

**The Challenges of productivity and
Competitiveness of Women-owned
Enterprises in the Caribbean:**

A Jamaican Case Study

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INTRODUCTION

The ILO commissioned a study that focused on the competitiveness of a leading female owned enterprise. Two other similar enterprises were studied for comparison. The study aimed at providing a brief history of each enterprise, an examination of the macro and micro economic environment in which the enterprises operate inclusive of the challenges and opportunities for productivity while making specific references to the influence of gender. In addition, the study looked at “signals of undesirable trends” within and between organizations and where possible highlighted the signals that are gender related.

For the purposes of the study the following organizations consented to participate:

- (a) Alhambra Inn (Leading female owned enterprise)
- (b) Mayfair Hotel (Other Female owned enterprise)
- (c) Medallion Hall Hotel (Male owned enterprise)

Specific objectives

The specific aims of the study were to:

- provide data on the productivity measures and trends of each enterprise
- investigate the challenges for improved productivity and competitiveness in the women owned enterprise.
- investigate the opportunities for improved productivity and competitiveness in the women owned enterprise

The specific objectives created a framework for the following research questions:

1. What are the signals of undesirable trends?
2. What is the rationale for the stated results?
3. What are the challenges for improved productivity and competitiveness in the women owned enterprise?
4. What are the opportunities that exist for improved productivity and competitiveness in the women owned enterprise?

Research Methodology

Design

A qualitative approach was taken to data collection. Case study analysis was carried out on three middle scale urban based hotel enterprises. The participants included two female and one male enterprise. All three enterprises have strong linkages with the business and convention clientele.

Research Tools

1. A matrix outlining the signals of undesirable trends was used to make intra – enterprise and inter-enterprise comparisons.
2. A Pair wise ranking was used to highlight the factors and variables associated with the superior productivity and competitiveness of female enterprises.
3. A force field analysis was used to examine the problems and opportunities for improved productivity and competitiveness in the women owned enterprise.

Limitations of the Study

1. Time appropriateness affected the amount of work covered for the submission of the first draft. The final study participants were not the first targets. Operators in the chemical processing industry were first contacted. They gave initial consent to participate but subsequently declined. Operators in the tourism industry were subsequently contacted. Three of the hotels initially contacted declined before the final three participating entities were arrived at. The selection of the study participants was therefore influenced by willingness to participate.
2. Each organization was unwilling to divulge important financial data concerning its operations. Therefore, in order to present credible assessments on productivity, other innovative mechanisms were developed such as a rating scale for productivity measures. Proxy estimates of earnings and productivity were arrived at by estimating income from charge rates, hotel capacity, and utilisation and occupancy rates as against number of employees.

Brief History of the Enterprises

Alhambra Inn - Leading Female Enterprise

The Alhambra Inn was designed to imitate the Moorish fortress style palace in Granada Spain. The trademark Spanish design of red tiled roof and balconies are evident in the design that was recreated at the Inn located at 1 Tucker Avenue, Kingston 6.

The construction of Alhambra Inn and restaurant was started in 1992 and completed in August 1995. Over the next twelve months, the twenty deluxe rooms, conference facilities and main reception hall were opened to guests on a phased basis.

The initial concept for the Alhambra Inn was to create a reception centre for weddings, cocktails and private and corporate dinner parties in a garden setting that would rival any private home. Furthermore, the proliferation of townhouses in the corporate area and the shrinking of private spaces for entertaining generated an urgent need for a beautiful reception centre in the heart of Kingston.

The Alhambra Inn now fulfils the brief of being a reception centre for special functions as well as a comfortable Inn where guests may find comfortable overnight accommodation.

May fair Hotel – Other Female Enterprise

The May fair Hotel was first established in 1966 at 4 West Kings House Close, Kingston 10. The property was bought in 1965 and refurbished in time to benefit from the influx of visitors that was expected for the Commonwealth games which were held in Jamaica in 1966. However, no bookings were made for the hotel. Fortunately, the then Sheraton Hotel was overbooked and as a result, guests were referred to the Mayfair Hotel. They received 32 guests on that day and since then, the name of the hotel has spread by word of mouth. Currently, visitors come from diverse places as far away as Russia, New Zealand and Australia.

Medallion Hall - Leading Male Enterprise

The 1970's was a tumultuous decade in Jamaica's history. Capital flight and emigration caused a major depression in the local economy. Mr. Broomfield seized the opportunity to purchase an upscale home located at 53 Hope Road at a competitive price. His interest in the hospitality industry, especially one that catered to locals, led to the conversion of the home into a hotel. The home is now operated as the Medallion Hall – a hotel and regular centre for meetings and functions.

FINDINGS

Main Products and/or Services

The Jamaica Tourist Board has defined the following as the industry's main products and targets: (a) golfing (b) honeymooning (c) nature tourism (d) the mature market (persons 50 years and over) (e) the African American market (f) non-resident Jamaicans (g) conventions and business groups (h) the family market and (i) the scuba divers market. The Hotels under study would have a stronger emphasis on business and convention groups due to their location in the business capital of Jamaica.

Market Share

Table 1.0 shows that Kingston received approximately 14% of stopover visitors or 188,875 visitors in 2003. . With an estimated annual occupancy rate of 5,760 for the Leading female enterprise 6,912, for the other female enterprise and 6,336 for the male enterprise, the market share would be an estimated 3%, 4% and 3.3% respectively. This is a crude estimate as the hotels would have had local clients as well. Although imprecise, these estimates may be regarded as indicative of the true market share. Hotels in Kingston are challenged to attract overseas and local holiday guests as Kingston is not regarded as a tourism destination.

