

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Pressure's 'V.I. Nice' Song Has Created Brand Equity For USVI, Tourism Commissioner Says

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ST. CROIX -- Department of Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty told The Consortium on Friday that V.I. superstar Pressure Busspipe's "V.I. Nice" song has not only been an ongoing successful campaign for D.O.T., the song has created brand equity for the territory -- something Mrs. Nicholson-Doty says is very hard to come by.

In layman's terms, brand equity refers to the public's valuation of a brand, the brand in this case being the U.S. Virgin Islands. Brand equity is associated with wide recognition, customer loyalty, and the market share enjoyed by the branded product or service. Wide familiarity, strong loyalty, and a dominant share tend in the long run to be the consequences of consistently favorable performance by the owner of the brand -- which

is the people of the Virgin Islands.

The "V.I. Nice" song -- with its easy-to-remember lyrics emphatically describing the allure of the territory, along with a catchy hook being sung by an international artist from the U.S. Virgin Islands, has "absolutely" been a boon for the territory on multiple fronts, Mrs. Nicholson-Doty said.

Senator Kurt Vialet, who contends that Pressure's V.I. Nice song [should be redone in Quelbe](#) so as to better represent the territory, has argued that the visitors D.O.T. targets with the V.I. Nice song may think that the song is about Jamaica, and thereby inadvertently promote the land of reggae instead of the V.I.

"I think that we have built brand equity, and we have built brand equity using someone from the Virgin Islands," Mrs. Nicholson-Doty said, referring to Pressure and the V.I. Nice song. "That's an accomplishment on two ends: building brand equity is not an easy feat, and certainly being able to build brand equity with someone that has a song that was so easy to gravitate your marketing campaign around and embrace, it's certainly something that we're proud of and we're proud of the work that he's done with us."

Mr. Vialet, however, contends that Pressure -- who is paid whenever he travels with the Department of Tourism to sing the V.I. Nice song -- in sounding like he is from Jamaica (Pressure spent some time living in Jamaica), could confuse potential visitors.

"The individual needs to speak like a Thomian and not speak like a Jamaican. Because when you speak like a Jamaican they think you're from Jamaica. So if you're our icon, the person [whose] song we're using, every interview you do you sound like a Jamaican, then when they hear V.I. Nice they think you're Jamaican," Mr. Vialet said during a Senate Committee on Economic Development and Agriculture hearing on Tuesday.

The senator added: "Sometimes as soon as they hear, no matter what the word is, they take it as Jamaican, so I wish they would redo the V.I. Nice to a Quelbe or something that is more local to the Virgin Islands.

"All Trini artists speak like Trini, Jamaican artists speak like Jamaicans, so Virgin Islands artists need to speak like Virgin Islanders — and we need to switch that music to a local rhythm with the same V.I. Nice. Same thing," Mr. Vialet went on.

"I want them to hear, when they hear V.I. Nice, that they think you're Thomian. So I want you to say, 'heh', and 'deh', and 'ova deh' — speak like a St. Thomian and be proud of where you're from." Mr. Vialet stressed his respect for Pressure. "He's an excellent artist, but speak like a St. Thomian," the senator said.

Mrs. Nicholson-Doty revealed that D.O.T. pays \$200,000 annually to the owners of the "V.I. Nice" song — Pressure and Laurent "Tippy" Alfred — for its use. The commissioner said the department would continue using the V.I. Nice song with its national campaign, and that D.O.T. has been working with the Fusion Band on a song for D.O.T.'s local campaign. The talent will be all residents of the territory, she said.

On Friday, Mrs. Nicholson-Doty noted the Legislature's continuous support for the department, but she made a point of highlighting the team at D.O.T.

"I recognize, and we applaud the work of Virgin Islanders in every segment, and the members of the Legislature have been supportive of the Department of Tourism, and we take certainly the concerns and advice that's given to us, and they are of extreme importance to us as we craft our marketing strategy," she said. "But I just want to respectfully acknowledge the fact that the team at the Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, we really value our ability to showcase our people in the creative that represent our territory.

"We certainly respect everyone's opinion, and we have really worked hard to ensure that the voices of the Virgin Islands and the people of the Virgin Islands are reflected in our advertising and marketing. And that's why a conscious decision was made and continues to be made to put Virgin Islanders in the forefront of our marketing efforts."

Mrs. Nicholson-Doty said the department is getting ready to work on new creative which will see 80 percent of the work being sourced in the territory. "That's important because that is a transition to saying that our people can represent us fully and they are capable."

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