

# BAHAMAS HOTEL SECTOR SUFFERS PROBLEMS



Tourism industry all over the world has witnessed transitions due to the current changes in the global economy especially in the U.S. Bahamas is no exception. According to 21 hotels that participated in an economic survey 2007 was a bad year for the hotel industry. Sixty per cent of the surveyed reported a net loss for 2007.

Nevertheless, President of the Bahamas Hotel Association Russell Miller, has positive expectations for the year 2008. The Bahamas tourism, however, needs improvements. The sectors main problems are in human resources, airlift and airport issues and in high operational cost of the businesses involved in tourism. There are also problems with high crime rate but it is not usually directed toward tourists.

What really bothers the tourism industry players in this destination is the lack of skilled workers. According to Mr. Miller there have been considerable investments in recruitment and training. The officials are trying to change the bad situation on the labor market. Some hoteliers (37%) who participated in the survey suppose that the employment levels will increase in 2008.

Another figure of the Bahamian industry, Director General of Tourism Vernice Walkine, claims there is a need for a new tourism training institute for high school graduates. According to Ms. Walkine, nowadays high school graduates are under-skilled and therefore unemployable in the tourism industry. She calls for an institution that would help the young people improve their qualification and consequently provide the needed labor for the tourism industry.

It is not only the lack of labor force that bothers Bahamians. Other issue is the global competition that is rising every year. Bahamas also suffers from the lack of tourist attractions. According to Ms. Walkine, there have to be some changes if Bahamas wants to establish itself as a tourism industry leader.

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