Table: 1.0 Percentage Distribution of Resort Areas Visited in Jamaica

Area	Stopover Arrivals						%Change 2003/02	%Change 2003/01
	2001	%Share	2002	%Share	2003	%Share		
Montego Bay	410,091	32.1%	391,688	30.9%	417,274	30.9%	6.5%	1.8%
Ocho Rios	270,049	21.2%	278,651	22.0%	296,344	21.9%	6.3%	9.7%
Negril	257,986	20.2%	256,667	20.3%	275,124	20.4%	7.2%	6.6%
Kingston	179,629	14.1%	181,318	14.3%	188,875	14.0%	4.2%	5.1%
Mdvie/S. Coast	47,856	3.7%	49,442	3.9%	52,795	3.9%	6.8%	10.3%
Port Antonio	14,895	1.2%	13,605	1.1%	14,475	1.1%	6.4%	-2.8%
Other	96,010	7.5%	94,995	7.5%	105,398	7.8%	11.0%	9.8%
Total	1,276,816	100.0%	1,266,366	100.0%	1,360,285	100.0%	6.6%	5.8%

Source: Jamaica's Annual Travel Statistics, 2003 Jamaica Tourist Board

Because the enterprises under study are in the hospitality sector, the context in which they operate is intertwined with the factors affecting the general tourism industry in Jamaica and the region. The main environmental challenges for the general industry are therefore presented as the main external factors affecting the enterprises.

Factors that Influence the Local Export /Import Drive

This industry does not export but markets its services in overseas markets and thereby earns foreign exchange. The factors that have influenced the demand for services in Jamaica over the last five years may be summarised as follows:

- The Iraqi/USA-led war had a negative impact on international tourist travel, but also resulting from this event is the perception that the Caribbean is one of the safest areas for vacation travel as far as regards terrorism. Jamaica does have a murder problem. However, so far it does not appear that this has affected the level of visitor arrivals.
- The decline in the strength of the US dollar relative to the Jamaican dollar has increased the level of competitiveness of the destination.
- Increased airlift from the main market regions.
- Persistent and targeted advertising campaigns that ran in our primary markets, the USA and UK.

Main Environmental/External Challenges Affecting Jamaica's Tourism Industry

The high resource dependency and susceptibility to external shocks has made the industry very vulnerable. The main challenges are (1) natural disasters (2) high investment costs (3) harassment (4) economic instability and dependency (5) difficulty in accessing output markets (6) customer orientation and preferences (7) high murder rate.

Natural Disasters

Jamaica's geographic location makes it prone to the negative impacts of hurricanes and similar weather patterns. In September 2004 for example, *Hurricane Ivan* had an adverse impact on the number of arrivals during the last quarter of 2004. Cruise passenger arrivals fell by 10.8% between September and December 2004. Additionally, stop over arrivals fell by 4.3% compared with the 8.5% growth recorded in the pre-Ivan period. Table 2.0 presents a summary of the estimated damage caused by Ivan.

Table 2.0:
Estimated Damage to the Tourism Industry Associated with Hurricane Ivan (US\$)

Category	Major Damage(\$)	Minor Damage (\$)	TOTAL (\$)
Accommodation	\$1.8 million (11 properties)	\$8.03million (98 properties)	\$9.84 million
Attraction	\$0.49 million (3 attractions)	\$3.20 million (39 million)	\$3.69million
Water Sport	\$0.49 million (3 properties)	\$0.49 million (3 properties)	\$0.74 million
Crafts	-	\$0.30 million (9 properties)	\$0.30million
Total	\$2.79 million	\$2.92 million	\$14.56 million

Source: Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica

High Investment Cost

The Caribbean has been viewed as projecting a very high cost on investment, especially among local investors, combined with low returns on the project. The operating environment for investment is generally seen as favourable with Government indicating their enthusiasm for both local and foreign investment. Sometimes local investors are viewed as being at a disadvantage compared with foreign investors. The latter are usually able to access capital at lower rates, and hence, gain an advantage in the perceived weighted average of capital costs (WACC). The local private sector is also sometimes in competition with the Government in mobilizing capital from the local population.

Harassment

Tourist harassment represents a significant social problem to the local tourism industry. Wallace (1998) indicates that between 58%-60% of tourists were harassed on the streets, 36%-40% at the airport and the remaining 20.4%-22.8% were reportedly harassed on the beach. Among the three leading resort areas, in 1992, the highest level of harassment was recorded at Negril (53%), Montego Bay (50%) and Ocho Rios (47%). The occurrence of harassment in the local industry is usually attributed to the direct and indirect exclusion of small business entrepreneurs, the need to make gains during this seasonal product and the misguided view that all tourists are wealthy and visit Jamaica to use substances such as marijuana.

Economic Dependency and Instability

The local tourism industry is primarily externally driven. The stock market crash in 1988 and the economic depression of 1991 are two recent examples of how external factors adversely affect the stop over arrivals on the island. In addition to economic factors, sub cultures that display unorthodox behavioural patterns such as the “yardies” and “possess” in Britain and the United States also have negative implications for the local industry with international reports sometimes causing irreparable damage. Efforts such as the fledgling Strategic Marketing and advertising campaigns are responsible for keeping the industry afloat during slow periods.

Access to Output Market

The challenges that affect Jamaica’s access to output markets relate to the following:

- The market is predominantly driven by sand, sea and sun. European tourists, for example, accounted for only 16 per cent of total stopover arrivals during 2003 because they desire a more heritage based vacation
- The market is increasingly price led and is perceived as expensive. The pricing policies do not sufficiently take into account the longer stay and off peak demand generated by European tour operators. This has led to Jamaica being perceived as comparatively more expensive than Cuba and the Dominica Republic for the European visitor. There is a shortage of direct air links to places like France.

Customer Orientation and Preferences

Table 3.0 below, shows that the most popular areas are main resort areas Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril. The need for diversification of the product to include a greater emphasis on heritage in the cultural capital, Kingston and on the natural environment as offered on the South Coast and Port Antonio are challenges faced by marketing strategists in an environment favoured for sun, sea and sand. Additionally, between 2000 and 2003, all inclusive areas located predominately in the frequently visited resort areas were twice as likely to be occupied compared as the non-all inclusive. This poses a challenge for the economic viability of these resorts during off peak seasons.

