

TITLE:
CURACAO COMPETES
CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT COMPETITIVENESS IN CURACAO

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country: Curacao

Coordinating Institution: MarkStra Caribbean

Other institutions involved: Many Business Service Organizations who engaged their members, government agencies that provided secondary data, Ministry of Economic Development

Duration of the experience: July 2012-July 2016

Webpage: www.markstra.com

1) Objectives

Curacao and several other small economies in the Americas are not included in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). If they are not part of a regional organization, like CARIFORUM, where some members are included in the GCI, these countries' awareness of 'competitiveness' is minimal. This is the case for the Dutch Caribbean islands. The objectives were:

1. to create awareness and understanding of factors that contribute to competitiveness among Curacao executives and policy makers so that Curacao can add more value to the region and therefore to its own economy
2. to reduce the relative isolation of Curacao by increasing local and international understanding of the country's position in the world. Small non-sovereign nations such as Curacao hardly participate in global studies. Hence, they are hardly 'known'.

2) Relevance

1. The Curacao Ministry of Economic Development is presently buying into the importance of a competitive nation and firms as a result of our efforts that started in 2012, so too are development and other institutions that service especially SME.
2. Awareness about factors that enhance competitiveness will make Curacao a better partner for trade, investment and collaboration for countries in the region, enabling all parties to take better advantage of the 'Dutch linkage' in the region.
 - a. 80 executives completed the GCI Survey, but over 300 filled it in partially. Hence, close to 400 executives have been exposed to the types of issues that enhance competitiveness, factors that executives in other countries have known for many years.
 - b. Workshops for stakeholders (banks, sme's, sme advisors, policy makers) further enhance awareness about competitiveness

3) Concrete activities and actions

1. Publicity to recruit respondents for survey –Curacao Chamber of Commerce, Curacao Hospitality and Tourism Association, ADECK Association of Small Business and Markstra Caribbean have all sent invitations to their databases.
2. Conduct GCI Study – MarkStra Caribbean
3. Provision of secondary data – Central Bureau of Statistics, BTP Regulatory Board, Ministry of Health,
4. Competitiveness awareness workshop – Ministry of Economic Development and MarkStra Caribbean

4) Achievements and results

1. More than 1000 executives exposed to the concept through invitations to take survey issued by their BSO's and through media
2. 400 executives exposed to the survey and thus the concepts, by filling it in at least 'partially'
3. 80 organizations sent relevant information to register for Curacao Competes workshop.
4. 10 workshops provided by September 30.
5. Articles in 2 business magazines with international reach and several local newspapers
6. Ministry of Economic Development negotiating to adopt the program

5) Sustainability

1. Once stakeholders become aware of the relevant factors, their views will be changed. They will start investing in the relevant areas and/or insist on programs that facilitate that.
2. By offering 'Curacao Competes' workshops to private firms, BSO's and others against a fee, income is generated to conduct the next survey.
3. Once someone's innate competitive spirit is triggered, they will have a continuing desire for improvement and progress.

6) Lessons learned

Repeat:

- 'Established institutions' are difficult to change. Do not wait until they agree on supporting the effort. It would be better to simply begin conducting the study itself, especially if it is online and not very costly. It will be beneficial to the researcher's brand.
- Work with University students
- A workshop, rather than just an (Industry type) report, has more impact

Improve:

- To cover its cost, MarkStra Caribbean provides workshops and a report against a fee. If public institutions, such as the government and BSO's, buy just one report and share it with their constituents, our investment is lost. Another business model is needed.

7) Capacity for the exchange of this experience

Cooperation modality	Cooperation modalities the institution can provide to others	The institution may be able to provide this cooperation to others by
Videoconferences	x	Always
Workshops	x	Always
Technical and Experts Visits	x	Always

8) Author of this story

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9) Key persons involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the experience

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