

Workplace

Show respect and manage conflict



Caribbean Catalyst Inc. managing director, Rosalind Jackson (FP)

Leaders who respect all members of their team, and are prepared to learn how to master conflict, will find themselves on the way to increased organisational success.

For Caribbean Catalyst Inc.'s managing director Rosalind Jackson these attributes are non-negotiable for people who want to improve their leadership abilities.

This was communicated to participants at the human resources consulting firm's latest The Leadership Challenge Workshop. It was held from March 15 to 17 at Sandals Barbados.

The Leadership Challenge Workshop is based on three decades of research by best selling authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner. It focuses on the five practices of exemplary leadership – model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.

Jackson told **BARBADOS BUSINESS AUTHORITY** that the workshop was not a static event, and that she and her team were constantly looking for local, regional, and international examples to help leaders here improve.

Main takeaways

She singled out the need for respect as one of the main takeaways this time.

"Since COVID-19, I think people recognise, more than before, that they are leading human beings, they are not leading robots, and therefore they have to be far more tuned in to the people they are leading, and respect them," Jackson observed.

"It doesn't matter if they are the receptionist or the gardener, if we respect everybody on our team, we can build a team much better. To me that is so fundamental."

She noted that the use of terms like subordinate and boss was still evident, but her view was that the "more you can flatten your organisational chart in reality, the more you can build a team".

"So to me it's not rocket science, at the workshop we are putting out excellent leadership practices, which are not necessarily the norm," the workshop facilitator said.

Jackson also highlighted the importance of managing conflict, including organisation heads having difficult conversations with people they were leading.

She spoke in the context of what Patrick Lencioni, business management expert and author of **The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team**, called mastering conflict.

"Nobody likes conflict, but you just don't accept stupidity because it's been happening for a



Participants at the recent The Leadership Challenge Workshop. (GP)

long time," she said.

"A lot of people don't want to deal with the possibility of a difficult conversation, but if you deal with those difficult conversations in search of constructive improvement, then they may not feel comfortable the first time, they may feel a little uneasy, but when we realise you are doing it for their good and their improvement, then they accept it more."

Some participants in the recent edition of The Leadership Challenge Workshop offered feedback on the exercise.

"I feel inspired to undertake the role of leadership with more confidence and expertise. I am now enabled to face and conquer hurdles that I once considered challenging," Deborah Bayne of SigniaGlobe Financial Group Inc. said.

Nicole McCarthy of Rubis Eastern Caribbean, said: "It provides an opportunity to do a meaningful assessment of your current leadership style and provides meaningful ways to improve where needed."

This time there was also participation from St Vincent. Jackson reminded that when her organisation launched The Leadership Challenge Workshop in 2010 "we did two workshops a year up to COVID-19 and we always had participants from other islands".

"We have had participants from Central America and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and I was quite pleased we had two people from St Vincent this time around," she said.

With the COVID-19 pandemic having

shaken up some organisations, and tested their leadership, Jackson also said there was an opportunity for those who participated in previous Leadership Challenge workshops to participate in "a refresher course".

This would include them participating in the 360 leadership feedback, which measures the frequency of 30 behaviours, which Kouzes and Posner identified as "the behaviours that leaders engage in most frequently while performing at their best".

Research has shown that the more frequently an individual is perceived as demonstrating the behaviours, the more likely that individual will be identified as an effective leader.

She believed this would be helpful considering that due to the pandemic "some momentum was lost" by some leaders.

"The pandemic created a break in the whole process so we are quite willing to help get some people awakened out of their slumber. But I have no magic wand, you have to continually work at improving your behaviours as a human being," Jackson said.

"If you want to improve how you are leading people, to me it is aimed at being on a continuum that helps improve the culture."

The next The Leadership Challenge Workshop is scheduled to take place from September 20 to 22.

Before then, Caribbean Catalyst Inc. will hold a workshop entitled **Manager/Supervisor As Coach** on Thursday, March 30. (SC)