme to assist in institutional strengthening and export marketing training for SMEs and Business Support Organisation (BSOs) targeted at specific sectors such as specialty food and beverages, furniture, handicraft and gifts and fashion. Three (3) training sequences were implemented with a total of seventy-four (74) participants from across the CARIFORUM region including thirty-five (35) BSO staff members. Through these training sequences, it was revealed that many companies needed support to improve their basic productivity and competitiveness. This was the genesis of the ProNet programme.

The implementation of the ProNet Programme comprised of three (3) main components where firstly, there was adaptation of the programme to the CARIFORUM's context<sup>1</sup>, then secondly, the establishment of a Regional ProNet

Trainer Pool and finally certification of Regional ProNet Trainers where after basic training i.e. exposure to one or more ProNet modules, candidates delivers ("rolled out") ProNet courses to SMEs.

It is expected that the Regional ProNet trainers, in the context of their BSO affiliations and/or as independent consultants are expected to provide business development and export marketing training to CARIFORUM SMEs based on their own resources. This is the current role of TTMA in the rolling out of the ProNet training programme in Trinidad and Tobago. It should be mentioned that TTMA was closely involved in the framework and the programme development of ProNet since its initiation with CEDA and GIZ. TTMA through Mr. Ramesh Ramdeen; CEO of TTMA and Regional Master Trainer for ProNet developed several 'real-live' case studies for the programme. These case studies have become effective in understanding the business environment and providing a practical outlook. Exercises have been easily facilitated through these case studies.

## So why SMEs?

SMEs are viewed as a vital engine of growth for developing and developed economies. This is very evident in Trinidad and Tobago where SMEs have increased

**SMEs have increased over the last decade numbering some 18,000 by the end of 2010, employing 200,000 individuals and contributing nearly twenty-eight (28%) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).**

over the last decade numbering some 18,000 by the end of 2010, employing 200,000 individuals and contributing nearly twenty-eight (28%) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This compares favourably with other countries such as India where SME's contribution to GDP which was expected to increase from seventeen (17%) in 2009 to twenty-two (22%) by 2012. In developed countries like USA, Japan, South Korea and Germany, the contribution to GDP exceeds fifty percent (50%). These figures are evidence of the important role of SMEs play in the growth and development of countries worldwide. Hence any effort to improve and enhance

<sup>1</sup> This was conducted by two (2) international consultants procured by CEDA.

<sup>2</sup> CSR and Developing countries. What scope for government action? Accessed at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02247.pdf>

<b>Business Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assesses the competitiveness of their own business;</li> <li>Recognises the strengths and weaknesses of their own products / services</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain knowledge of quality management principles</li> <li>Acquire knowledge of the basic requirements that a product or service must have to be perceived as having quality</li> </ul>
<b>Production Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands different production Management processes</li> <li>An ability to conduct production capacity and production lead-time planning</li> </ul>
<b>Resources Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands production planning strategies</li> <li>Understands and apply procurement strategies and techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Product Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of processes for managing the process of developing a new product;</li> <li>An understanding of the importance of product innovation</li> </ul>

<b>Information &amp; Knowledge Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn to systematically manage information processes</li> <li>Ability to conduct an audit of the information requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resource Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist learners in gaining an understanding of the concept of basic conditions of employment;</li> <li>An awareness of labour requirements imposed on employer</li> </ul>
<b>Cost and Financial Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of the basis costing, pricing and financial assessment techniques;</li> <li>An understanding of break-even and safety margin analysis; financial ratio analysis and other techniques.</li> </ul>
<b>Export Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determines their export readiness</li> <li>Understands the export market research</li> </ul>

the operations of SMEs in TT, allowing for their sustainability is highly favourable. This is why this group is being targeted for this training. In terms of structure, the programme comprises nine (9) modules. Below provides a snapshot of the objectives of each module. The last workshop held in November 2013 where participants were trained in Export

Marketing and Human Resources Management, was successful. This workshop was no different in its output to the target group whereby presentations were tailored to meet the needs of SMEs and to facilitate peer interface. The majority of participants were satisfied with the ProNet Workshop. They thought it was informative, adequate for its intended purpose,

fostered good networking and increased communication among companies. One participant shared that he "Looks forward to more seminars of this nature due to mix of participants and knowledge gained from presenters and through the discussions".

