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THE COURT NEWSLETTER

CHIEF JUSTICE INTRODUCES JUDICIARY'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN TO STAFF

The Honourable Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice, in August unveiled the Judiciary's new strategic plan at a four-day retreat held at the Terra Nova Hotel in St. Andrew under the theme "***Benchmarking the Future: Courting Success***".

In his opening remarks, Chief Justice Sykes said "strategic planning is a road map for taking an organization from where it is, to where it needs to go" and stressed that "the strategic planning is necessary to deliver alignment across the judiciary as well as to clearly communicate its vision, mission, core values and strategy".

The Chief Justice further explained that strategic planning provides a disciplined framework and improves performance through measurement, informs decision making, and contributes to the organizational growth while minimizing expenses.

Under the new strategic plan, Chief Justice Sykes said the indicators of success would be achieving "95%



The Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice, engages in a conversation with the Hon. Delroy Chuck at Strategic Retreat held at The Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel.

hearing date certainty; clearance rate of 130% consistently; court utilization time of 100% or as close as possible; and employee satisfaction."

Meanwhile, Justice Minister the Honourable Delroy Chuck, who was

also in attendance, congratulated the Chief Justice for convening the retreat with relevant stakeholders and asked members of the judiciary to give the Chief Justice their full support.

"A leader should set the tone in terms of where he wants to take us, and the Chief Justice is doing this," said Mr. Chuck.

Balanced Scorecard

The plan is rooted in the Balanced Scorecard which is a strategic management performance metric used to identify and improve various internal business functions and their resulting external outcomes. The Balanced Scorecard is also used to measure and provide feedback to organizations.

There are four perspectives to the Balanced Scorecard: organizational capacity, internal Processes, budget and finance, customer/stakeholder.

CHIEF JUSTICE INTRODUCES JUDICIARY'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN TO STAFF (CONT'D)

Mrs. Tricia Cameron-Anglin, Court Administration Officer of the Court Administration Division, indicated that it is important to build from the ground up, which is starting from the organizational capacity perspective.

Under this perspective, Mrs. Cameron-Anglin pointed out that “this includes training for judges through the Judicial Education Institute and staff through the Justice Training Institute and Court Management Services to improve knowledge, skills and ability from the ground up.”



File photo:

Her Honour Ms. Sanchia Burrell

As it relates to internal processes, the Court Administration Officer pointed out that “the aim is to improve work processes which entails standardization of processes within the different parishes to ensure greater trust across the board.”

Her Honour Ms. Sanchia Burrell explained that the customer/stakeholder’s perspective is critical and “each internal stakeholder must be made to feel as though their contribution is absolutely pivotal to the success of the court so that they become invested in and drive the process.”

Her Honour Ms. Burrell pointed out that the other perspectives directly influence the budget, adding that the “key objective here is to improve resource management and therefore be accountable for the monies we spend. For each of the four perspectives we must ask ourselves key questions and identify a key results we want to accomplish in each area to create the alignment to the vision.”

The plan consists of three tiers. Tier one is based on the organizational level while tier two is focused on departments, business units and support units and tier three is based on teams and individuals.

Her Honour Ms. Carole Barnaby explained “that tier two is more specific and actionable than the overall organizational institutional plan while tier three highlights the importance of each individual to the functioning of the unit as a whole.”

Change Management

Human resources consultant Dr. Rickert Allen told the staff that they cannot separate strategic planning from change management and they must be integrated and done simultaneously.

Dr. Allen noted that change is constant and less than forty per cent (40%) of transformational changes are successful due to the havoc it can create on the individual.

He pointed out that change may be resisted or accepted by members of a company but added that all organizations have to change to remain relevant based on several factors influencing them such as automation, big data and advanced analytics and access to information and ideas.

“Transformational change is the only change that can give you that leap to keep current. If you stay still while

everyone is advancing, then you are reversing. It's about a behaviour and mind-set change throughout the organization," added Mr. Allen.

