

Editor's Corner: Vashti G. Guyadeen

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It is clear that business today must be driven by not only risks **but by opportunities presented by the global environmental challenges**. Sinclair Knight Mertz in a recent study entitled, "Business Opportunities in the Primary Sector Arising from Climate Change", noted that, "*there is a shift in perception of climate change – from being a business burden to being a potential business opportunity*". The private sector internationally is not just *talking the talk* but has already taken concrete steps in dealing with the issue of climate change. This Group vociferously stated that, "*businesses in renewable power, energy smart products and clean technologies are generating revenues, profits and jobs at rates that would have been unthinkable a few years ago*".

In this issue of the "Trade & Investment", we share with you what one local manufacturer has been doing to tap into the demands of the environmentally conscious consumer. Lisa Bholai, our Research Officer, chats with the Managing Director of Agos Lighting, Mr. Edward Kacal to learn more about what they have been doing to break into this niche market. As Louis Pasteur once cautioned, "*fortune favours the prepared mind*" and indeed, business people who have the vision and foresight of environmental considerations will be better positioned to transition their organization to meet the demands of the "new consumer".

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Lisa Bholai chats with Mr. Edward Kacal, Managing Director of Agos Lighting on “Opportunities for local manufacturers in light of climate change”

To some, Agos Lighting is synonymous with light bulb manufacturing. However, Agos has been out of this market for decades, and is wholly dedicated to florescent fixtures manufacturing. Currently, approximately 70% of its output is geared towards the US market.

Agos Lighting is one local firm that proved that there are business opportunities in the face of climate and economic change, as many companies globally have moved toward energy saving. Two years ago, at the start of the US downturn, Agos purchased a small company in the US. This firm had a contract with the Washington power company to retrofit schools, with the aim of saving energy. Mr. Kacal pointed out that, the energy savings and the resulting costs savings of an organization as a result of the retrofit can be quite substantial when for example, a firm moves from a 150watt light to a 75 watt light for each of its lights.

While completing the retrofitting contract, there was a need for special fixtures to be designed. This was because the existing shells could not be removed as it would expose asbestos in the ceilings. Through a design-build campaign, a suitable fixture was designed to fit this purpose. This design-build model was very successful, and Agos now has a dedicated cross border design team that can produce a prototype within a working week.

According to Mr. Kacal, Agos continues to compete quite well against the American chains with nationwide distribution. This is because these large chains maybe slower to respond to small or custom orders as opposed to Agos which will have its team working to fill the order quickly. They stand behind their warranties, and have very low product returns and maintain high product quality.

Agos has worked on the lighting for the Waterfront Project. While this project was considered relatively large in local terms, Agos has worked on much larger projects in the US. Agos - Mobern is actually listed on the US Government List of Suppliers. Agos Lighting continues to compete quite well against their large foreign competitors in the US as their products meet all of the required quality standards. It is for this reason that Mr. Kacal is concerned about local content in local construction projects. He noted that Agos’ products continue to compete effectively with competitors on quality standards in the US market. He questioned why in local projects foreign competitors are given contracts based on quality standards, when a

local firm already operating and producing high quality products for an international market which has proof of its high quality levels, is not being given the opportunity to tender. Even though the US market has seen a slowdown, as a result of the recession, Agos believes that at end of the slowdown it is poised for significant growth. A major advantage of this cross-border interaction is that the innovation can be brought back and applied to Trinidad and Tobago.

Closer to home, Agos is focusing on building the CARICOM market and has been working very closely with Barbados. They have gained the approval of the Barbadian Electrical Inspectorate. At home, as a result of the cheap energy, there has traditionally been little incentive for companies to move towards energy saving, however there now seems to be a change in attitude by some companies who see the long term value.



Top: Mr. Edward Kacal, making a comment at the Chamber's One on One with Minister Mariano Browne session.
Middle: Agos Lighting Booth at the TIC 2009;
Bottom: Demonstration on inserting bulb into lighting fixture.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

EVENTS

LOCAL

Fundamentals of Finance & Accounting for Administrative Professionals

Date: 20th-22nd, July, 2009

Contact Mr. Troy

Tel: (868) 645-6700

E-mail: finacne@gsb.tt

ASYCUDA World “Live” Demonstration

Date: 22nd July, 2009

Venue: Cara Suites Hotel and Conference Centre, Southern Main Road, Claxton Bay

Contact Ms. Sumintra Seeram

Tel: (868) 637-6966 ext. 228

Fax: (868) 637-7425

E-mail: events@chamber.org.tt

Website: www.chamber.org.tt

“Managing Absenteeism” hosted by the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce’s Industrial Relations Committee

Date: 23rd July, 2009

Venue: Leon Agostini Conference Hall, Chamber Building, Columbus Circle, Westmoorings.