For more information on this stimulating training and upcoming ProNet workshops planned for

2014, you can contact Mr. Ramesh Ramdeen, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at [ceo@tma.com](mailto:ceo@tma.com) or Ms. Joy Francis, ProNet Coordinator and facilitator at [caribj@hotmail.com](mailto:caribj@hotmail.com). We hope to see you there!

# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY RAISING THE BAR

By: Victor A. Reyes, Project Manager, UNV-UNDP-MTII

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) deals with social, economic and environmental sustainability issues, which could include management of social and environmental impact of business activities, work ethics, fair labor practices, human rights in the work place and others. Firms with CSR programmes are better positioned than their peers to understand their stakeholders needs, i.e. workers, consumers, suppliers and fence line communities. This allows companies to innovate in their processes and products, incorporate added value and appeal to an international market that is increasingly demanding responsible practices.

In order to support companies in realizing such benefits, a number of guidelines and standards applicable in different sectors have been issued over the last years. A recent study by the Institute for Marketing & Innovation in Vienna, found 216 instruments dealing with CSR practices for businesses<sup>1</sup>. Although the number might seem overwhelming, on the positive side, there is virtually one guide for every business sector; extractive industries, agribusiness, tourism, etc.

Many of these guidelines and standards can be verified by a third party, enabling a firm to use a certification label in their products. Unfortunately, the absence of a CSR label in a product will reduce the company's ability to capitalize on their CSR efforts. No consumer will chose a product for its "CSR added

value" if this is not effectively communicated in its packaging. In other words, the third party CSR certification increases the appeal to consumers to select that particular product and yes, it increases the appeal of the product in the international market.

In Trinidad and Tobago there is great opportunity for improvement in the uptake of CSR practices. Although many companies have engaged in successful CSR programmes, the level of third party CSR certification is still not desirable. Probably, one of the reasons to explain this phenomenon is the lack of awareness of such instruments coupled with the limited existence of accredited organizations that could provide CSR-related certifications.

However, important steps have been taken to increase the level of standardization regarding CSR practices in the country. The ongoing project for the Development of a National CSR Policy between the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment and the United Nations Development programme shows the attention that is being given to responsible practices.

Furthermore, the TTS/ISO 26000:2011 "Guidance on Social Responsibility", a non-certifiable standard, provides valuable support to any firm willing to act responsibly on a voluntary basis. Moreover, the document has actually identified a number of sectorial initiatives relevant to Trinidad and Tobago to assist

entrepreneurs in finding the most appropriate CSR resource for their activity.

A specific example of a sectorial initiative is the Fairtrade Label. Although mainly focused in the agriculture sector, its scope has been expanded to the manufacturing sector as well. The Fairtrade system is present in over 58 developing countries supporting farmers, workers and consumers. Products that are part of the system can obtain the Fairtrade certification mark, which ensures the producer receives a fair price to cover the cost of sustainable production. Is that going to make your cup of coffee taste a little better? Probably yes, as farmers participating in the system receive technical assistance to improve their production.

Again, if the coffee producers under the Fairtrade system wouldn't be able to incorporate the Fairtrade certification mark, they would have little impact in getting consumers to support their products. Apply the same principle in other areas and you will find how some OECD-based multinationals, for example, in the chemicals industry, require ISO: 14000 certification for all their suppliers<sup>2</sup>.

Local production with CSR standards can improve its access to international markets as end products or incorporated within international supply chains. Inability to incorporate responsible practices will only result in the alienation of local production in the responsible segment of the international market.



## Development of a National CSR Policy (NCSRPP)

The long term impact of CSR activities is yet to be realized by firms and communities in Trinidad and Tobago. A strategic approach to CSR coupled with a Public and Private Partnership strategy can significantly contribute to sustainable development in the country. The NCSRPP certainly marks the beginning of a long term process to create a shared value between businesses and government.

Do consider that the responsible segment is continuously expanding over the years.

Luckily, Trinidad and Tobago is at the right moment to take that qualitative step and incorporate sustainable and ethical standards in its products. It is time to start capitalizing on the CSR initiatives already in place and to incorporate more and more sectors of the economy into the responsible side. Based on the appetite for responsibility from the trend setters in the international market, adopting responsible practices might just be the smartest business option today.

