GMSA Meets with Dr. Ashni Singh on Areas of Concern for Business Growth in Guyana

GUYANA MANUFACTURING & SERVICES ASSOCIATION LTD.

GMSA NEWSLETTER

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GMSA Participates in GNBS Webinar - Made in Guyana Certification Programme

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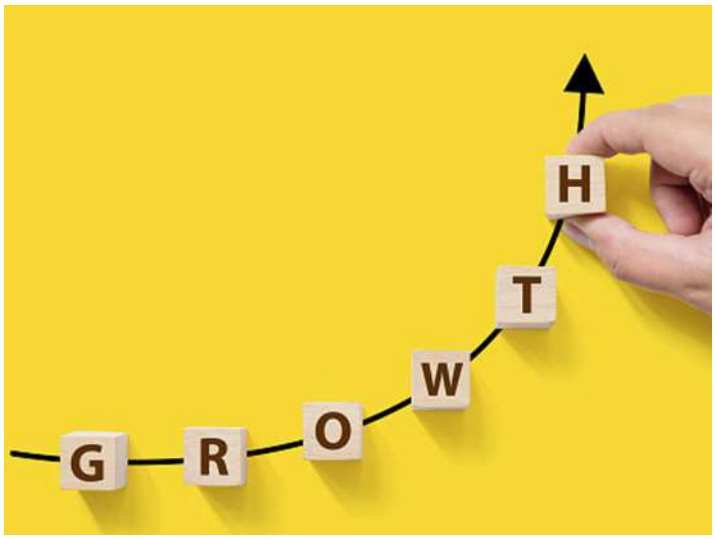
GMSA Meets with Dr. Ashni Singh on Areas of Concern for Business Growth in Guyana

The Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) met with Dr. Ashni Singh, M.P., Senior Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Finance, on September 13, 2021 to discuss areas of concern for growth of business in Guyana, and ways by which the Government can alleviate these concerns.

GMSA President Mr. Rafeek Khan, and several executive members including 1st, 2nd and 3rd Vice Presidents, Mr. Ramsey Ali, Mr. Vishnu Doerga and Mr. Peter Pompey respectively were present, along with GMSA's Executive Director, Mr. Jason Allicock and Business Analyst, Ms. Tynisha Niles.

Discussions ranged from the export trends in Guyana to prolonged hindrances affecting business growth. These hindrances include borrowing cost, quality and standards, business support measures, trade barriers, training and technical skills and energy and fuel. Dr.



Singh assured of his Ministry's support and committed to meeting with the relevant agencies and Ministries to discuss and advocate avenues by which these hindrances can be addressed.

Some of the more in-depth approaches for addressing these issues included meeting with Guyana Bankers Association Inc-GABI with respect to deterred access to financing, and hosting Job Fairs in areas where surplus labour is prevalent. The Minister also highlighted how pleased he was that the Association raised these pertinent matters.

Both the GMSA and Dr. Singh alluded to certain benefits for the Private and Public Sectors from collaborative efforts to assist in the development and growth of the business community. The meeting concluded with the establishment of a Technical Working Group between the GMSA and the Ministry of Finance.

GMSA thanks Dr. Ashni Singh and Ministry of Finance for taking the time to meet with members of the Executive Team and eagerly awaits future interactions with the Ministry, to improve the business environment within Guyana.

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GMSA Participates in ExxonMobil Webinar on the Gas to Energy Project

The Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) participated in a webinar on September 8, 2021, titled "Gas to Energy Project 2021". The virtual scoping session was hosted by ExxonMobil's subsidiary, Esso Exploration and Production Guyana Limited (EEPGL), to educate members of the public and private sectors on the Gas to Energy Project.

Over 107 attendees from the private and public sectors who hold a keen interest in the Gas to Energy Project 2021 were engaged through an in-depth presentation which provided information on the project overview, the benefits of project and the role in Local Content activities.

The Gas to Energy Project is a partnership between ExxonMobil and the Government of Guyana (GoG). The GoG intends for the project to begin the country's transition to cleaner energy sources, as Guyana's energy sector is heavily dependent on diesel and heavy fuel oil. Guyanese authorities are aiming for a 50% reduction in the cost of power with the institution of not only the Gas-to-Energy Project, but a diverse energy mix, including hydro, solar and wind power.

