



The *Pioneers of Prosperity* 2009 Award Competition Country-level Winner Profiles

Bahamas

Caribbean Civil Group

CEO: Ray McKenzie

Years of Operation: 9 (founded in 2000)

Number of Employees: 5

Description

A civil engineering firm which offers public and private sector clients world-class expertise, local knowledge, and a superior client focus on transportation and infrastructure projects.

Unique Strengths

CCG has demonstrated a consistent ability to deliver an excellent product in a timely manner. They have used their local knowledge – both personal and technical – to keep projects moving forward according to schedule. This has allowed them to compete against international firms that might struggle with the specifics of local permitting requirements and other regulatory difficulties.

In order to maintain its competitiveness CCG invests heavily in its employees with good compensation and benefits as well as training-- historically 3-4% of revenues annually have been invested in training both on and off the island. Also, CCG supports local charities (3% of annual revenues are donated) and promotes engineering through presentations to schools and by offering internships.

Barbados

Trinity Homes

CEO: Elizabeth and Christopher Cupples

Years of Operation: 9 (founded in 2000)

Number of Employees: 20

Description

Trinity Homes Ltd. offers the middle-class in Barbados quality, tailored housing that is within their budget. Trinity Homes offers customers a “one-stop-shop” by walking them through the entire process of building a home: from design, initial government approval, contracting, construction, to final government approval.

Unique Strengths

Trinity Homes realizes that for most people the steps to build a house are unclear and full of potential pitfalls. Additionally, architectural design services are primarily targeted at the very high end of the market, and therefore unavailable to the working and middle classes. Unlike their closest competitors, Trinity Homes has architects on staff which allows them to ensure that designs are easily tailored to suit customer needs, while maintaining compliance with government standards. By providing superior service and complete process oversight, Trinity Homes aims to reduce the stress on the homebuyer in the task of building a home, and reduce the risks of unanticipated costs for new home builders on a limited budget.

Belize

Hummingbird Group Ltd.

CEO: Robert Lopez

Years of Operation: 22 (founded in 1987)

Number of Employees: 50

Description

Hummingbird Furniture Ltd. produces high-end bamboo, wicker, rattan, and poly-resin furniture. Nearly all of its furniture is sold within Belize to resorts, and to tourists who are furnishing second homes. The company has showrooms in the tourist centers of Palencia and San Pedro, and a factory & showroom in the capital, Belmopan.

Unique Strengths

Hummingbird Furniture Ltd. offers a high degree of customer input into the design of their furniture, and provides lifetime refurbishing for a small cost, to ensure long-term customer satisfaction and a lifetime of durability in their product. Hummingbird has extensive product lines and continues to innovate with new materials and varieties in order to ensure that it can always meet the needs of its customers.

Hummingbird Furniture is concerned about the environmental impact of the furniture industry and only buys wood that has been approved for harvest by the Forestry Department of Belize. Hummingbird has also increased its production of non-wood products in an effort to reduce its own demand.

Guyana

Bulkan Timber Works Inc.

CEO: Howard Bulkan

Years of Operation: 11 (founded in 1997)

Number of Employees: 37

Description

Bulkan Timber Works (BTW) was founded in 1997 by Howard Bulkan to provide house building materials including wall cladding, tongue & groove flooring, wall studs and rafters, to clients across the Caribbean.

Unique Strengths

Most wood-related production and export in Guyana focuses on cutting and exporting raw material from Guyana's rich rain forests. Rather than continuing this business model, BTW has focused on developing a sustainably harvested, value-added export product. BTW takes the logs and saws them into lumber that is air- or kiln-dried, decreasing warping and significantly adding value to the lumber. BTW then turns the dried lumber into various building products.

BTW pays significantly higher wages than the government mandated minimum wages for the timber industry (up to double). Employees work their way up through an apprenticeship model.

BTW purchases logs from companies that practice sustainable forestry following strict government guidelines around the number of trees that can be cut in a certain area. BTW's sawdust and wood waste is given away daily to numerous chicken farmers living in and around the facility. A sawdust cottage industry has developed in the community with people reselling this material.

Haiti

Alternative Insurance Company

CEO: Olivier Barrau

Years of Operation: 8 (founded in 2001)

Number of Employees: 70-80

Description

Alternative Insurance Company (AIC) was established in 2001 by Olivier Barrau in response to his frustration as an insurance agent at the lack of insurance products adapted to the local market. The company's portfolio includes automobile, health, commercial, homeowners and life insurance products, as well as microinsurance and funeral insurance aimed at Haitians earning less than \$4 a day.

Unique Strengths

AIC is unique in focusing on a different customer segment from its competitors, who target the top 2% of Haiti's population with premiums costing US\$2,000-2,800 per annum in a country where the average GDP per capita is US \$5,422. AIC's competitive advantage comes from intimate knowledge of their customer based on detailed market research and direct interaction rather than working through brokers. Their well-trained staff design innovative products to meet the customers' specific needs, which are then distributed through AIC's network of strategic partners, including a major bank, a microloan organization and a bank focused on microentrepreneurs.

AIC invests largely in training its employees. According to AIC's staff, they receive consistent formal training in insurance, and subject matter experts (e.g. in microinsurance) are frequently brought in to share their expertise (three times per year for two weeks each visit).