The retreat was attended by senior parish court judges, directors and middle managers from the Court Management Services.

VISION STATEMENT

*To be the best in the
Caribbean in three years
and one of the best
globally in six years*



MISSION STATEMENT

To provide sound,
timely judgements
and efficient court
services



Our Core Values spell FAIR and CARE

Fairness

Accountability

Independence, integrity and impartiality

Respect

Commitment, courtesy

Accessibility

Responsiveness

Empathy



CASE BACKLOG COULD BE CLEARED IN LESS THAN SIX YEARS

The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica is reporting that the backlog of cases in the court system could be cleared up before the projected six years, if there is steady progress in addressing these matters.

Speaking at the annual assize church service, Chief Justice Sykes said 108 out of every 100 cases before the parish courts have been disposed of during the second quarter of this year.

Chief Justice Sykes said this is a marked improvement when compared to the previous year when only 94 out of every 100 cases were disposed of. He pointed out that ideally, it should be 130 cases out of every 100. “In effect, we are just 22 cases away from where we need to be and to sustain that for the next six years.... If the current trend continues, the backlog of criminal cases could be cleared up before six years,” Chief Justice Sykes added.



Additionally, the Chief Justice noted that the parish courts are where the vast majority of citizens come into contact with the legal system. He pointed to data which show that approximately 40 per cent of cases before the parish courts have been disposed of within nine months. Chief Justice Sykes emphasized that it is of paramount importance that matters are dealt with in a timely manner.

“Many of the litigants there [at the parish courts] are not necessarily the wealthiest and for them to come to court is a significant investment of resources in terms of money and time. Many of them are either self-employed or employed in circumstances where if they don’t turn up for work, they don’t get paid.”

The Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD addresses congregants at Annual Assize service.

As it relates to the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice said progress is also being made in relation to the disposal of cases.

The clearance rate was 50 per cent in 2017 for cases at the Supreme Court. This increased by 16 per cent in 2018.

FOUR-PRONGED APPROACH

Justice Minister Honourable Delroy Chuck, who also spoke at the service, said his Ministry will continue to push for alternative dispute resolution to ease the burden on the court system.

He says the Ministry has been taking a four-pronged approach to reduce the number of cases entering the courts and to quickly dispose of cases before the courts.

These include: plea bargaining, restorative justice, child diversion and mediation. He said the Government intends to increase the amount of money it spends on mediation, noting that globally mediation is settling fifty

CASE BACKLOG COULD BE CLEARED IN LESS THAN SIX YEARS (CONT'D)



The Honourable Delroy Chuck addresses congregants at the Annual Assize Service.

per cent (50%) of cases that would normally be settled by a court.

“We have to urge persons within the justice system to see how they can settle matters in a more amicable way, in a more timely way and less costly way rather than feeling everything must be settled by a judge.... That is the only way I believe we can reduce the burden on the court system,” said Mr. Chuck.

The annual assize church service, which marks the commencement of the Michaelmas term of the Home Circuit Court, was held on September 22 at the Webster Memorial United Church in Half Way Tree, St. Andrew.

A service was also held in Montego Bay, St. James for the first time.

JURY LIST TO BE UPDATED



The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD provides update on jury list at Annual Assize service.

The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica, has announced plans to update the jury list in a bid to widen the pool of persons available to serve as jurors and improve efficiency in the legal system.

Furthermore, Justice Sykes said that there has been no settlement of the jury list in any parish court for at least a decade and this has presented several challenges in relation to the availability of jurors.

He explained that due to the 10-year-old jury list that the judiciary is working with, whenever summons are to be issued to persons to serve as jurors, they cannot be found because they have relocated from their communities or have left the country.

JURY LIST TO BE UPDATED CONT'D

Amendments were made to the Jury Act in 2015 to allow individuals who have a Taxpayer Registration Number (TRN) to be selected to serve as jurors which means that the voters' list produced by the Electoral Office of Jamaica was no longer the sole source of selecting jurors.

