



THE
Belize
Chamber of Commerce
and Industry



AT A GLANCE THE BELIZE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

WHAT: A membership organization mandated to be the voice of Belizean business

WHERE: Belize City, Belize

WEBSITE: www.belize.org



KIM AIKMAN, CHAMBER CEO

THE *Belize*

Chamber of Commerce and Industry

CONNECT, CAPACITATE, AND CHAMPION

The Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the largest private sector membership-based organization in Belize. Founded in 1920, the Chamber has been consistently championing the causes of its private sector constituency and considers among its primary objectives the social and economic development of Belize through the development of all sectors of industry, services and commerce. Addi-





tionally, since 1997, the Chamber is the only recognized “Employers Organization” in Belize under the International Labor Organization’s (ILO) tri-partite social partnership.

Currently, the BCCI boasts a fluctuating membership of almost 300 Belizean businesses, representing over 1,500 employers, from a wide cross-section of the agricultural, productive, service, and industrial sectors. The BCCI’s mandate is legally enshrined in Chapter 308 of the Laws of Belize under the Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry Act. The specific objectives of the organization are as follows:

The goals of the Chamber shall be: to encourage, enhance and promote an investment climate which is favorable to both local and

foreign investors; to continuously work towards the strengthening of the partnership between the public and private sectors, and the growth of private enterprise; to promote and encourage commercial ventures and capital investment; to promote the development of services, agriculture, tourism, fishing, forestry, industry, aquaculture, manufacturing, and other related fields; to undertake, promote, and facilitate economic and financial studies as a guide to investment; to consider, discuss, and take action on questions directly or indirectly relating to or affecting commerce and industry generally, including promoting, supporting, or lawfully opposing legislative or other concerns affecting the entire country; to collect and distribute statistical and

other information relating to commercial services, and the business, tourism, and manufacturing sectors, including the professions and the trades in Belize; to foster and encourage co-operation among private, financial, and non-governmental organizations in the development and use of their human resources to strengthen and improve the economic development of Belize; to promote the development of export-oriented businesses so as to increase foreign earnings and aid growth; to actively promote Belize abroad as an ideal country for foreign investment and a popular destination for tourists; to promote and support the cultural and scientific advancement of Belize with due regard to the protection of the environment and the preservation and promotion of Belize’s cultural heritage; to liaise closely with the Government on matters of national importance and interest; to promote and foster the tri-partite relationship with Government, Employers, and Labor through active participation in, and contribution to, relevant representative organizations and bodies nationally and internationally.

The businesses that are members of the BCCI include, but are not limited to importers, exporters, manufacturers and producers, auto dealers/distrib-





utors, agri-business, agricultural producers, small business enterprises, accountants, attorneys, bankers, engineers, insurance, financial service providers, office communications/computers, airline services, brokers, airline services, brokers, computer (electronic) service providers, furniture manufacturers, publishers, employment and training services, environmental firms, hoteliers, tour operators, transportation,

real estate, trust investment advisors, petroleum, and food and beverage.

In 2010, BCCI adopted its “Triple C Philosophy: To Connect, Capacitate, and Champion.” “We Connect by making meaningful networking and connections between members nationally, regionally and internationally,” explains Kim Aikman, the Chamber’s CEO. “We Capacitate by strengthening skills, abilities and processes that organizations need to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world. And on behalf of our members, we Champion their issues to encourage a healthy business environment.”

BCCI offers several membership packages,



including:

- **Member of the President’s Circle** - Leaders and trendsetters who enjoy unfettered access to the movers and shakers and the powerful resources of the Chamber. The members of the President’s circle influence perspectives and set trends in public policy and business leadership.
- **Distinguished Member** - These business visionaries advance their organizations through meaningful networking and





peer interaction. The distinguished member will have greater opportunities to shape public policy and industry development. They enjoy discounted member benefits.

■ **Signature Member** - This is the entry point to the powerful resources of the Chamber. This basic membership provides the ability to stay on top of issues affecting the business community, input into policy and advocacy positions and discounted member benefits.

■ **Associate Member** – Associate members want to work with the Chamber on a peripheral level; to experience the resources of the Chamber without making a full-fledged commitment.

Association/ Group of Companies Member

Association organizations and Group of Companies who wish to join the Chamber under any of the above four membership levels will be considered as one entity. All Members of the Association and a maximum of five businesses under the Group of Companies will be recognized and will receive full benefits of the respective membership level they have chosen.

