

Trinidad & Tobago
Mortgage Finance
Company Limited

insight

January – March 2009

Vol 6, Issue 1

POSITIVE VIBRATIONS – harnessing our energy



SPOTLIGHT:

Careers in Mortgage Banking
– how to be the best



In this issue:

- *Zeroing in on Safety*
- *Positive vibes for homeownership in the economic downturn*
- *Mr Popular – Sheldon Romano*

insight

Table of contents

Vol 6, Issue 1 • January - March 2009

- 3 Insight with Ingrid: Economics and 'tough love'**
by Ingrid L-A. Lashley
- 4 Positive vibes for homeownership in the current economic downturn**
There may be a silver lining for homeowners.
by Gillian C. Caesar
- 5 Harnessing our energy - teamwork in turbulent times**
by Hemant Mahabir
- 6 Careers in Mortgage Banking - How to be the best**
Get the skills to reach the top. Find out what it really takes to work in the mortgage financing industry.
by Karel Mc Intosh
- 8 Living Your Performance Appraisal**
Grade yourself every day. Get the results you want.
by Cherrie Caracciolo



- 9 TTMF supports Habitat for Humanity**
Helping the disadvantaged to improve their quality of life.
Branch news
Who's celebrating an anniversary?
- 10 Memory Lane**
Talk about "ole mas"!
- 11 Zeroing in on Safety**
Caution. Safety has a busy schedule in 2009.
By Sharon Daniel-Munroe
- 12 Greening technology - computers and conservation**
by IT Department
- 13 Policy compliance and governance - making it omnipresent**
by Waheeda Ali
- 14 Movers and Shakers**
New faces and promotions.
- 15 The EOQ League**
These ladies have more in common than you think.
by Sharon Daniel-Munroe
- 16 Early bird hurricane tips**
- 17 EMPLOYEE PROFILE: Mr Popular - Sheldon Romano**
Just call him our 24-hour salesman.
- 18 Get to know your manager**
20 things you didn't know about Waheeda Ali, Manager- Internal Audit
- 19 Braingle**



Albion Court, 61 Dundonald Street, P.O. Box 1096, Port of Spain, Trinidad W.I.

Tel: 623-TTMF (8863) Fax: (868) 624-3262 E-mail: info@ttmf-mortgages.com Website: www.ttmf-mortgages.com

Insight is a publication of the Trinidad & Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited (TTMF). No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission in writing from TTMF. Enquiries and comments may be forwarded by e-mail to info@ttmf-mortgages.com.

Economics and 'tough love'

Insight with Ingrid

Our economic circumstances have changed. Businesses are more stringent in managing the costs associated with their operations. Customers are more prudent in their spending, and only a crystal ball can guide us through these volatile financial times.

Managing a business in an economic slowdown is a challenge. The good news, however, is that such challenges bring innovation and creativity that bear fruit over time, and the foundation laid over the long-term will secure the prosperity of the future. In our own case, cost control and improved efficiency will add to our success package. For the turbulence, we must also add proactive delinquency management so that both we, and our customers, can benefit from early action to defer long-term negative consequences.

The current environment demands ongoing revision of our SWOT position (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). New factors come into play regularly, and as such we must all continue to scan the market. Our customers are our best allies during this period, not only for their obvious contribution to our profitability and viability, but also for their intimate knowledge of our operating environment. They 'live' in their communities, their neighbourhoods and their societies. They know what affects others, and what is likely to be the reaction to our business manoeuvres. We must keep in touch. We must maintain our relationships with our business partners – developers, real estate agents, valuers, lawyers, and quantity surveyors. More importantly, we must communicate among ourselves so that we garner the pool of knowledge that is so readily available among us. Our reactions, once rationalised, must be quick and effective, sure and secure.

