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Pioneers of Prosperity

Here is a brief look at the finalists:

Alternative Insurance Co., Port-au-Prince, Haiti: The eight-year-old company employs between 70 and 80 employees. It provides automobile, health, commercial, homeowners and life insurance products, as well as funeral insurance for Haitians living on less than \$4 a day.

Analytical Technologies, Port Lisas, Trinidad and Tobago: This 13-year-old company has 19 employees. It is a private industrial lab that offers clients in the petrochemicals industry lab technicians and advisory services.

Bulkan Timber Works, Yarrowkabra Linden/Soesdyke Highway, Guyana: The 11-year-old company has made a name for itself by adding value to lumber, which is then used in building materials. Instead of exporting logs from the country, the company saws logs into lumber that is air- or kiln-dried, and then turned into building materials. It pays competitive wages and recycles its sawdust and wood waste by giving it to chicken farmers.

Caribbean Civil Group, Nassau, Bahamas: With five employees this nine-year-old civil engineering firm uses its knowledge to compete against international firms for transportation and infrastructure projects. It devotes about 3 percent of its annual revenue to charity and invests heavily in employee training.

Hummingbird Group Ltd., Belmopan, Belize: This innovative furniture company has operated for 22 years and employs 50 workers. The company makes high-end bamboo, wicker, rattan and poly-resin furniture that is sold to local resorts. Customers are also encouraged to give their input into designs, and the company offers lifetime refurbishing for a small fee.

Sacha Cosmetics, Freeport, Trinidad & Tobago: In the makeup business for 30 years, this firm's 120 employees cater to Trinidad's ethnic skin tones, while exporting its products to more than 20 countries. It provides training to underprivileged youth and at orphanages to teach them how best to present themselves professionally.

Solutions SA, Port-au-Prince, Haiti: This nine-year-old company's 20 employees work to provide customized software and database to clients. Among its products: a bank text messaging service alerting clients when their remittances have transferred into their accounts.

Spatial Innovision, Kingston, Jamaica: This 11-year-old company boasts just 15 employees. It provides interactive, customized analysis such as land mapping to government and private sector clients. It is an advocate for the implementation of GPS (Global Positioning Solutions) systems throughout the Caribbean.

Totally Male Limited, Kingston, Jamaica: Founded in 1994, this is Jamaica's only male-oriented spa, offering men a range of services from nail care and barbering to etiquette

lessons and clothing makeovers. Company owners also mentor young women entrepreneurs and young men on how to present themselves and make career choices.

Trinity Homes, St. Michael, Barbados: This nine-year-old company's 20 employees work to assist Barbados' middle-class community with their housing needs by walking customers through the process of building a home, from the design to final government approval.

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