■ **Individual Member** - Being an Individual Member entitles one to invitations to Trainings and Workshops which feature “Issue” Experts, as well as customized trainings, upon request. In addition, individual members gain access to Chamber Publications which keeps them up to date on issues that impact Belize’s



business society in areas such as international business, and trade and finance.

■ **Micro Member** - The Chamber, in a vision to Connect, Capacitate, and Champion members created this new membership tier. A Micro Member is a business employing

less than five full time employees, has gross annual sales of less than BZ \$1,000,000 and has a total investment in plant and equipment of less than BZ \$50,000.00.

The BCCI stays in contact with its members by sending out daily emails with local, regional, and international information, as well as newsletters every quarter. It also has a website and Facebook page. “We are looking to upgrade our website,” says Aikman. “It will give the members and also the general public an easier way to reach us – not just by telephone or email, but they’ll be able to leave messages and blogs, and participate that way.”

“We also have a Customer Relations Man-

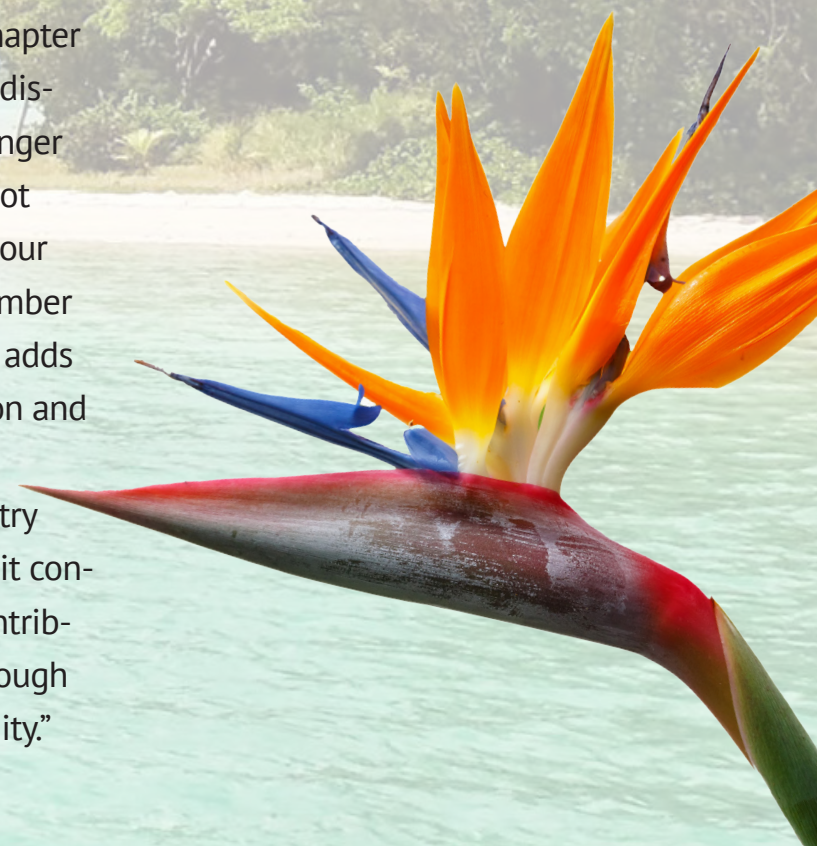
agement system (CRM), and whenever we have a certain topic matching a particular sector, the CRM has made it easy to share information with that specific sector,” adds Yorshabell Cattouse, BCCI’s Manager of Member Relations. “We’re out there in the media; we’re out there representing the voice of businesses. In order to interest new members in joining the Chamber, we organize one-on-one visits, as well as ‘Chamber Days.’ A Chamber Day is where we partner with a local school, inviting other Government organizations that businesses regularly interact with, to have informational booths and bring more awareness to the community about the Chamber and the right way to do business.”

“Although the BCCI has its membership spread across the country, we only have one main office in Belize City due to limited human and financial resources. Despite this, our MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the Development Finance Corpora-



tion has made our information available at their countrywide locations. We recently launched a new chapter in Toledo, and we plan to have a chapter in each district and major towns, so that we can have a stronger voice and a stronger presence,” says Cattouse. “A lot of businesses that we have not reached through our membership visits, for example, call into the Chamber because it’s a very much respected organization,” adds Aikman. “The businesses look to us for information and guidance.”

As the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry approaches the end of its first century of service, it continues to adhere to its Mission Statement: “To contribute to the sustainable development of Belize through effective representation of the business community.”



www.belize.org



AS FEATURED IN BUSINESS VIEW MAGAZINE