Table: 3.0 Percentage Distribution of Resort Areas Visited in Jamaica

Area	Stopover Arrivals						%Change	%Change
	2001	%Share	2002	%Share	2003	%Share	2003/02	2003/01
Montego Bay	410,091	32.1%	391,688	30.9%	417,274	30.9%	6.5%	1.8%
Ocho Rios	270,049	21.2%	278,651	22.0%	296,344	21.9%	6.3%	9.7%
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Kingston	179,629	14.1%	181,318	14.3%	188,875	14.0%	4.2%	5.1%
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Other	96,010	7.5%	94,995	7.5%	105,398	7.8%	11.0%	9.8%
Total	1,276,516	100.0%	1,266,366	100.0%	1,350,285	100.0%	6.6%	5.8%

Source: Jamaica's Annual Travel Statistics, 2003 Jamaica Tourist Board

Access to Input Markets

Some local partners in Jamaica's Tourism Industry are:

- Jamaican Promotions Limited (JAMPRO)
- The Urban Development Corporation (UDC)
- Parish Councils
- The Social Development Commission
- The Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC)
- The Jamaica Tourist Board
- The Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCO)
- Jamaica Reservation Services (JRS)
- Jamaica Vacations (JAMVAC)
- Air Jamaica
- The Jamaica Tourist and Hotel Association (JTHA)
- Heart Trust/NTA
- Travel Agencies

- The River Rafting Authority
- The Micro Investment Development Authority (MIDA)
- The National Environment and Planning Authority (NEPA)

Some Regional partners are:

- The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA)
- The Caribbean Tourism Organization(CTO)
- The Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- The University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development (UWICED)

Challenges affecting Partners of the Tourism Product

1. Inadequate budgets for all organizations affect their ability to strategically support the work of the tourism sector.
2. There is inadequate coordination between the work of the Regional Governments, the private sector and international donors for this industry and it is unlikely that tourism and its role in national development is highly placed on the agenda of some of the governments of the region and multilateral agencies.
3. The high cost of utilities, operating costs, airlift and attracting investment, challenge the very survival of the Caribbean Tourism product in an increasingly competitive global tourism market place
4. There is the absence of a Tourism Investment Fund (TIF) to harness the capital resources of the region and lower the costs of funds for development projects and act as a conduit for extra-regional resources.

Infrastructure

The essential Infrastructures required for a successful tourism product are: (a) roads (b) water and sanitation and solid waste management. There are several challenges which the Jamaican authorities need to consider in expenditure on such public goods. The local budget is not able to provide the required funding for modernization projects such as Highway 2000 and the Donald Sangster International Airport redevelopment plan that is estimated to cost US\$100 million, and is to be undertaken on a phased basis over the next 6 years. International loans and their exorbitant interest rates will impact negatively on the Balance of Payments which has implications on the ability to finance other areas of the social sector such as health and education.

Productivity of Institutions

None of the institutions that were studied were willing to give data on income, input and output costs. It was therefore necessary to find creative means of estimating productivity. To do this, the institutions under study were asked to supply data on their staff

complement, number of rooms, rates charged, occupancy rates, number and types of functions held and rates charged to arrive at a crude estimate of productivity as measured purely from the perspective of outputs. *In the final analysis, the institutions did not supply sufficient information to allow for the inclusion of income garnered from functions to be factored into the calculation of productivity as measured purely from the output side.* While the data on productivity was not pure, it did allow for a fair estimate of how each institution compared with the other as relates to productivity.

Table 4.0 Productivity indicators for the three enterprises

INSTITUTION	Mayfair Hotel			Alhambra Inn			Medallion Hall		
YEARS	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
Staff Complement	53	53	53	35	35	35	46	46	46
Occupancy Rates	0.70	0.60	0.60	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80
Number of rooms	32.00	32.00	32.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	22.00	22.00	22.00
Number with two beds	21.00	21.00	21.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Number with King size beds	11.00	11.00	11.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Crude Average Room cost (US\$)	68.85	68.85	68.85	67.11	67.11	67.11	77.25	77.25	77.25
Crude average daily income from rooms	1542.14	1321.83	1321.83	1073.72	1073.72	1073.72	1359.67	1359.67	1359.67
Crude Productivity Rate based on estimated daily earnings from room occupancy/staff size)	29.10	24.94	24.94	30.68	30.68	30.68	29.56	29.56	29.56

The highest productivity rate was for the leading female enterprise (US\$30.68 per person per day compared with 29.56 and 24.94 for the male and other female enterprises respectively). Over the three year period, 2003- 2005, the productivity rate of the main female enterprise and the male enterprise remained flat. However, that of the other female enterprise declined. The fact that this was the largest of the three hotels studied might have been a factor to the extent that it is harder to fill a large hotel than a small one.

On the whole, gender does not appear to have been a factor affecting productivity as the results did not vary by what gender owned each establishment. Rather, other factors as revealed in the ensuing Tables 5.1 to 6.4 were more responsible for productivity and success rate.

The data in the tables were compiled based on the following questions:

1. Does a corporate strategy exist? What are some of the challenges experienced in formulating and implementing this corporate strategy?
2. Are there any challenges in access to new technology such as information technology and kitchen machinery?
3. Who is your target market? What organizations or groups do you work closely with?
4. What challenges do you face in the area of training staff and business development?
5. What challenges exist in the staff- to- staff relationship and the management and staff relationship? Is there much collaboration between workers and management as partners in achieving the productivity and competitiveness goals of the enterprise?
6. Are there any challenges as it relates to communication, respect and mutual trust and confidence between employers and employees? Is staff turn over high?
7. Are there any challenges that impede on the safety, health and as working conditions of the enterprise?
8. Are profits shared among employees? How do you assess your compensation package among other hoteliers in the sector?

Challenges that affect Study Enterprises

Tables 5.1 to 5.3 (below), present the challenges that affect the enterprises under study. Each company 's perspective is presented on an individual table.