Guyana's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) charged EEPGL to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in order to obtain authorization for the imminent Project which includes construction, commissioning, and operation of:

- the onshore natural gas liquids and natural gas processing plant (NGL plant) which is proposed to be located at the Amsterdam/Vriesland area, West Bank Demerara;

- the construction of a 220km offshore 12-inch pipeline from the Liza Phases 1 and 2 floating productions, storage and offloading (FPSO) vessels, the Liza Destiny

- an onshore 12-inch pipeline, approximately 27km long, commencing North of the proposed NGL plant site and extending through and near several villages along the West Coast of Demerara and the West Bank of Demerara, until it meets the offshore pipeline.

Several scoping meetings were held over the last few weeks to solicit issues or concerns proposed by citizens to have ExxonMobil address in its EIA for the Project.

An EIA is a process that involves evaluating the likely impacts of a proposed project or development, while taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, which are beneficial and adverse.

The Project is expected to provide cheaper, cleaner, reliable and sustainable energy to Guyanese, with diverse energy sources that will eliminate imports, reduce the cost of LPG's and create revenue streams for Government whilst increasing local industries' competitiveness and encouraging the entry of new investors.
In addition, the Project is also expected to support job creation and skills development in the local workforce while acting as an anchor for development of the Wales Industrial Zone thereby offering an abundance of opportunities to local businesses in the construction and operating phases.

With Local Content being the prime interest of many attendees, numerous questions followed which included information on bidding, local procurement of available goods and services, provision of a list of subcontractors and fire and gas prevention systems being supported locally. The presentation was well received and provided attendees with a profound understanding on details of the Project and its implementation.

The GMSA would like to thank ExxonMobil for taking the time to engage the private sector on the Project and provide clarity where requested. The Association anticipates future engagements as the Project comes to fruition.

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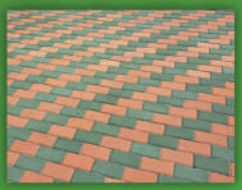

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ISO 15189 – ISO 15189:2012 Medical laboratories — Requirements for quality and competence
ISO 15190 – ISO 15190:2020 Medical laboratories — Requirements for safety
GYS 231:2010 CRS 14: 2010(First Revision) Requirements for good management practices for micro, small and medium enterprises.
GYS 170:2009 – General requirements for the operation of a laboratory.
GYS 235:2003 – General requirements for safety in laboratories

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GMSA Participates in GNBS Webinar - Made in Guyana Certification Programme

The Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA), on September 21, 2021, participated in a consultation session titled "Made in Guyana Certification Programme". The virtual consultation was organized by the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) and was hosted by Ms. Andrea Mendonca. Participants in attendance came from a wide cross-section of the public and private sub-sectors.

The draft Made in Guyana Certification Mark Programme document was issued for public comments and feedback on the GNBS website, during the period of September 01-30, 2021. However, this virtual forum presented the opportunity for all stakeholders to interact directly with the GNBS to share ideas and concerns related to the Programme.

GNBS advised that participation in the Programme will be voluntary and is available to all local Manufacturers with authentic Guyanese products that are desirous of being certified under this programme. The Certification Mark will be used to distinguish authentic Guyanese products that meet the established criteria as outlined by the Programme requirements and have been tested in accordance with these criteria for non-certified Guyanese products. The Certification Mark is a registered mark that aims to provide recognition of locally manufactured products on the national and international markets. Companies that intend to market their product(s) using this mark shall be required to comply with the Terms and Conditions of the use of the Made in Guyana Certification (MIGC) mark.

Some of the objectives in establishing the MIGC mark were shared with participants:

1. To create national competitiveness for authentic Guyanese produced products certified under the Programme.
2. To promote and create brand recognition of locally manufactured products on markets.
3. Positioning Guyana as a tourism destination with

successful nation branding "Made In Guyana" as unique locally manufactured products are associated with authentic Guyanese culture.