However, Chief Justice Sykes said "a combined list [TRN and voters' list] should have come to us from the relevant entities. But we are getting the data and doing it ourselves...So we are going to be merging them and then now the process of settlement of the jury list will go some way in reducing duplication."

He said this is expected to be completed by next year which will in turn result in the improvement of the number of persons serving as jurors. Consequently, Chief Justice Sykes said this will go a far way in achieving "much-needed improvement in criminal cases as far as jury trials are concerned."

The Chief Justice was speaking at the annual assize church service in September held at the Webster Memorial United Church in Half Way Tree, St. Andrew to mark the commencement of the Michaelmas term of the Home Circuit Court.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS-ASSIZE SERVICE



The Chief Justice (centre) and members of the private bar share a photo. Also present, Attorney General Marlene Malahoo Forte, QC, MP, JP.



The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Attorney General Marlene Malahoo Forte, QC, MP, JP and members of the private bar are in the photo.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS-ASSIZE SERVICE CONT'D



Chief Justice Bryan Sykes shares a light moment with his predecessor the Hon. Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla at the Assize Service.



Members of the Jamaica Combined Cadet Force in attendance at the Assize Service.



President of the Jamaican Bar Association Emile Leiba addresses the congregants at the Annual Assize Service held in Kingston.



Members of the congregation at the Assize Service held at the St. James Parish Church in Montego Bay.



Attorney General Marlene Malahoo Forte, QC, MP, JP delivers an address at the Assize service in St. James.

ATTORNEYS URGED TO USE PRACTICE DIRECTIONS



The Honourable Mr. Justice C. Dennis Morrison speaking at the Opening of the Court of Appeal.

The Honourable Mr. Justice C. Dennis Morrison is urging attorneys to save the court's time by using practice directions which are supplemental protocols to rules regulating procedures in the courts.

Speaking at the opening of the Michaelmas term of the Court of Appeal, Mr. Justice Morrison said that two practice directions were designed at the start of the year to promote greater efficiency in the use of judicial resources.

These are: practice direction number one of 2019 on the subject of filing of judges' bundles for the hearing of applications and notions and practice direction number two of 2019, which is aimed at limiting the length of skeleton arguments.

Bundles are defined as all the documents brought together by the claimant for a trial while a skeleton argument gives the judge a brief synopsis of the relevant matters for the court to consider and also outlines both the agreed and disagreed issues between the parties.

Practice direction number one supersedes and expands practice direction number one of 2014 on the subject of filing of judges bundles for the hearing of applications and notions.

Mr. Justice Morrison expressed alarm at the number of incidents in which bundles are still either placed on the bench minutes before the hearing, or not at all.

He explained that "the existing requirement that bundles in such cases, must be filed at least four days before the date fixed for the hearing, has now been strengthened by the addition of an indication that in the absence of good reason shown in writing, the particular matter will automatically be removed from the hearing list prior to the hearing."

As it relates to the practice direction on skeleton arguments, Mr. Justice Morrison said it is also aimed at reinforcing the provision in rule 2.64 of the Court of Appeal rules 2002, that a skeleton argument should set out 'concisely' the nature of the party's argument on each ground.

Consequently, Mr. Justice Morrison said it is therefore necessary that attorneys have regard to the practice directions and considerably body of other materials on the court's website, regarding the processes of the court.

PM TOURS SUPREME COURT- “HOPE PROGRAMME A SUCCESS”



(From centre) Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, (to his left), the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, Chief Justice, (to the PM's right), The Honourable Mr. Justice C. Dennis Morrison, President of the Court of Appeal and Mrs. Tricia Cameron-Anglin, Principal Executive Officer of the Court Management Services, joined by participants of the HOPE programme and staff on July 24, 2019.

Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, has hailed the Government's training and apprenticeship initiative, the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme as a success.