Table 5.1: Challenges that affect leading Female Study Enterprise

Indicator	Problems /Challenges in the area	Coping Strategy(ies)
Formulation and Implementation of Corporate Strategy	1. Non exists	The owners rely on the tried and true method <i>“if it works continue with it, if it ain’t broke do not fix it”</i>
Access to new technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was no challenge expressed concerning the acquisition of new technology. The current reality is that there are four (4) personal computers with internet access. 2. There is a software that keeps track of online reservations 3. There is no deliberate attempt to have an organization website. This has no implication re business conditions 4. Only the most basic kitchen machinery is used 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All staff members are computer literate 2. Some food preparation is done off site to facilitate enormous catering demands
Networks, alliances and market	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was no challenge expressed. 2. There is no formal marketing strategy; this is done predominantly by word of mouth. There is a strong local clientele base particularly from the Bank of Jamaica, Guardian Life, Grace Kennedy, National 	—

	Commercial Bank and Cable and Wireless. These companies utilise the services of lunch, coffee break and cock tail provisions.	
Training and business development/ Investment in training and skill upgrading	1. No challenge exists.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All staff members to return to school for upgrades. The manager gives time off for study. 2. Staff members are multi-tasked 3. Training in customer service is encouraged at all levels of the enterprise. 4. In addition investing in training, sponsorship is a key area of investment. Beneficiaries include the Netball Association __
Collaborative efforts of workers and management as partners in achieving the productivity and competitiveness goals of the enterprise	1. No challenge exists.	1. A weekly meeting is held with the enterprise's four(4) supervisors and owners to share ideas on the way forward or weekly plans
Communication , respect and mutual trust and confidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No destructive challenge exists. Staff morale is high 2. There is low staff turn over; 90% of the staff has been there since its inception. 	1. The rapport in the organization is family oriented. The relationship between the manager and the staff is facilitative.
Safety and health as well as working conditions	1. All operations affecting safety are adhered to	1. There is a proactive approach taken to reducing any operational risk on the property. The owner's background in auditing has allowed

		for the transfer of skills to this hospitality enterprise.
Compensation System and sharing in productivity goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No challenges exist. There are 35 full time staff members. They are provided with the necessary subsidies for lunch. There is free coffee as well as fully paid health insurance. The staff also receives travel benefits and paid gratuity. 	---

Table 5.2: Challenges affecting leading Male Study Enterprise

Indicator	Problems /Challenges in the area	Coping Strategy(ies)
Formulation and Implementation of Corporate Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No such document or plan exists 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. However, in the area of marketing it is word of mouth strategy that is heavily relied upon.
Access to new technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an absence of the most modern and sophisticated kitchen technology 2. The office utilises modern mediums for communication 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The basic equipment is sourced and serviced for meal preparations
Networks, alliances and market	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competitors in Kingston rely heavily on the business and convention market 2. Constant improvement in customer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relies heavily on good customer service and local cuisine
Training and business development/Investment in training and skill upgrading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cost of training is high. Not much training is being done these days 2. The physical infrastructure of the plant cannot be expanded due to the unavailability of space 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liaise with other organizations that welcome the organization to partner with them in areas of staff development. Areas of training include food and beverage management , accounts

		<p>bookkeeping</p> <p>2. The JTHA coordinates training for the local hotels.</p>
<p>Collaborative efforts of workers and management as partners in achieving the productivity and competitiveness goals of the enterprise</p>	<p>1. Non exists</p>	<p>1. Clockwise decision making is practiced.</p> <p>2. Empowerment of staff at all levels is encouraged.</p> <p><i>"if you ask the gardener about his role in the productiveness of the enterprise he can tell you."</i></p>
<p>Communication , respect and mutual trust and confidence</p>	<p>1. None exists.</p> <p>2. There is very few conflict between management and the staff</p> <p>3. Low staff turnover</p>	<p>1. The management team has a direct interest in building a good relationship with staff</p>
<p>Safety and health as well as working conditions</p>	<p>1. None exists.</p>	<p>1. There is close monitoring of the safety guidelines that guide the operations of the hotel.</p> <p>2. The site is expected three times per year by the Health inspector for any evidence of food preparation practices that are hazardous to health and the necessary fire devices</p>
<p>Compensation System and sharing in productivity goals</p>	<p>1. Staff members are provided with provided with all the necessary components of remuneration package.</p>	<p>1. Profits are shared but indirectly. For example, if you are working in the enterprise for 3 years or more, the manager aids in tangible ways such as the</p>

acquisition of home or vehicle.

Table 5.3: Challenges affecting other study organization (female owned and operators)

Indicator	Problems /Challenges in the area	Coping Strategy(ies)
Formulation and Implementation of Corporate Strategy	1. None exists	—
Access to new technology	1. Initially there was fear in the use of new technology such as the computer and cable in daily operations	1. Aid from personnel at financial institutions in the form of presentations on how to use equipment 2. Staff reassurance
Networks, alliances and market	1. No challenge expressed. The manager of the resort has a cordial relationship with the Jamaica Tourist and Hotel Association(JTHA) 2. There is a strong network with local and international clients from countries such as Russia, Australia and New Zealand 3. Marketing is predominantly done by word of mouth. Advertisements of the hotel are placed in Canadian and Florida tabloids that attract clientele from the Caribbean market.	—

<p>Training and business development/ Investment in training and skill upgrading</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate funds to pursue staff development. 2. The age of the equipment and constant repairs militates against sustained profitability. 3. Cannot afford to hire and pay the highly trained staff 4. Inadequate funds to pursue ongoing training of staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continues to upgrade equipment 2. More junior staff learns from older persons 3. As former chairperson of the Kingston Chapter of the JTHA maintains a cordial relationship with the leadership to benefit from any courses in staff development
<p>Collaborative efforts of workers and management as partners in achieving the productivity and competitiveness goals of the enterprise</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is minimal collaboration between staff and management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegation and constant referral to management works best
<p>Communication , respect and mutual trust and confidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All business communications are directly related to the manager. 2. There is low staff turn over. 	<p>—</p>
<p>Safety and health as well as working conditions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All operations affect safety are adhere to 	<p>—</p>
<p>Compensation System and sharing in productivity goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff members are provided with all the necessary components of remuneration package 	<p>-</p>

Signals of Undesirable Trends

Tables 6.1 to 6.4 show how the enterprises saw themselves with respect to the signals of undesirable trends. The results are revealed first, on individual tables and then on one comparative table (Table 6.4)