4. To establish consumer confidence in locally made products.

The GNBS presented an eight (8)-stage procedure and a five (5)- stage criteria for acquiring the Made in Guyana mark, which requires stakeholders input on the draft. The eight (8) stages identified includes:

1. Completion and submission of application form.
2. Review of application by the Certification Services Department (CSD) for approval or rejection.
3. Costing is prepared and sent to manufacturer for payment, one month before audit date.
4. Head, CSD assigns audit team and audit date is determined, which is shared with applicant.
5. Audit team conducts assessment and prepares a report on findings that is submitted to Head, CSD.
6. Upon approval, the manufacturing is formally informed of terms and condition of license to use mark. If denied, applicants are formally informed with reasons for denial.
7. Formal handover of certificate and signing of terms and conditions by parties involved. As well as, notifying the public that manufacturer is permitted a MIGC mark.
8. Surveillance audits will be conducted during one year of the certification period with an exemption for companies with ISO 9001 and 22000 certificates.

The criteria entail five (5) areas for review which includes raw materials, origin of staff, established turnaround times, system of complaints and product/sample testing. The verification process is still being discussed.

The GMSA welcomes the consultation and the Made in Guyana Certification Mark Programme being established in Guyana, which will undoubtedly add value Guyanese-made products. The Association continues to support GNBS throughout the process as this Programme comes to fruition, which will benefit Guyana.

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GMSA Services Sub-sector Hosts Webinar on: Optimizing your Management Operating System to Enhance Customer Value and Improve Profitability

The Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association's (GMSA) Services Sub-sector, on September 17, 2021, hosted a webinar titled *"Sensitization Session: Optimizing your Management Operating System to Enhance Customer Value and Improve Profitability"*. This webinar was organized by GMSA Secretariat, and was hosted by Ms. Carol Webster, Chairman of the Services Subsector. Participants in attendance came from both the public and private sectors, including agro-processing, construction, forestry and services.

Ms. Webster is the founder and CEO of O-Squared Consulting, an operations optimization consulting and management development organization. She is also Co-founder and COO of the Guyana Economic Development Trust (GEDT), an organisation that incubates and supports projects to expand and enhance enterprises and workforce skills in Guyana. She is a lecturer in Critical Thinking, Project Management Lean, Six Stigma and Quality Management at the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation at the University of Guyana. Ms. Webster also teaches Project Management for the CAPM and PMP certification.

The Sensitization Session was centered around Optimization with focus on key elements to provide participants with a profound understanding of how to maximize your business results though engagement of your entire team to refine the operations process. Topics discussed

focused on the Management Operating Systems (MOS), which included:

- What is a MOS
- Key Elements of a Management System
- What happens to your business when you optimize processes
- How can you get your employees involved
- What are the enabling behaviours of management to accelerate improvement
- What steps can be taken to see improvements yearly

The presentation educated members on the optimization process, which is a consistent and repeatable framework, where overall strategic imperatives are translated to goals for each division/department and those goals aligned throughout the organization. It involves instilling a culture of continuous improvement and empowering all levels of staff, including frontline staff to make decisions and take actions in the best interest of the organization. This preparation for better decision making is done through hands on knowledge transfer and coaching with clients so that the organization delivers substantial and sustainable operational and financial improvement. Excellence in customer service is at the center of those decisions.

She stressed that optimization is not consultation (where you listen to clients' issues and write a report), but rather working shoulder to shoulder with one's client, transferring/sharing your knowledge with them. Mr. Webster iterated the importance of teaching your clients how to solve future problems on their own by ensuring they are more knowledgeable, to make the decisions and improve their own processes. Some benefits of business optimization include maximizing throughput and efficiency, minimizing cost and eliminating unnecessary tasks, wastage of resources and errors.

The process of Optimization seeks to understand as a firm:

"What are you doing? How are you doing it? What resources are being utilized and are they necessary?"

The management system however is the blueprint for optimization, as it entails a specific identifiable set of activities necessary to create value for your stakeholders which involves consistent, repeatable practices that must be adhere to by all. If you want to be successful, your business results need to be aligned, compared and be competitive within your business industry globally. The presentation also highlighted the importance of communication systems in aligning your process and management capabilities in unison with your business results.