Our local economy is starting to show the signs of an economic slowdown – delays in property sales, decrease in construction projects, reduced spending and job losses in certain sectors. In these times, we must be creative and proactive. Empathetic but stern. Firm but kind. At all times, we must mitigate the risk of losses – credit, sales and operational losses. We must be mindful of the impact of world economies on our own business. The stability of income when family overseas can no longer afford to contribute to local household income is another factor to bear in mind. As we consider the risks that job and income loss have for our business, we will maintain a prudent lending approach and manage our credit criteria to match the circumstances of the day.

At all times, our position will focus on the best interests of our customers. At the same time, however, we must be more vigilant about potential risks to our operations. The alarm has sounded. The challenge is on. The race is not for the swiftest, but for who will reach the finishing line. Business sustainability is our goal. At the same time, we are not pessimistic. Our business is long-term and our business horizon must match. We will target goals beyond the day-to-day scope to combine sustainability and longevity, in the interest of all stakeholders.



**by Ingrid L-A. Lashley,
Managing Director/
CEO**

Positive Vibes for Homeownership in the Current Economic Downturn



by Gillian C. Caesar
– General Manager,
Mortgage Services

“A silver lining in this cloud, however, is the fact that the real estate landscape is now more of a buyers’ market”

The vibes currently circulating international and local financial services and real estate sectors can be described as anything but positive. Recession. Melt-Down. Belt-tightening. These buzz words of the day certainly do not conjure any ‘positive vibrations’ for the prospective or even the seasoned homeowner.

Mortgage financing institutions are also feeling the effects of the current economic slowdown, and find themselves having to

adopt much more stringent and prudent measures to their underwriting of new business, in light of the almost daily reports of retrenchments. Additionally, these job cuts would adversely impact the ability of existing homeowners who are so affected, to service their mortgages. As a result, increased delinquency levels can very quickly become a reality for many providers of mortgage financing.

Amidst this cloud of ‘doom and gloom’, the mandate for most, if not all, providers of mortgage financing is that they maintain, and, in many instances, improve their level of operational efficiency. At the very least, the aim is to sustain profitability levels. This is quite a challenge. However, it can be overcome.

A silver lining in this cloud, however, is the fact that the real estate landscape is now more of a buyers’ market. For the prospective purchaser, this means lower prices for housing, increased bargaining power, and an increased likelihood of owning a home. Positive vibes to those for who, until now, their dream of homeownership seemed only a distinct possibility. Signs of this are already evident in some private housing developments along the East-West Corridor. Only recently, the selling prices of units in one such development

were reduced by as much as 20%, resulting in the immediate sale of all the existing units that were available. Many real estate practitioners predict that this softening and levelling of the market is likely to continue over the short to medium term.

Within the construction sector, we are currently witnessing a reduction in the cost of both building materials and labour – a welcome development for persons who are constructing homes. This is also prompting many existing homeowners to undertake repairs and renovations such as roof and other remedial works, which – prior to these costs reductions – were much more prohibitive, given the cost of steel and other products. Such an investment into the property would serve to preserve its value.

It may be argued, however, that the factors highlighted above are negated by the fact that mortgage interest rates have risen to as much as 10% per annum over recent months. As such, though house prices and construction costs may be falling, the cost of mortgage financing has risen. While this is true, the following example shows that, all other things being equal, the effective structuring of the repayment terms of the proposed mortgage loan, while maintaining the required debt service ratios, can redound to the homeowner’s benefit.

Example: Prior to the reduction in house prices and increased lending rates, a mortgage loan of \$1M over a repayment period of 20 years at 8% per annum would result in a monthly instalment of \$8,364.46. Assuming a 20% reduction in the property price at the increased interest rate results in a mortgage loan of \$800K at 10% per annum, which, if re-paid over a period of 15 years, results in a monthly instalment of \$8,596.84. While there is an increase in the monthly payment by \$232.38, the interest cost over the term of the loan is reduced by more than \$250,000.