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility Standards and Guidelines in the Agribusiness Sector. Accessed at [https://www.ifama.org/events/conferences/2011/cmsdocs/2011SymposiumDocs/491\\_Symposium%20Paper.pdf](https://www.ifama.org/events/conferences/2011/cmsdocs/2011SymposiumDocs/491_Symposium%20Paper.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> CSR and Developing countries. What scope for government action? Accessed at <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G02247.pdf>

# Canada

Niagra Falls

By: Christian George, Research Officer,  
Trade Unit, TTMA

-  **Full name:** CANADA  
**Population:** 34.88 million (World Bank, 2013)  
**Capital:** Ottawa (4th largest city)  
**Area:** 9,984,670 km<sup>2</sup>  
**Major languages:** English and French  
**Major religions:** Christianity  
**Life expectancy:** 79 years (male), 83 years (female) (World Bank, 2011)  
**Monetary unit:** Canadian dollar (Can\$)  
**Main exports:** Energy products (primarily crude and refined petroleum oils, and petroleum gases); automotive products; gold; machinery and equipment; metals and plastics; forestry products; agricultural and fishing products  
**GNI per capita (constant 2005, USD):** 35,794.27 USD (World Bank, 2011)  
**GNI per capita (current, USD):** 52,177.22 USD (World Bank, 2012)  
**Internet domain:** .ca  
**International dialing code:** +1

Labour Force (World Bank 2011)

19,202,267

Ease of Doing Business  
Ranking 2014

19 OUT OF 189

## Economy at a Glance

	2010	2011	2012
GDP, PPP (constant 2005, USD)	1,202.02 billion	1,232.41 billion	1,253.47 billion
GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2005, USD)	35,222.50	35,738.70	35,936.26
GDP growth (annual %)	3.21	2.53	1.71

Canada is the 2nd largest country in the world (after Russia), and the largest country in North America (the size of its neighbour, the United States of America [USA] is 9,629,091 km<sup>2</sup>, or 355,579 km<sup>2</sup> smaller than that of Canada). The word Canada is derived from the Huron-Iroquois *kanata*, meaning a village or settlement. However, with a population size of 34.88 million, and the extremely large land space, it is also one of the most sparsely settled regions (the population of the USA is 313.9 million, or approximately 9 times the size of Canada). Additionally, 90% of the population live close to the USA border, due to the Northern part of Canada being primarily wilderness.

According to the Canada Act (also known as the Constitution Act), the legislative and executive authority is divided between the federal government and the ten provinces of Canada. Each province has power mainly with regards to matters of local or private concern, such as licenses and direct taxation within the province, for provincial purposes. Thus, it is important for one to be au courant with the various provincial requirements when trading, as the requirements differ from province to province. E.g. in 2013, Alberta applied a tobacco tax of Can \$0.20 per cigarette, while in Manitoba this tax was

valued at Can \$0.29 per cigarette. However, for most provinces, the federal (i.e. the Goods and Services Tax) and provincial sales taxes have been harmonised. Primarily, the provinces possess regulatory autonomy over agriculture, natural resources, electricity, investment, government procurement, food safety, technical regulations, taxation, and services.

Importation of goods into the country has been facilitated by several initiatives. These initiatives include the Pre-arrival Review System (PARS), the Customs Self Assessment (CSA), the Free and Secure Trade Program (FAST), and Partners in Protection (PIP). PARS allows importers to submit import documentation prior to the arrival of the goods into Canada (such documentation cannot be submitted any more than 30 days before the arrival of the goods). This ensures that each container is cleared from the port immediately (unless an examination is required).

The country possesses various natural resources, such as timber, oil, gas, minerals and ores. Such an abundance of oil and natural gas positions Canada as one of the world's largest producers of oil and natural gas, as well as hydro-electric energy. The comparative advantage which it has in these resources contributes significantly towards the economy, as Canada's exports of natural gas and oil have represented approximately 20% of the country's



merchandise exports since 2005. Furthermore, the country exports several manufactured goods in various industries, including the automotive, aerospace, textiles and apparel, and shipbuilding industries. Canada's aerospace industry is one of the largest in the world, and it (Canada) is a significant player in the global automotive industry as well.