Table 6.1: Signals of Undesirable trends within leading Female Owned Enterprise

Indicator	Situation	Rating (True/False)	Rationale	Importance of gender(0 being irrelevant 1 being the lowest 10 being the highest
Output	Low /Falling	F	The ambiance is unique and the clientele make constant referral to other persons about the service provided	0
Standards of Service	Low /Falling	F	The enterprise owner pays close attention to the daily operation of the hotel and meals have a personal touch.	1
Scrap/Waste	High/Rising	F	Purchases are made for what is needed. Some catering jobs are done off site to facilitate demands.	0
Human Performance	Low /Falling	F	Customer service is seen as priority number one. The owner pays close attention to the product input. This includes attitude to work and attitude to serving clients.	0
Time to perform	Low/Rising	F	The staff has been around for a long time and is accustomed to demands, especially during peak periods. Some recipes have become standardised which reduces error.	0

Level of Accuracy	Low /Falling	F	The enterprise owner pays close attention to the processes involved in meal preparation , especially for repeat clients and	0
Use of equipment	Low /Falling	F	Regular assessments of equipment conducted	0
Accident Rate	High/Rising	F	Nothing major since the enterprise began operations	0
Labour turnover	High/Rising	F	Internal customers are motivated and receive adequate compensation	1
Absenteeism, tardiness	High/Rising	F	Attitude to work and customer service is constantly assessed by operator and clientele	0
Recruitment Problems	Continuing/Increasing	F	The staff turn over has been minimal and has remained relatively constant since inception	1
Labour Disputes	Excessive/Increasing	F	Good working relationship exists among the staff and between management and staff. Weekly meetings are used to work out workplace grievances.	0
Market Share	Low/Shrinking	F	Serves a significant component of the major corporate clientele.	0
Delays in Delivery	Excessive/Increasing	F	No major complaints as it relate to tardiness of coffee break, lunch time and dinner deliveries.	0
Customer Complaints	Excessive/Increasing	F	Customers are satisfied	0
Growth rate	Low/Diminishing	F	Credit card sales and over the counter sales contribute significantly to profit	0

Table 6.2: Signals of Undesirable trends within Male owned enterprise

Indicator	Situation	Rating (True/False)	Rationale	Importance of gender of the owners (0 being irrelevant 1 being the lowest 10 being the highest)
Output	Low /Falling	F	Good customer service has been accredited with the enterprise's success. Personality and business astuteness are critical	0
Standards of Service	Low /Falling	F	Improved customer service, building client base and technology	0
Scrap/Waste	High/Rising	F	Purchase needs are not excessive , purchase what is needed	0
Human Performance	Low /Falling	F	Females are likely to show better work practices than the males	0
Time to perform	Low/Rising	F	Low turn over, experience of staff has influenced positively the time taken to perform task	0
Level of Accuracy	Low /Falling	F	A lot of attention given to details	0
Use of equipment	Low /Falling	F	Essentials are purchased and maintained	0
Accident Rate	High/Rising	F	Care is taken to adhere to security concerns	0
Labour turnover	High/Rising	F	-	0
Absenteeism, tardiness	High/Rising	F	Younger people, usually those for which this is their first job	0
Recruitment Problems	Continuing/Increasing	F	Job-best fit selection is used	0
Labour Disputes	Excessive/Increasing	F	No union exists. Organization camaraderie is embraced.	0
Market Share	Low/Shrinking	F	Constant	0
Delays in Delivery	Excessive/Increasing	F	-	0

Customer Complaints	Excessive/Increasing	F	Impressed with treatment given to local clientele.	0
Growth rate	Low/Diminishing	F	The number of first time guests as well as repeat clientele is growing. Apart from hosting conferences, weddings and receptions have become other popular areas of business.	0

Table 6.3: Signals of Undesirable trends within other Female owned enterprise

Indicator	Situation	Rating (True/False)	Rationale	Importance of gender(0 being irrelevant 1 being the lowest 10 being the highest)
Output	Low /Falling	T	Age of manager is hindering the support that the enterprise ought to be receiving	1
Standards of Service	Low /Falling	F	Consistently high	0
Scrap/Waste	High/Rising	F	-	
Human Performance	Low /Falling	F	The quality of work by the staff is commendable. Direct interface with the manager is the critical factor	8
Time to perform	Low/Rising	F	-	1
Level of Accuracy	Low /Falling	F	All financial preparations are intensely monitored.	1
Use of equipment	Low /Falling	F	The necessary equipment is still used in the daily operations. They keep operations afloat. Downturn period are kept at a minimal	1

Accident Rate	High/Rising	F	Strict adherence to quality management and operations are maintained. There is a very experienced kitchen and household staff.	1
Labour turnover	High/Rising	F	Very Low. There are staff members that have been there since the property's inception and see themselves as an integral part of the business	1
Absenteeism, tardiness	High/Rising	F	There is initial evidence of tardiness from younger members of staff on starting to work at the hotel. In many cases this is their first job.	1
Recruitment Problems	Continuing/Increasing	F	There is no evidence of continuing /increased recruiting problems. However, the hotel cannot afford to recruit those persons that are very educated and skilled.	2
Labour Disputes	Excessive/Increasing	F	Overall the staff is content	1
Market Share	Low/Shrinking	T	Age of manager not able to intensely monitor and keep up with the rigors of maintaining a hotel.	1
Delays in Delivery	Excessive/Increasing	F	-	1
Customer Complaints	Excessive/Increasing	F	There is a high percentage of repeat guests	0
Growth rate	Low/Diminishing	F	It could be better with another person in charge	0