Solutions SA

CEO: Kurt Jean-Charles

Years of Operation: 9 (founded in 2000)

Number of Employees: 20

Description

Kurt Jean-Charles started Solutions S.A. in 2001 to provide customized software and database solutions as well as conceive and implement information systems.

Unique Strengths

The products that Solutions develops are customized for the client taking into consideration their specific needs and the Haitian context; for example a banking text messaging service alerting customers when a remittance transfer has been made into their account.

Recently, the CDC1 Global Aids Program (GAP) Haiti Office won an award for its system of monitoring and evaluating HIV/AIDS, the backbone of which is an information management system built by Solutions called MESI (Monitoring, Evaluation and Surveillance Interface). According to the CDC, products of lesser quality are being touted as leading edge but in terms of functionality MESI is better than the others. Various governments in Francophone Africa are interested in purchasing the system from Solutions.

Jamaica

Totally Male Limited

CEO: Sandra Samuels

Years of Operation: 15 (founded in 1994)

Number of Employees: 12

Description

Totally Male Limited (TML), a niche market company founded in 1994, offers Jamaican professional men with a full aesthetic upgrading experience, ranging from nailcare and barbering to etiquette lessons and clothing makeovers.

Unique Strengths

TML, the only male oriented spa in Jamaica, has successfully tapped into the growth of male spas world-wide. TML adheres to the highest caliber of professional standards, evident from when one walks in the door and is greeted on a first name basis by a staff member in a monogrammed long-sleeve black-collared shirt to the weekly team meetings where the Founder facilitates discussions with input from the team on best practices for customer management as well as for improving team dynamics.

According to one customer, TML “removed the stigma of being a man who cares about his appearance”. TML empowers its staff to manage customer relations and solicit feedback, and

TML management actively looks to its staff for ways to improve the business. In a society where male unemployment is high and absentee fathers are common, TML aspires to address significant socioeconomic challenges confronting Jamaica through mentoring young women business leaders and providing young men with career and personal presentation coaching. Additionally, TML hires underprivileged but high-potential young women and invests in their professional development.

Spatial Innovision

CEO: Silburn Clarke

Years of Operation: 11 (founded in 1998)

Number of Employees: 15

Description

Spatial Innovision (“Spatial”), founded in 1998, positions itself in the Caribbean as 1) a reseller of land mapping technology 2) a systems implementation company for land mapping and surveying infrastructure and 3) a consulting company that can interpret and analyze complex spatial data trends for clients (e.g. to plan product distribution strategy or disaster recovery relief needs).

Unique Strengths

Spatial provides interactive, customized analysis to help private sector clients maximize profits (e.g. land mapping to help plan where to distribute/sell) or to help governments deliver public services more effectively (e.g. natural disaster recovery efforts or real estate tax revenue). Since its inception, Spatial has provided spatial data services to over one hundred government agencies, non-government organizations and private businesses. Spatial has been an advocate for the widespread implementation of GPS (Global Positioning Solutions) systems throughout the Caribbean and has consistently won competitive bids issued by leading international technology firms as well as national governments in the Caribbean.

Spatial invests in professional development and organizational effectiveness through several means: it engages in 360 feedback, assigns projects to staff based on demonstrated and potential capabilities, and invests in at least one international training per employee per year in addition to offering local executive education courses and seminars/conferences.

Spatial is a founding member of the National Emergency GIS Team (NERGIST) in Jamaica as well as the sponsor of the Government of Bahamas' Geographic Information Education Programme.

Trinidad & Tobago

Analytical Technologies (ATL)

CEO: Namdeo Maharaj

Years of Operation: 13 (founded in 1996)

Number of Employees: 19

Description:

ATL is a private industrial lab and environmental remediation consulting firm which primarily serves the petrochemicals industry of Trinidad. ATL also offers its clients additional support, such as outsourced lab technicians that can work on their premises and advisory services that will help clients with quality assurance procedures.

Unique Strengths:

ATL achieved ISO 9000 Certification within one year of operation (1999) and attained ISO 17025 Accreditation in 2007. ATL, which is located in the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, the hub of the petrochemicals industry of Trinidad, is the only private industrial laboratory in Trinidad. The firm competes with the government laboratory and indirectly with the in-house laboratories of major petrochemical corporations. In addition to offering faster response times than the government laboratory, ATL has developed proprietary processes and possesses technological instruments that are not available anywhere else in Trinidad.

ATL conducts regular performance evaluations with employees and creates development plans, including trainings, certifications, and on-the-job learning opportunities for employees to grow. ATL also helps its employees secure government subsidies that pay for half of their continuing education credits, and it works with them to develop flexible work arrangements that accommodate their learning schedule.

Sacha Cosmetics

CEO: Kama Maharaj

Years of Operation: 30 (founded in 1979)

Number of Employees: 120

Description

Sacha Cosmetics, a premium make-up brand that caters to “exotic” or ethnic skins, was founded in Trinidad in 1979.

Unique Strengths

Sacha has created, tested and refined its products leveraging one of Trinidad’s most distinctive qualities: its ethnic heterogeneity and exotic skin tones. Sacha’s foundation products are differentiated by their yellow-tone base (most cosmetics use a pink or orange tone base) and target an international customer segment that is underserved and consists of at least one billion people. Since 1979, Sacha has grown to export its products to over 20 countries around the world.

Sacha provides free make-up certificates and training to underprivileged youth and at orphanages to teach them how best to present themselves professionally.