

TSEP - Recognising Jamaica's Outstanding Tourism Service Providers

The Tourism Service Excellence Programme, TSEP, embodies a very important statement by the Ministry of Tourism and its agencies about the importance of recognising and rewarding the top performers, the true stars in our industry. It also underscores our commitment to enhancing our service standards as we seek to make "high touch service" the standard in our sector. This is done through the selection and recognition of Resort Area Champions and National Champions in the individual and organisation categories in the annual Tourism Service Excellence Awards. Our workers are our most important asset and we are determined to ensure that they feel a part of this vibrant industry.

It has been proven that service quality is a prerequisite for success and survival in today's competitive environment. This is so because in the highly competitive tourism industry there are many destinations and tourism entities that offer similar products and services. Thus, there is stiff competition within the sector as well as between companies in the same industry. Hence, increasingly it is the quality of service delivery that distinguishes one tourism service provider from another and allows a service provider to achieve a sustainable advantage.

In the travel and tourism industry today, it is very much a 'buyers market' where organisations have to compete not only on price but also on quality of service in order to win their share of customer and tourist spend. As a result of globalisation, increased consumerism, and the competitive nature of the tourism sector, industry players worldwide are forced to re-examine their relationship with their customers. Whereas in the past it was the view that it was only the responsibility of customer service representatives to deal with customer enquiries and complaints, today what pertains is that every staff member and all the company's activities must seek to deliver excellent customer service.

In the hospitality industry, a service provider's skill, motivation, and attitude toward a customer greatly influences whether the service a customer receives is good or bad. It is for this reason that everyone needs to provide excellent service whether it is the frontline staff such as receptionists, tour guides, flight attendants, immigration and customs officers, taxi drivers, retail shop staff, craft vendors or at the community level. It's not only persons who are directly involved in the tourism industry that need to understand the importance of providing excellent customer service, but everyone.

Even so, though everyone has a part to play in ensuring that a visitor's experience is enhanced, the employees who interface directly with customers' everyday are probably the most important. Achieving customer service excellence requires investment, planning, training, motivation, management, and support, both from management and the work force. The Tourism Service Excellence Programme is an investment in Jamaica and in Jamaicans, intended to continually raise the bar in service excellence to foster national development, thereby playing an instrumental role in the achievement of the national 2030 Vision... 'Jamaica... a place of choice to live, raise families and to do business'.