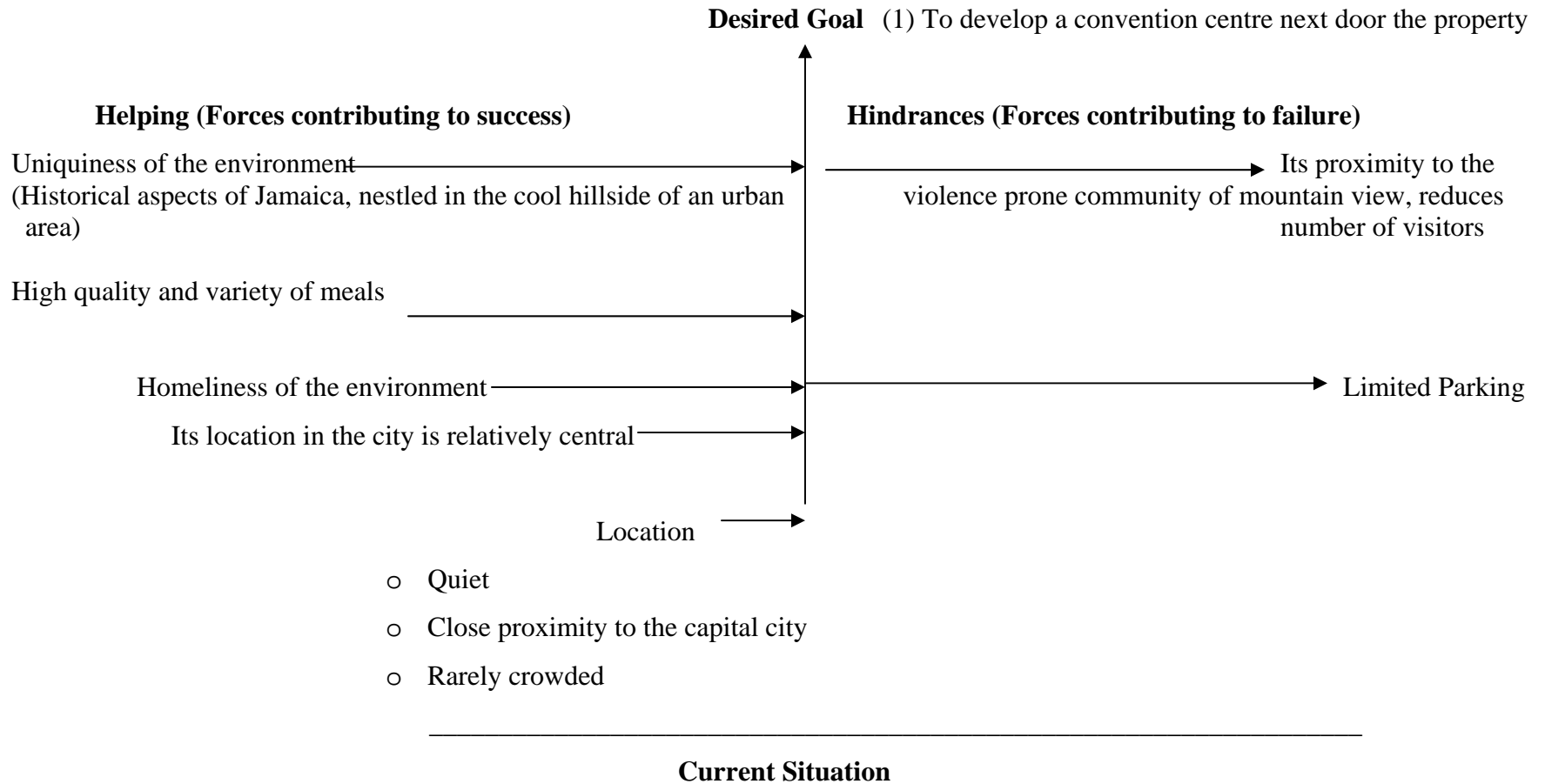
Table 6.4: Signals of Undesirable trends Among Organizations Studied

Indicator	Situation	Rating Among Organization			Importance of Gender of Owner		
		Leading Female Enterprise(Study Enterprise)	Leading Male Enterprise	Other Female Enterprise	Leading Female Enterprise(Study Enterprise)	Leading Male Enterprise	Other Female Enterprise
Output	Low /Falling	F	F	T	0	0	1
Standards of Service	Low /Falling	F	F	F	1	0	0
Scrap/Waste	High/Rising	F	F	F	0	0	
Human Performance	Low /Falling	F	F	F	0	0	8
Time to perform	Low/Rising	F	F	F	0	0	1
Level of Accuracy	Low /Falling	F	F	F	0	0	1
Use of equipment	Low /Falling	F	F	F	0	0	1
Accident Rate	High/Rising	F	F	F	0	0	1
Labour turnover	High/Rising	F	F	F	1	0	1
Absenteeism, tardiness	High/Rising	F	F	F	0	0	1
Recruitment Problems	Continuing/Increasing	F	F	F	1	0	2
Labour Disputes	Excessive/Increasing	F	F	F	0	0	1
Market Share	Low/Shrinking	F	F	T	0	0	1
Delays in Delivery	Excessive/Increasing	F	F	F	0	0	1
Customer Complaints	Excessive/Increasing	F	F	F	0	0	0
Growth rate	Low/Diminishing	F	F	F	0	0	0

Comparisons made across the organizations demonstrate that generally, there is a negligible relationship between the signals of undesirable trends and gender of the enterprise. *Indicators associated with profitability and competitiveness are output, market share and growth rate for which the leading female organization and leading male organization record the same results with respect to the non-existence of gender of operator as a cause of success or failure.* Niche marketing, positive treatment of clientele and word –of –mouth marketing were more associated with success.

Figures 1.1 to 1.3 below illustrate a force field tool. This tool examines the helping and hindering factors which affect the nature of operations in the enterprise. The present undesired situation and future desired situation are stated. The length of the arrow and the proximity to the helping/hindering force to the top is related to the strength of the force.

Figure 1.1: Problems and Opportunities affecting and contributing to Improved Productivity and Competitiveness in Leading Female Enterprise