This very simple example suggests that by partnering with their mortgage service provider, prospective and existing homeowners can still realise their goals and dreams even during this period of economic downturn. This creates a vibe that can only be described as positive.

Harnessing our energy - teamwork in turbulent times

Teamwork always adds magic to the workplace. It motivates us; it increases productivity, and it certainly helps to quiet any fears we may have about failure.

Nowadays, the economic slowdown casts a shadow over some activities. But, as any optimist will tell you, cooperation is what will get us through any obstacle course. Our focus must be on maximising our competitive advantages in the financial services sector by optimising the factors that we can control. One such factor is ensuring teamwork.

TTMF's size and structure provides a competitive edge that allows us to manoeuvre and be flexible in the current, uncertain economic environment. Daily, we must find ways to be efficient in the use of our time and resources. We must work with our colleagues, not only in the same units and departments, with colleagues but also across units and departments. Training, re-training and cross-training are also integral as we seek to improve our performance and increase our knowledge base. This not only comes from formal programs

developed and facilitated by the Company, but also by our own thirst for knowledge and by each employee assisting his or her colleagues in enhancing their understanding of our systems, policies and procedures.

As we become better individuals and employees, our company will also benefit from the results. A key benefit of increased teamwork is the synergistic effect it creates. Synergy (not to be confused with Synergy TV) is the human resource theory that formalises what we all knew all along – that the results of a properly functioning team are greater than the specific efforts of each member. Synergy purports that $2+2=5$. We can all contribute; teamwork doesn't require capital outlay, executive approval or any training to implement it. Teamwork depends on individuals cooperating.

We must endeavour to understand and execute our own functions, and, at the same time, assist our colleagues to understand and execute their functions as we all work to one goal. We should therefore be as proactive as possible, and, together achieve success.

by Hemant Mahabir – Assistant Manager, Mortgage Origination

Team TTMF experiences

"My team members are people you can always bounce ideas off of and they are always willing to lend support when needed, even if they are busy. Even persons outside of the team assist. When we work together, we're not only helping ourselves; we're also helping our customers." - **Lisa Ransome, Mortgage Officer.**

"When I think of teamwork in TTMF, I think "TEAM: Together Each of us Achieve the Mission." - **Maureena Jackson, Officer-in-Charge, Arima Branch.**

"My co-workers are always willing to go the extra mile no matter the circumstances." - **Charlene Williams, Officer-in-Charge, HDC Unit.**

"Some people entertain ideas. Collections puts them to work. Collections knows that the best time to do anything worthwhile is between yesterday and tomorrow. We brainstorm, and go all out to help each other in various areas. We make ourselves necessary to one another." - **Timothy Rochford, Mortgage Officer, Collections.**

"There is no 'I' in teamwork – that is exactly how my team at the Chaguanas Branch operates. We come together and help each other in our respective job functions. Our objective is to get the job done and our watchwords are 'Grace under pressure'." - **Calleen Jones-Noel, Customer Service Representative, Chaguanas Branch.**

"Although my team is small, there is support. The achievements of TTMF will be the result of the combined effort of each individual. According to a quote by Henry Ford, 'coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success'." - **Wendy Cuthbert, Officer-in-Charge, Tobago.**

Careers in Mortgage Banking

- how to be the best

Mortgage banking sometimes feels like the kid who never gets picked to play on anyone's team. It isn't the first thing off the lips of eager students at career sessions; it doesn't even get a front row seat at career fairs. Yet, it's one of those professions that provide a sense of satisfaction in fulfilling the needs of others.

"Purchasing a house is a huge investment," says Gillian Caesar, TTMF's General Manager, Mortgage Services. "It's rewarding when you realise someone turns to you because they believe you can help them to achieve their dream of owning a home."