In closing, Ms. Webster informed that the optimization process is ensuring a company can sustain its efforts by maintaining consistency, implementing a system for getting new ideas for frontline staff and adding variety that benefits staff. All the elements within the optimization process must be done consistently. Athough they may not be accomplished all at once, work must be done towards implementing them all. Together, the elements will help deliver business results that are competitive.

The Sensitization Session was well received by participants with a wide array of questions which followed the completion of the session. The GMSA would like to thank Ms. Webster for taking the time to share her expertise with our members which can aid in the improvement of the management system and ultimately the improvement and success of their businesses.

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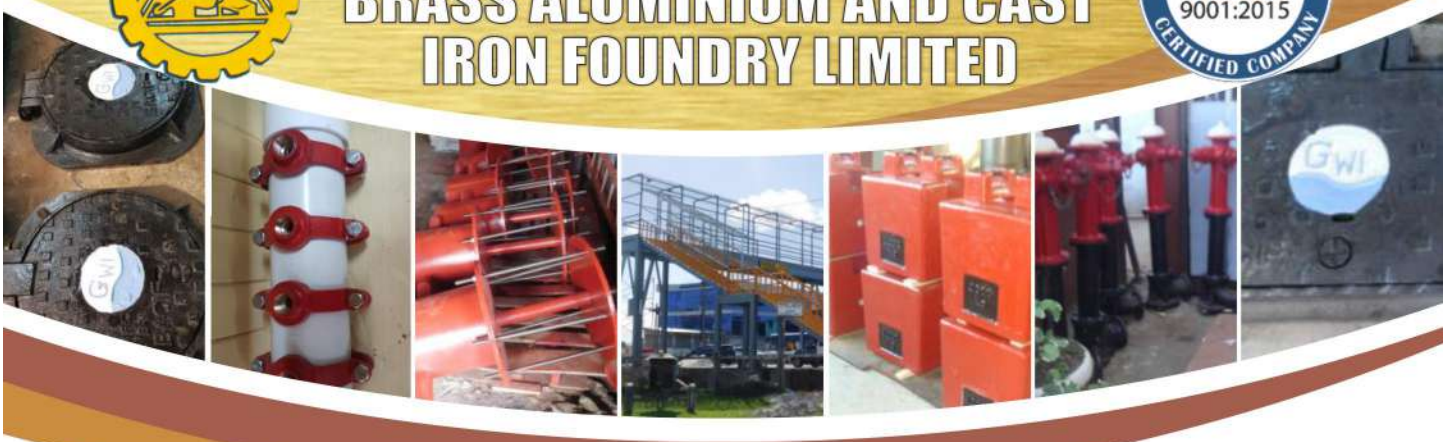

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"MEET OUR MEMBERS"

In this exciting and interactive feature, we will inform and educate our readers on the benefits of operating a business in Guyana and the possible challenges that can be faced by the various sectors and sub-sectors represented by the GMSA.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE MEMBER IS:

401 FURNITURE STORE

Highway 401 was initially a popular Restaurant and Bar; prior to becoming a prestigious furniture store. The then proprietor and his mother who in discussing the Canadian Highway 401, was influential in the name of the establishment. In 2019, the name was modified to 401 Furniture Store.

The 401 Furniture Store was initially a major seller of foam and mattresses, and a pending payment agreement with an upholsterer led to an arrangement that made them who they are today. The arrangement entailed the making of beds by the upholsterer and resale by 401. This led to other manufacturers engaging the company on their ability to make the same beds at a cheaper cost allowing the business to make a profit.

Since 2004, 401 Furniture Store is a family-owned business, that has been delivering locally produced furniture of the highest quality. Ms. Fazeena Khan highlighted that herself along with her siblings took up the role, to support their father in managing the affairs of the business, which led to their permanent role and presence. Further, their pieces carry a unique and modern style, and are guaranteed to add beauty and comfort to one's home. Their product portfolio includes a

wide variety of beds, wardrobes, dinette sets, living room suites, office furniture and mattresses.