Contact Ms. Sumintra Seeram

Tel: (868) 637-6966 ext. 228

Fax: (868) 637-7425

E-mail: events@chamber.org.tt

Website: www.chamber.org.tt

Information Technology Security

Date: 24th July, 2009

Venue: Leon Agostini Conference Hall, Chamber Building, Columbus Circle, Westmoorings.

Contact Ms. Cheryl Lyn Kurban

Tel: (868) 637-6966 ext. 228

Fax: (868) 637-7425

E-mail: events@chamber.org.tt

Website: www.chamber.org.tt

LOCAL

Blazing Service

Date: 27th-28th July, 2009

Venue: TRAINMAR Centre, Top Floor, DHL Building Corner Churchill Roosevelt Highway & Chanka Trace, El Socorro.

Telephone: 638-5858

Fax: 638-8677

E-mail: Leah.de.Souza@trainmar-caribbean.org

Website: www.trainmar-caribbean.org

Professional Presentation Skills

Date: 29th-30th July, 2009

Venue: TRAINMAR Centre, Top Floor, DHL Building Corner Churchill Roosevelt Highway & Chanka Trace, El Socorro.

Telephone: 638-5858

Fax: 638-8677

E-mail: Leah.de.Souza@trainmar-caribbean.org

Website: www.trainmar-caribbean.org

E-mail: events@chamber.org.tt

Website: www.chamber.org.tt

Coaching & Mentoring Skills for Managers

Date: 10th-11th August & 9th September, 2009

Contact: Tamara Edwards, Brent Cassim

Tel: (868) 645-6700 ext 157;330

E-mail: professionaldevelopment@gsb.tt

REGIONAL

International Havana Fair

Date: 2nd – 7th November

Venue: EXPOCUBA Fairgrounds, Havana, Cuba

Telephone: + (537)-2710758, 2716614

Fax: + (537)-2719065

E-mail: pabexpol@palco.cu

Website: www.feriahavana.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

INTERNATIONAL

SAITEX 2009 - Southern African International Trade Exhibition

Date: 19th-21st July, 2009
Venue: Gallagher Convention Centre, Richards Drive, Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Telephone: + (27)-(11)-7837250
Fax: + (27)-(11)-7837269
Website: www.biztradeshows.com/trade-events/saitex.html

39th House and Gift Fair, South America

Date: 15th – 18th August, 2009
Venue: Expo Center Norte, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Telephone: 011-4604-2110
Fax: 011- 2614-8194
E-mail: anandpseth@fieo.org

East – West Business Forum

Date: 14th – 18th August, 2009
Venue: Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Czech Republic
Telephone: +420 257 217 744
E-mail: salini@icc-cr.cz
Website: www.icc-cr.cz

Invest Mexico Forum 2009

Date: 19th-20th August, 2009
Venue: Mexico City, Mexico.
E-mail: sandra.tapia@concanacored.com;
ialmada@impulsoimx.com;
investmexicoforum@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL

13th China International Fair for Investment & Trade (CIFIT)

Date: 8th-11th September, 2009
Venue: China (Xiamen) International Investment Promotion Center
E-mail: lianggang@mofcom.gov.cn
Website: www.chinafair.org.cn

28th Indian Handicrafts & Gift Fair

Date: 10th-13th October 2009
Venue: India Expo Centre & Mart, New Delhi, India
Telephone: + 91-11-26135256/57/58
Fax: + 91-11-26135518/19
E-mail: epch@vsnl.com
Website: www.epch.com

China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair)

Date: 15th-19th October 2009
Venue: China Import and Export Fair Complex, No. 380, Yuejiang Zhong Rd, Guangzhou, China
Telephone: + 020-26088888
Website: www.cantonfair.org.cn

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) observes World Food Day each year on October 16th. The theme of this year's World Food Day is **“Achieving Food Security in times of Crisis”**.

The FAO notes that “the global economic slowdown has added to the food crisis and shaken the international agricultural economy highlighting the fragility of world food security.” Their statistics show that more than one billion people are hungry, and that figure is projected to escalate by approximately one million each day. “The recent increase in hunger is exacerbated by the economic slowdown which has resulted in lower incomes and increased unemployment.”

To assist in celebrating World Food Day 2009, the Office of the FAO Representative, Port of Spain, has suggested tips on ways to become involved with the cause.

- Start a food bank and donate to FEEL and other organizations
- Volunteer your skills and times
- Organize a tree planting exercise, or distribute seedlings
- Host Competitions: Best back yard garden, best school, poster, essay.
- Go to the market, talk to the vendors
- Organize a church service (week of October 16th)
- Send photos and write articles or letter to the editor and submit them to the press on your community's or your organization's role and concerns for national food security.