**by Karel MC Intosh
Manager – Marketing
and Public Relations**

As a financial services institution that is focused on residential loans as its single product, TTMF provides the perfect opportunity for mortgage banking professionals to hone their skills in the "hard" and "soft" areas of the profession. Ask any seasoned banker, and they will tell you that you need strong analytical skills, credit adjudication and technical expertise, and the ability to interact well to establish a successful career in the field. At the same time, you also have to learn how to interact with various types of customers, and cater to their respective needs.

"The service industry requires patience and care," says Kayode Redhead, who recently made the move from TTMF's Human Resources Department to the Mortgage Services Department as Mortgage Assistant, Lending. "This is what I anticipated before I assumed duties, so it's not different from what I expected in this regard. However, the demands are varied as they arise from all stages of the mortgage process, so prioritising is essential."

As expected, at TTMF, the largest department is the Mortgage Services Department, which

includes mortgage origination, processing, lending, account servicing and collections. With a staff complement of over 80 persons, it is the Company's 'shop front'.

Mortgage banking is a very specialised profession, and in Trinidad and Tobago, where the industry market is fairly small and not as diverse as the US or UK, the number of potential workplaces are limited. TTMF is one of four institutions, which focuses exclusively on mortgage banking, the other three being the General Building and Loan Association, the Trinidad Building and Loan Association, and Home Mortgage Bank. For other local mortgage providers, primarily the commercial banks and some insurance companies, mortgage loans represent just one product line in their portfolio.

At the outset, mortgage banking involves providing loans and nurturing customer relationships. A mortgage banking professional's job involves reviewing credit scores, determining the kind of loan that is most beneficial for the customer, guiding the application process, and closing the transaction. While closing the sale takes the spotlight, this is really the beginning of the customer service process.

“Due to the nature of the acquisition for the customer, you’re really building a 25 or 30-year relationship,” Caesar explains. “It’s easy to focus on meeting your sales targets as it relates to booking loans. The real achievement though is in seeking the interest of the customer, as the majority of your customer contact is at the point of origination. However, that’s not the end of the relationship.”

Bankers have to adjust to the various life stages that customers experience. One day, you may be processing a mortgage application, years later you may be helping that same customer to retain ownership of his or her property.

“Mortgage banking is not just about origination,” Caesar reiterates. “There’s also the challenging aspect of ‘collections’. This is where a customer in arrears may feel that all is lost. As bankers, we have the opportunity to sit with them and help them arrange their finances in a way that they can develop settlement and future stability. Often, we tend to focus on facilitating homeownership from the origination point of view. But in times like these, with the economic slowdown, this is where mortgage bankers have to be creative, empathetic and stern all in one because you have to empathise with people who have lost their earning capacity. Then you have to be creative to work out something with them. Of course, you have to be very stern where delinquency is recurrent.

“The final step in the collections process is probably the least satisfying aspect of mortgage banking – where there is need for foreclosure and ultimately mortgage sale. But this is sometimes more critical than booking new business because if you can’t collect payments, then the company incurs immediate losses.”

A successful career in mortgage banking is highly dependent on the depth of experience acquired over time. A management degree or banking qualification will certainly fit the bill on your résumé; an MBA will also be necessary once you aim for the strategic, executive level. However, what will differentiate

you from your competition is your skill set – analytical skills, credit adjudication and technical expertise, interpersonal skills, customer service and salesmanship included. Mortgage officers also have to be able to manage the large volumes of paperwork and reporting that are required for ensuring that loans are properly documented and justified. To say that you need to be detail-oriented and organised is an understatement.

“Mortgage banking is different from the usual consumer and commercial lending at banks,” adds Caesar, who has over 14 years’ experience in credit and mortgage banking. “Apart from it being a more long-term transaction, it also demands a different set of analytical and credit skills. For example, analysing a customer’s risk profile – individual or corporate – for a mortgage application is different to assessment of loan applications for retail products. So you’ve got to have a good grasp of all the factors involved.