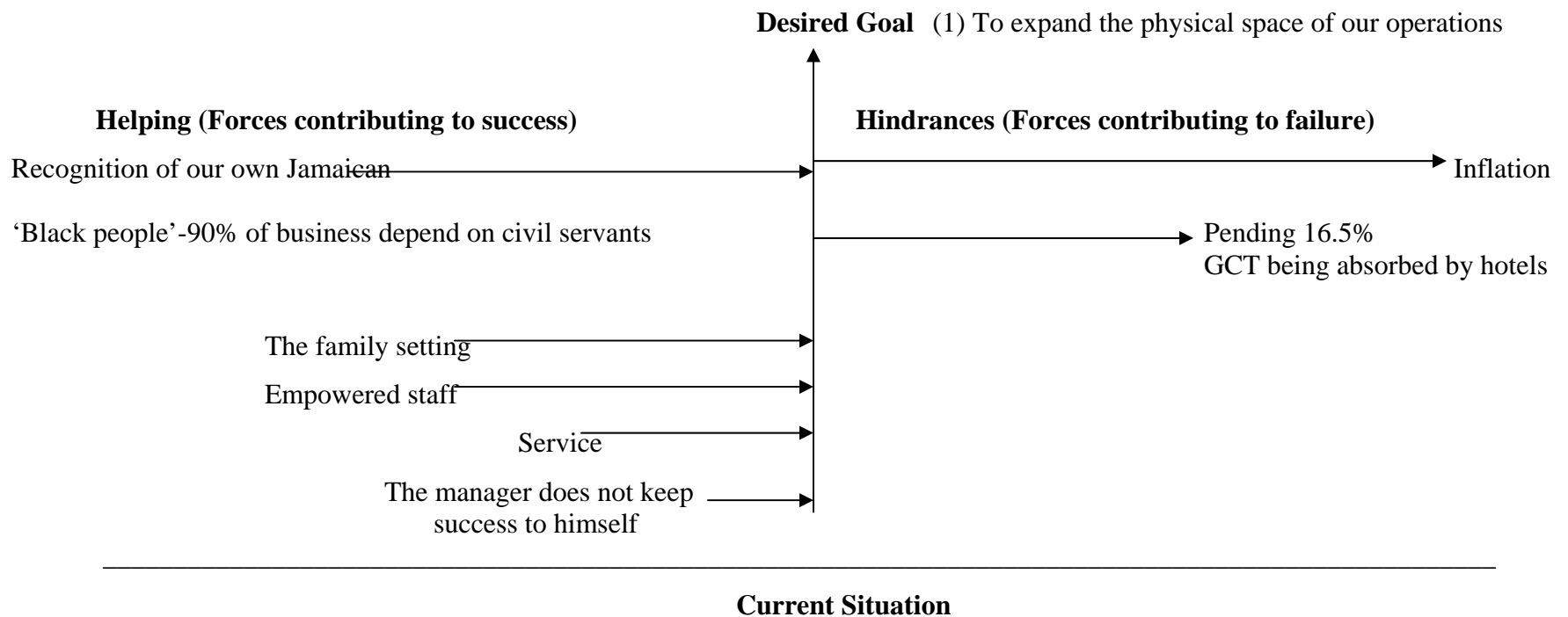


(1) 90% of the staff has been there since the inception

(2) Credit card sales alone account for J\$1million monthly

- (3) Above average benefits to staff such as payment of 10% gratuity of annual profits made, 100% payment of health benefits, travelling and subsidised lunch as well as the placement of much emphasis on employee training and upgrading of skill sets

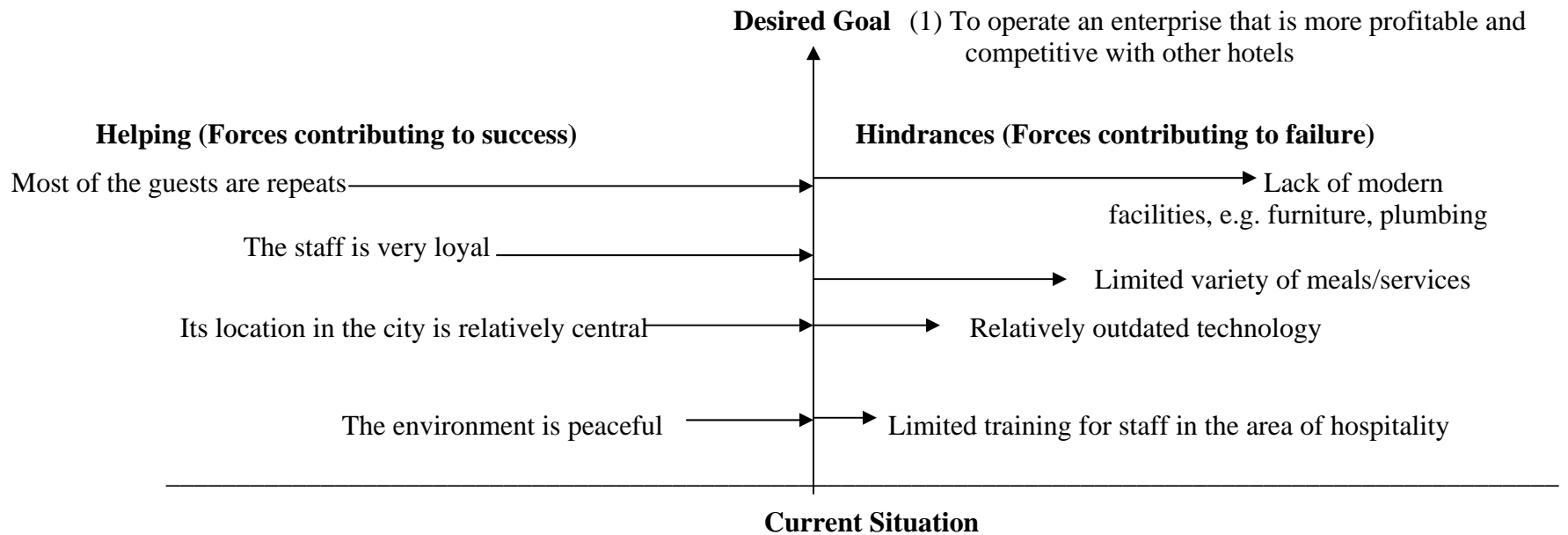
Figure 1.2: Problems and Opportunities affecting and contributing to Improved Productivity and Competitiveness in Male Owned Enterprise



1. Operating within the market in comparison to other hotels

2. There are days when all 10 conference rooms are booked and potential guests have to be referred to other venues
3. 80% of our guests are repeats
4. Prices are increasing but the hotel is absorbing the losses (not passing on the new prices to consumers)

Figure 1.3: Problems and Opportunities affecting and contributing to Improved Productivity and Competitiveness in other female enterprise



- (4) Expenses are high , not even breaking even
- (5) Monthly payment for utilities is extremely high
- (6) 40% of guests are repeats