But the country is more than a merchandise exporter.

services, which successfully weathered the 2008 financial crisis (as no major financial institution had failed).

Additionally, Canada has signed various free trade agreements: with USA and Mexico (via the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA), Latin American markets (such as Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama), and Europe (via the Canada-European Free Trade Association FTA or Canada-

THE VALUE OF CANADA'S SERVICE EXPORTS HAS BEEN NO LESS THAN **CAN\$ 67BILLION** SINCE 2005

EFTA). Furthermore, the country has provided non-reciprocal preferences to developing countries, via the Commonwealth

A greater understanding of the sheer magnitude of Canada services sector can be achieved by comparing the value of Canada's export of services with the value of Trinidad and Tobago's 2013 gross domestic product (GDP) of TT 165.2 billion, or Can\$ 27.3 billion. Among the drivers of Canada's services sector is its financial

Caribbean Country Tariff (CARIBCAN), the General Preferential Tariff (GPT), and the Least-Developed Country Tariff (LDCT). For certain products, the aggregate applied tariffs on finished goods exceeded that of the applied tariffs on semi-processed goods, which exceeded that of the applied tariffs on raw materials. These products include



food and beverage, non-metallic mineral products, and fabricated metal products. The country is also a party to many bilateral investment treaties, with several countries throughout the world.

As with other developed countries, Canada assists developing countries in their endeavours to conduct international trade by providing Aid for Trade. This is primarily done via the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which is charged with the

administration of Canada's official development assistance (ODA). Guiding the disbursement of Canada's ODA are three objectives: increasing food security, securing the future of children and youth, and stimulating sustainable economic growth. Among the countries which CIDA focuses its development financing are selected Latin American and Caribbean states.

SOURCES

1. Britannica Encyclopaedia – Canada
2. BBC Country Profile – Canada
3. Trade Policy Review: Report by the WTO Secretariat 2011 – Canada



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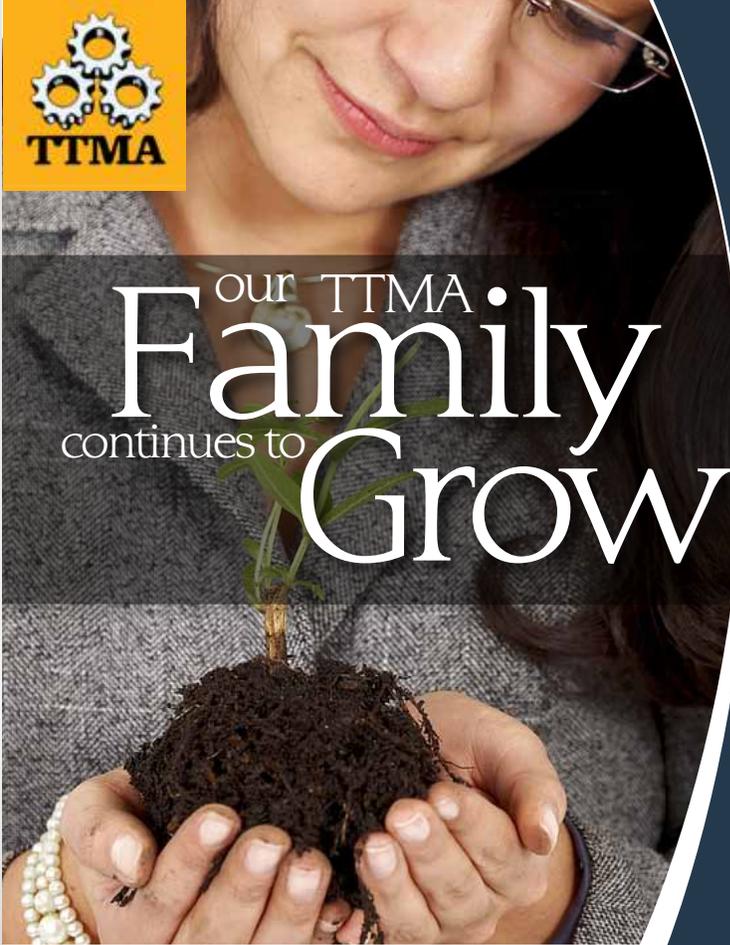


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