

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Hundreds Receive Customer Service Training Through Tourism Initiative

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Hundreds of stakeholders across the United States Virgin Islands participated in customer service training sessions held by the Department of Tourism [earlier this month](#).

Sandra Husbands, CEO of Caribbean company Business Development Services, and Lisa Wynne Magnuson, Founder and President of The Virgin Islands Etiquette & Leadership Institute, facilitated the training at the University of the Virgin Islands' Great Hall on St. Croix and Windward Passage Hotel on St. Thomas.

"The unique aspect of this training was the facilitators' approach. They presented a cultural perspective on how Caribbean people view customer service," said Cherie

Wheatley, Manager of Customer Service at the University of the Virgin Islands, who attended the training session along with fellow industry stakeholders.

According to Wheatley, who is thoroughly experienced in managing customer expectations and understanding the cultural context of customer service, provided much needed insight into why "we (Caribbean people) behave as we do and why certain (conventions), such as saying 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' are necessary (exchanges) before service can begin." Overall, Wheatley rated the training as excellent.

In addition to a general session at each location, there was a session tailored for supervisors and a four-hour professional development workshop for taxi drivers and tour operators.

The taxi and tour operator session included a customer service presentation along with presentations from the Office of the Governor on ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) Compliance, the Virgin Islands Police Department on Traffic Rules and Safety, and a personal development session.

Key messages addressed a range of topics intended to highlight what makes Caribbean tourism powerful as participants discovered the brilliance and potential of Caribbean people; key performance standards and how to work with confidence, honesty, and integrity in the service industry; how providing excellent service can result in job security and financial stability; and relationship values and their impact on quality of service.

Close to 400 participants attended the general session, while 168 participated in the session for supervisors and 152 for the training session designed for taxi and tour operators.

Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-Doty stated that the training sessions, which are provided at no cost to participants, are part of the territory's ongoing efforts to enhance the delivery of quality customer service. "It is important for us to continue to invest in our people so they have the necessary tools to provide great service for travelers and locals alike," said the Commissioner. "The sessions were informative and productive. I am indebted to the facilitators and all those who attended this important two-day exercise," she added.

*Image Credit: The Grio.*