



CITA open letter to media and the public

Friday, 20th February 2015.

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Recent articles on *Cayman News Service* [CNS] and this morning's *Cayman Crosstalk*'s talk show have cast aspersions on the CITA initiative to partner with the NWDA in a tourism employment drive called "CayTED". The first time we did this drive was in 2013, and we did it again in October 2014. Through these initiatives, CITA was able to complete screening interviews and give employment advice to NWDA clients and over 20 of these individuals were placed in jobs in tourism. It is very disheartening therefore for CITA, and for the tourism leaders and HR industry professionals who volunteered countless hours of time and effort to create and run these initiatives, to be the target of allegations about a lack of transparency and fierce attacks alleging that our intentions in these efforts were to somehow manipulate the job drive to be a "deliberate attempt to discredit Caymanians and justify using cheap labour."

This misinformed and unwarranted attack is a very sad state of affairs that does not bode well for the future prospects of the tourism industry. It will surely discourage any other industries from attempting to collaborate with the NWDA in job drive initiatives. No other industry in Cayman has gone to the extent that CITA has done in attempting to work collaboratively with the NWDA by initiating and organizing a professionally conducted job drive seeking to place unemployed persons to fill vacancies in our industry, involving people at the highest levels of companies in tourism and in the HR recruitment community here. CITA wishes that a higher number of Caymanians could have been placed in jobs as a result of all this effort that enabled so many interview opportunities, but we respect that ultimately employers have to choose the best person available for the job. CITA is happy that through CayTED initiatives we were able to give employment advice to so many people, and that a number of persons who might have otherwise remained unemployed were placed in tourism jobs.

There has been a lot of misinformation spread regarding the list of jobs that were being offered during CayTED 2014. On its own initiative, CITA created a public website www.cita.ky/jobs to make it easier for interested candidates to see several jobs that are available in the tourism industry and obtain full details to apply for those jobs. In preparation for CayTED 2014 CITA reached out to its members and requested that especially for our jobs drive they post any currently available jobs on the CITA website for the purpose of matching potential CayTED candidates with then current vacancies. In accordance with immigration processes, our members also post vacancies on the NWDA website especially if they consider a work permit could become necessary to fill the post. By the start of CayTED

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2014 screening interviews, there were some 42 job listings on our website comprising more than 61 vacancies with a diverse range of employers such as Al La Kebab, Captain Marvin's Watersports, Caribbean Marine Services, Casanova's by the Sea, Cayman Aggressor, Cayman Cabana, Cayman Turtle Farm, Dolphin Cove, Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort, Holiday Inn Resort Grand Cayman, Le Soleil d'Or Luxury Boutique Hotel & Rentals, Majestic Tours, Off The Wall Divers, Red Sail Sports, The Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman, and Thompson Resorts.

The jobs listed on www.cita.ky/jobs were openly accessible for anybody on the internet to see: potential candidates, the NWDA, MLA's, the media, or anyone else that took a genuine interest in CayTED 2014. CITA very actively encouraged persons to view the full list of jobs online through various media, inclusive of promoting this through press release, radio appearances with NWDA, membership e-blasts, emails and word-of-mouth. CITA wanted persons to see the various jobs available, in advance of the first 2014 job drive date on 18th October. In addition, the CayTED planning process enlisted the assistance of professional recruitment firms in the Human Resources community here in developing the process for objective screening of the local applicants seeking employment. We consider it outrageous therefore to infer anything other than a transparent and professional process that was fully intended to place suitable unemployed Caymanians into tourism jobs.

In preparation for CayTED 2014 the CITA office compiled an Excel spreadsheet "snapshot" summarizing those web listings as at 3:00 PM on 17th October 2014. The next day 18th October 2014 at the first CayTED 2014 venue at the Clifton Hunter campus, the CITA office staff had a hardcopy of the spreadsheet and on request they made a photocopy and provided it to the NWDA there at the site. Following that event there were no subsequent requests from NWDA for the jobs listing snapshot. Those listings remained on www.cita.ky/jobs for many weeks thereafter.

Since then, CITA has provided the NWDA with very detailed information charting the progress and status of each candidate referred for job interviews. This is an ongoing process and there is still information being collected in that regard as updates come in from prospective employers. That chart contains personal information regarding the candidates however, for which we must respect confidentiality, so it would not be suitable to be released beyond the confines of the CITA organization and stakeholders intimately involved, the NWDA, and the Employment Ministry.

On 12th February 2015 when the article appeared on CNS, the CITA executive immediately contacted the NWDA leadership and the Ministry of Education, Employment & Gender Affairs, and emailed to them an electronic copy of the same jobs listing "snapshot" spreadsheet we created on 17th October 2014. That is over a week ago, and yet today



Friday 20th February 2015 we still hear accusations from a government representative that up to now the list has not been provided.

CITA has responsibilities to act in the best interests of its membership and the tourism industry as a whole. CITA wants nothing to do with anything that is perceived as discrediting Caymanians. In light of the negativity that has been cast on CayTED, if these falsehoods remain uncorrected in the public perception CITA will have to disassociate itself from any future iteration of a tourism employment drive in conjunction with NWDA. Furthermore CITA reserves the right to defend itself whether publicly or in any other forum, against false and damaging allegations.

CITA has been very restrained and deliberately patient in the hopes that the relevant government Ministry, Department or representative will publicly issue authoritative, clear and firm corrections to the misstatements and unfounded allegations of lack of transparency and improper motives. We believe that is the proper and most effective way to set things right. We still hope that will be forthcoming.