“Once you’ve decided that this is the profession you want to be in and have attained technical competence, the key going forward is building relationships with your customers and external service providers. It’s about establishing a network that enables efficiency and growth, and you’ve got to do what is necessary for your own development both academically and personally.

“A lot of the technical experience comes through practice, but if you’re looking at a career you’re looking at building management skills. As mortgage banking professionals move from the more tactical and operational level at which a mortgage officer may operate to the managerial and executive levels, they will need to increase their knowledge of strategic management, as well as their leadership skills. I’d encourage anyone to acquire the qualifications and skills required to support the professional level they want to get to.”



Successful careers are not always an easy ride, and regardless of the profession you choose, it is important to lay a firm foundation that will allow you to take full advantage of the opportunities that are available.

“What will differentiate you from your competition is your skill set – analytical skills, credit adjudication and technical expertise, interpersonal skills, customer service and salesmanship included”

Living Your Performance Appraisal - grade yourself every day



by
Cherrie Caracciolo,
Manager – Human
Resources

How many of us think about our job performance standards only when our appraisal is due? Okay, don't all answer at once! You get the picture... most of us. That is tantamount to waiting until the night before your annual physical examination to start thinking about healthy eating and exercise.

So how do we prepare ourselves for a performance appraisal? We apply the established standards and objectives to a daily, weekly or monthly self-appraisal. This way, we can track our growth, and make it easier to measure success, especially when we have to grade ourselves.

Grade C: Meets expectations

We need to ask ourselves whether we understand the expectations of our performance based on our job accountabilities and targets. If we do, are we willing to just meet those expectations? I am certain the majority of us do not want to be accused of settling for mediocrity – that is not the legacy we want to leave behind. We have been repeatedly told by our parents/guardians that we should always try to be the best at what we do. Similarly, a C should not be our goal; we are better than that! We do not want to just meet our expectations; we want to surpass them. You should regularly refer to our Performance Appraisal Policy to measure your progress, as it relates to the grade sheet.

Grade B: Exceeds expectation

While most of us would argue that we fall into this category, does our performance support our position? Have we exceeded our targets the majority of the time? Even our peers, if they are honest with us, are in a position to give us a candid opinion of our performance and when taken objectively, those opinions can be invaluable in our self development. I can hear some of you saying, “I know that I have exceeded the expectation!”. But is this supported by performance above and beyond the call of duty? Have we set objectives that provide a challenge while adhering to the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time framed) principle? We must ensure that our objectives are “specific” in describing what is to be accomplished, “measurable” in quantifying the expected end result, “attainable” by the employee within reasonable expectations, “relevant” to company and department goals and the employee’s key accountabilities, and “time-framed” for specific achievement.

Grade A: Excellent

Ah, this is where the air is rare – the place to which we should all aspire, where performance has exceeded targets on every accountability. We should be appraising ourselves daily. Some days we may receive a C-, and others an A+. However, if we continue to learn from our mistakes, the C's soon become a distant reminder of where we were, and the A's our crowning glory.

I'm sure that we all agree that just we do not want to deal with our performance in retrospect. We want to avoid “should have” and “could have”. Thus, we must pursue our performance targets every day. We need to excel throughout the period so that our PARs can only say “Job well done!”.

NEWS

TTMF supports Habitat for Humanity

International NGO Habitat for Humanity is well-known for its mission to “eliminate poverty housing and homelessness”. In March 2009, TTMF supported the local chapter’s third annual charity golf tournament, “Hammer it Home”, making a sizeable contribution as sponsor of the third prize. The tournament was held on Saturday March 14, 2009 at the Millenium Lakes Golf and Country Club, under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency, President George Maxwell Richards.



TTMF’s Manager, Marketing & Public Relations, Karel M°C Intosh (second from right), presents the third-place prize, along with West Indies cricketing legend Gordon Greenidge (third from left).



“Hammer it Home” raises funds to assist disadvantaged families who are in desperate need of a home. The proceeds of this year’s tournament will assist a single, working mother and her two children, who have lived in a car for the past few years, with getting their own home.