With a wide array of manufacturers now engaging the company after their initial resale of beds, they started purchasing a variety of beds from a number of manufacturers for resale. Gradually they started importing the raw materials that was provided to manufacturers who would supply the finished products. As time progressed and the business grew, they opened their own factory in Lusignan, East Coast Demerara. In addition, majority of their products are made from medium density fiber boards (MDF) and apart from MDF, wood and ply are other raw materials used to produce their vast collection of final products.

As business grew, so did 401 Furniture partnership with international bodies including companies in Trinidad, Brazil and Columbia for MDF sourcing, due to the limited resource availability in Guyana. While the furniture store is not currently utilizing the lesser-known species of wood in their production process they are opened to building and showcasing products made from lesser-known species for the benefit of their customers once support and information is readily provided by GFC, since they were approached in the past.

Challenges Faced

With the world working tirelessly to adjust to the new normal, the business environment is also fighting to adjust to the new normal of increasing costs of raw materials and shipment. 401 Furniture Store is no exception to these daily challenges as freight cost has increased up to 900% on raw materials. This has the potential to halt their manufacturing process if a solution isn't devised soon. Currently, the business has three (3) containers currently stalled in Brazil due to increased freight costs exacerbated by the unavailability of vessels to ship cargo to Guyana. All plausible avenues are being considered from the outsourcing of the raw material from other locations to assessing the Lethem route of transporting the raw materials into Guyana from Brazil.

Challenges continue to rise during the contingency planning since many international companies are not accepting new/potential customers. Ms. Khan highlighted that the specific MDF supplied by Brazil provides the company with less wastage as compared to other countries specifications.

In their bit to expand the operations of the 401 Furniture Store, the management is currently seeking a commercial area, primarily an Industrial Site along the East Coast area to expand their manufacturing operations which will facilitate higher productivity to meet the local demand. The 401 Furniture Store has developed labour specialization in working with medium density fiber boards, while a small proportion of its labour compliment is experienced in wood working, thus most of the products being made of 60% MDF, along with a combination of wood and ply which is cost effective to the end consumer.

401 Furniture Store Today

MDF is widely used in furniture stores in Guyana and is also in high demand, they include the laminated sheets, whose edging must be sourced separately since the company that manufactures the laminated boards do not manufacture the edging. 401 Furniture utilizes both the plain MDF, which is similar to ply that they sand, lacquer and seal along with the water resistant MDF which is more costly and is used to kitchen build cupboards and other products.

401 Furniture Store continues to target primarily low to middle income persons who require affordable furnishings for their homes, since a completely wooden product may cost 100% more than one made with a combination of raw materials utilizing MDF boards. In addition, Ms. Khan highlighted when making certain products, MDF provides a better finish than ply and whilst there are no substitute for wood, knowing it is the best, not everyone can afford a fully wooden product.

With quality and affordability leading the way, there has been a regional interest in 401 Furniture and their prestigious products, who will soon be reaching regional shores, with Trinidad and Tobago demanding their high-quality upholstery beds.

As they continue to grow 401 Furniture Store supports diversity with the work environment with a combination of both the young and old, specialized in producing products from both MDF and wood respectively, they also promote gender equality with the company with four women in their retail store along with another four in the upholstery section who does the sewing, 401 Furniture store looks forward to the day women join their men in the factory.

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TIMBER WORKS INC.

Bulkan Timber Works Inc. (BTW), located at Yarrowkabra, on the Linden / Soesdyke Highway, has now opened a Showroom at **8 Smyth Street, Werk-en-Rust, in Georgetown** (obliquely opposite the Licence Office).

The company had decided earlier this year to place an emphasis on the local market and in this regard, invested significantly in upgrading their plant & equipment, as well as the physical infrastructure of their facility. As a result, the company has total confidence in all of their products, with the attention to detail that takes place in the manufacturing process.

Apart from their multifaceted skills to build an entire home, BTW can also supply **Flooring, Outdoor Decking, Mouldings, Doors, Roofing Shingles, Kitchen Cupboards, Windows, Outdoor Play Sets, Clothes Horses, Clocks, Pantries, Bar and Bar Stools, Coffee Tables, Customized Carvings**, and many more.

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