He made the statement during a tour of the Supreme Court in Kingston. The Supreme Court is one of the HOPE Programme partner organizations.

Mr. Holness said the programme has been transformational in terms of the participants' personal development, noting that he has seen a significant change in the attitude and demeanor of the interns who have graduated from the programme or are in their second iteration. This, he said, is “noticeable in the way they communicate, the self-confidence they exhibit, their understanding of interpersonal relationships, personal etiquette, and the air of responsibility around them”.

“It tells me that the programme has been effective in carrying them through a course of, not just gaining knowledge but having the experience that would

have influenced their character and inculcated certain core principles that [will stay with them] when they leave the programme,” he said.

Twenty-four thousand people have benefitted under the programme which was launched two years ago.

Mr. Holness indicated that 6,000 youth now being training under the programme are “doing very well”, adding that there are plans to increase this number by the end of the 2019/20 fiscal year.

A majority of the current participants are part of the Digitization and Record Management Corps and are involved in the digitization of government records, which Mr. Holness described as a “complex and involved project”, of which the participants are “doing an excellent job”.



Prime Minister the Most Honourable Andrew Holness greets a participant of the HOPE at the Supreme Court.

PM TOURS SUPREME COURT- “HOPE PROGRAMME A SUCCESS”

HOPE targets persons aged 18 to 24 who are not employed or enrolled in a school or programme of training. It aims to build character and provide opportunities to develop employable skills. The HOPE programme is a one-year engagement. The initial training, which focuses on core skills development, includes a values and attitudes component, followed by basic skills training component, after which participants serve as apprentices and are paid a stipend. At the end of the apprenticeship period, participants would have gained skills and certification as well as employment within various government ministries, departments, and agencies.

Meanwhile, the next phase of the HOPE Programme is to be rolled out shortly. This, Mr. Holness said, will entail institutionalizing the employment and training aspect of the programme.

He further explained that consequent on its impending institutionalization, HOPE “will probably move from the Office of the Prime Minister [and be placed] under some other agency that can carry it more effectively”.



A participant of the HOPE programme working assiduously at the Supreme Court in Kingston.

The Prime Minister noted that the opportunities component is being developed and will be launched soon along with the production aspect.

“We have already decided that for the production component, we are going to be focusing on getting young people into agriculture using technology,” he said, adding that details of the housing component, which was launched recently, will be provided at a later date.



The Hon. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ CD listens attentively to Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness during his visit to the Supreme Court.



Send your birthday wishes to:
nordia.ashbourne@cms.gov.jm

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER



Stress is an inevitable part of the work environment. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), some common workplace stressors are: low salaries, excessive workloads, few opportunities for growth or advancement, conflicting demands or unclear performance and the list is by no means exhaustive lists. The effects of stress on employees varied. These can range from short-term to long-term. According to the APA (2019), “a stressful work environment can contribute to problems such as headache, stomachache, sleep disturbances, short temper and difficulty concentrating.” The APA further stated that “chronic stress can result in anxiety, insomnia, high

blood pressure and a weakened immune system. It can also contribute to health conditions such as depression, obesity and heart disease.” Unfortunately, many people who “experience excessive stress often deal with it in unhealthy ways such as overeating, eating unhealthy foods, smoking cigarettes or abusing drugs and alcohol.”

Here are seven (7) steps to manage stress (Adopted from APA)

1. Track your stressors



Keep a journal for a week or two to identify which situations create the most stress and how you respond to them. Record your thoughts, feelings and information about the environment, including the people and circumstances involved, the physical setting and how you reacted. Did you raise your voice? Get a snack from the vending machine? Go for a walk? Taking notes can help you find patterns among your stressors and your reactions to them.

2. Develop healthy responses



Instead of attempting to fight stress with fast food or alcohol, do your best to make healthy choices when you feel the tension rise. Exercise is a great stress-buster. Yoga can be an excellent choice, but any form of physical activity is beneficial. Also make time for hobbies and favorite activities.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER CONT'D

3. Establish boundaries



In today's digital world, it's easy to feel pressure to be available 24 hours a day. Establish some work-life boundaries for yourself. That might mean making a rule not to check email from home in the evening, or not answering the phone during dinner.