GENDER ISSUES

Jamaican women have been in the labour force since the early post slavery period when they took up agriculture and *higglering*. This longstanding tradition has carried forward into the present and today, women continue to operate in their personal businesses, many of them as informal traders referred to as Informal Commercial Importers (ICI's). Notwithstanding this long tradition, concern has been raised that they continue to be concentrated at the lower end of the business spectrum. This may be seen to be reflected in their distribution in the population and labour force. In this regard, in 2004 women comprised approximately 51% of the population but accounted for only approximately 44.5% of the labour force¹. The main practitioners in the formal business sector continue to be males. Apart from gender stereotyping and the traditionally differentiated roles of men and women that have relegated women to the home and less dominant positions in business, a number of other factors, some discriminatory, have kept women out of the world of business. Some of those cited by women in business include:

1. Lack of access to credit because of the absence of bankable collateral
2. Reluctance of loan officers to give credit to females
3. Discriminatory lending practice (now no longer in practice) that dictated that married women would need their husbands' approval before entering into a loan agreement
4. Discriminatory practice (now no longer in practice) that required that married women would need their husbands approval before disposing of property
5. Fear that female managers will not be as respected as their male counterparts by workers and business associates

It was expected that some of these issues or maybe new ones would have been raised by participants in this study. However, they studiously avoided any suggestion that gender issues affected their businesses in any way. In view of the gender concerns that some have raised relating to women in business in other sectors, participants in this study were asked the following direct questions:

1. Based on your experience as an entrepreneur in the hotel sector, do you think that women are treated differently to men when they attempt to access credit?
2. Is there a difference between men and women in the way that they are able to build and gain entry into support networks for their business?
3. Is there a difference in the way that women are treated compared to men when they bargain for purchases, sales or in other circumstances relating to their business?
4. Based on your experience, are there any differences in the ways female managers are charged for services (transport costs, deliveries, purchases etc.) when compared to their male counterparts?

¹ Economic and Social Survey Jamaica 2004, Planning Institute of Jamaica

5. Do you think that women entrepreneurs have equal respect from their subordinates and business associates as do their male counterparts?

All three participants in the study rejected the notion that gender was an issue with respect to any of the questions raised. The only conclusions that could be drawn from this are either that the participants were gender blind or that they had in fact not been troubled by gender concerns. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary with respect to this study, the reasonable conclusion would point to the latter. It should be noted however, that this was a qualitative study and a broader study could yield vastly different results.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The leading female enterprise and the male enterprise appear to have been holding their own as far as productivity and profitability are concerned. Both entities appear to have emphasised good benefits to staff and good staff relations as key elements in their success. They also placed much emphasis on the provision of good meals as a strategy for attracting and retaining clients. All enterprises claimed to have high staff retention.

On the whole, the data do not indicate that gender contributed to the successes or failures of the entities under study. Other strategy as earlier alluded to seem to have been more relevant to success or failure among the entities under study.

Good Practices to be Recommended

- (a) There are a number of positives relating to the operations of the leading female enterprise. These “best” practices may be summarised as (i) the high level of communication between management and staff in the leading female enterprise which ensured that staff was highly motivated (ii) The provision of generous benefits to staff as a means of attracting and retaining the best staff and for providing excellent services (iii) The careful attention to the quality of food and service offered which contributed positively to word of mouth recommendations. This was crucial as much of the business of the leading female enterprise was gained through the recommendations of past customers.

Contributions that can enhance productivity growth in women enterprises studied

The challenge for the leading female enterprise, as with other small hotels, is to attract guests away from the large hotel chains in Kingston and on the North Coast.

In this regard, Productivity and growth in the leading female owned enterprise was enhanced through:

- (i) *Increased niche promotions* to the locale clientele. In addition to word of mouth promotions, other mediums such as targeted radio and print advertising were also effective.
- (ii) *Coaching and mentoring staff*, especially younger workers which yielded positive results in output, market growth and versatility of service offered.
- (iii) *Direct interface and close monitoring of staff*. However, enabling of employees to be more autonomous in daily tasks was critical for human resource and business development.

Because the operators cater to an urbane clientele, meal variety and quality are important as this demographic group enjoys eating out and will pay for this service. In addition, an ambiance that does not resemble the office but facilitates professional networking is important for this group.

Greater collaboration may be required with other stakeholders such as the Jamaica Tourist and Hotel Association and the travel agencies.

- (c) Impact of suggestions market development, strategic management, human resource development and family business balance.

Market Development

- Entrepreneurs in the tourism and hotel industry need to give more recognition to the local tourist. This is more true for the hotels under study, particularly the leading female enterprise as they are located in an area that does not easily attract foreign tourists. Tourism in Jamaica is popularly perceived as a treat for wealthy white folks. The leading female enterprise is in a location that does not offer much room for expansion. However, the hotel could expand by establishing a chain of specialist hotels rather than a single large hotel.
- Palatable and ethnic eating has become popular all over the globe. Reasonably priced and tasty cuisine is vital to competitive business.
- Business type tourism needs to be encouraged for Kingston, not just for foreigners, but also for locals. This type of tourism may be developed in conjunction with cultural segments such as the Port Royal heritage tourism project which is expected to generate gross foreign exchange earnings averaging about US\$146.5 million per annum,

Strategic Management

- Vision and consistency are the real hallmarks of success
- Commitment and dedication of staff is vital to the organizational strengthening process

- Delegating and empowering all levels of staff to perform with competence within their area and encouraging cross functional behavior are also vital to the future of the hotel
- Proprietor Emotional Intelligence (EI) is vital. (That is sensitivity to the feelings of others, particularly the workers).

Human Resources Development

- Employee behaviour within the enterprise has important implications for organisational performance. Good human resource practices by operators such as proper compensation and motivation, influence employee performance on jobs and their willingness to improve. This positively affected the success of the leading female enterprise.
- The flat nature of the structure of these organizations ensured that communication was more fluid.
- Human resource development and management need to operate as a duality. These processes need to enmesh with principles of individual and group performance dynamics, interpersonal skills, personal wellness and individual productivity. Training and coaching are therefore very vital to the longevity of such enterprises in a service driven economy.

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