Although people have different preferences when it comes to how much they blend their work and home life, creating some clear boundaries between these realms can reduce the potential for work-life conflict and the stress that goes with it.

4. Take time to recharge



To avoid the negative effects of chronic stress and burnout, we need time to replenish and return to our pre-stress level of functioning. This recovery process requires “switching off” from work by having periods of time when you are neither engaging in work-related activities, nor thinking about work. That's why it's critical that you disconnect from time to time, in a way that fits your needs and preference.

Don't let your vacation days go to waste. When possible, take time off to relax and unwind, so you come back to work feeling reinvigorated and ready to perform at your best. When you're not able to take time off, get a quick boost by turning off your smartphone and focusing your attention on non-work activities for a while.

5. Learn how to relax



Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises and mindfulness (a state in which you actively observe present experiences and thoughts without judging them) can help melt away stress. Start by taking a few minutes each day to focus on a simple activity like breathing, walking or enjoying a meal. The skill of being able to focus purposefully on a single-activity without distraction will get stronger with practice and you'll find that you can apply it to many different aspects of your life.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER CONT'D

6. Talk to your supervisor



Employee health has been linked to productivity at work, so your boss has an incentive to create a work environment that promotes employee well-being. Start by having an open conversation with your supervisor. The purpose of this isn't to lay out a list of complaints, but rather to come up with an effective plan for managing the stressors you've identified, so you can perform at your best on the job.

While some parts of the plan may be designed to help you improve your skills in areas such as time management, other elements might include identifying employer-sponsored wellness resources you can tap into, clarifying what's expected of you, getting necessary resources or support from colleagues, enriching your job to include more challenging or meaningful tasks, or making changes to your physical workspace to make it more comfortable and reduce strain.

7. Get some support



Accepting help from trusted friends and family members can improve your ability to manage stress. Your employer may also have stress management resources available through an employee assistance program (EAP), including online information, available counseling and referral to mental health professionals, if needed.

If you continue to feel overwhelmed by work stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist, who can help you better manage stress and change unhealthy behavior.

SNAPSHOTS OF EVENTS HELD FROM JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019



Chief Judge of the Parish Courts His Honour Mr. Chester Crooks speaking at the Drug Treatment Court graduation ceremony held at the Empowerment Park, Juici Patties' Head Office in Clarendon on July 16, 2019.



Parents and graduates at the Drug Treatment Court graduation ceremony held at the Empowerment Park, Juici Patties' Head Office in Clarendon on July 16, 2019.



Director of Industrial Relations and Wellbeing Mr. Nigel Gray interacts with a staff member of the Traffic Court Division during a HR-Day exercise at the courthouse.



Staff members of the Traffic Court participating in HR-Day exercise in Kingston.

SNAPSHOTS OF EVENTS HELD FROM JULY-SEPTEMBER 2019



The Honourable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica, outlines vision, mission and core values and Strategic map for the Judiciary at the Strategic Retreat held at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel.



Dr. Denarto Dennis, Chief Court Statistician, provides an overview of the Judiciary's performance at the Strategic Retreat held at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel.



Members of Staff from Court of Appeal, Supreme Court and the Court Management Services pause to take a photograph after the Strategic Retreat at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel.



The Honorable Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes OJ, CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica, addresses participants at the Witness Care Conference held at the Faculty of Law, UWI, Mona Campus on July 19, 2019.

Is there an event happening at your court? We can provide coverage. Call the Court Management services and ask for the Communications Unit. Also send us your events, birthday and congratulatory wishes and messages for our quarterly

Newsletter to

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To view these and other highlights of happenings around the courts and the judiciary visit <http://intranet.supremecourt.gov.jm/intranet/>



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