Habitat for Humanity assists those citizens who are most vulnerable in our society through “building simple, decent, affordable housing units”, and assisting “in the repair and completion of properties for qualifying families”. Through the organisation’s work, many low-income families in the country have been able to access affordable housing, thereby improving their standard of living. Operating in Trinidad and Tobago for the past 12 years, Habitat for Humanity has built approximately 140 homes, with support from sponsors and volunteers.

branchNews

Anniversaries

TTMF branches have a lot to celebrate during the first half of this year. The Arima branch celebrated its third anniversary on April 24; the Chaguanas branch, TTMF’s first branch, will be celebrating its sixth anniversary on May 5, and the San Fernando branch will be marking its fifth anniversary on May 19.

New team members

Already for 2009, the branches have been expanding their capabilities to better serve customers. The Arima and Chaguanas branches each increased its human resources, with a Mortgage Officer and Mortgage Assistant joining their teams. These new team members – Ava Mohammed (Mortgage Officer, Chaguanas), Keeva Connell (Mortgage Assistant, Chaguanas), Marsha Dyer (Mortgage Assistant, Arima), and Wendy Mohammed (Mortgage Officer, Arima) – will handle HDC transactions, specifically.

Memory Lane



Carnival 2009 marked TTMF's first "Ole Mas Competition". Staff went all out, depicting colleagues and scenarios related to mortgage processing for the "Guess who" and "Guess what" categories, respectively. Suffice to say, the event was filled with comedy and camaraderie. A special thank you goes out to the organising committee.

Get your DVD copy of the Ole Mas Competition for **only \$10.** For more information, email rinniss@ttmf-mortgages.com



Zeroing in on Safety

Hard hats and coveralls. That's the image that readily comes to mind when we think of safety in the workplace. In the corporate setting, however, safety switches its wardrobe.

"Working out on the field and in the office are two very different scenarios," says Robert Parris, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Consultant and Director of Dynamic Solutions Limited, who is assisting TTMF with its Safety and Health Programme. "For example, the oil and petro-chemical based industries operate in a high risk environment, while the corporate environment doesn't present the same sort of risks."

Although TTMF's work environment is not ranked in the "high risk" category, there are other factors to consider such as hazards presented by electrical outlets and cords, and walking surfaces. According to a 2006 facility and job risk assessment of our premises, which was conducted during the early period of our OSH implementation, 48% of the risks identified was classified as "negligible to moderate", and 52% was classified as "substantial to intolerable". The Facility and Job Risk Assessment was one of the first initiatives that TTMF undertook to ensure that all aspects of staff safety and health in work place were accurately evaluated.

Within recent years, local companies – primarily the larger ones – have taken significant steps to ensure OSH compliance. Headed by TTMF's Chief Operating Officer, Robert Green, TTMF's Safety and Health Committee has been developing policies and procedures that ensure full compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004), which calls for employers to "ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his (their) employees". The committee, which includes all levels of staff, is primarily responsible for identifying and evaluating workplace hazards, and reviewing reports of accidents and "near misses". Additionally, the committee has key responsibility for recommending solutions that address safety concerns.

TTMF's policy on safety and health emphasises our commitment to maintaining a safe work environment and an occupational safety and health programme that conforms to the best practices of similar organisations.

Aiming to instil a positive safety culture that promotes safe behaviour among all staff, the Safety and Health Committee is currently implementing its 2009 internal communications campaign. The campaign seeks to educate staff about OSH policies and procedures, secure the co-operation and support of staff in safety activities, prevent at-risk behaviours, increase safe work practices, encourage staff to take responsibility for their health and safety, as well as that of their colleagues, and encourage individuals to report hazards, incidents and "near misses". Employees can look forward to training sessions on topics such as fire prevention, substance abuse, and electrical emergency procedures.

**by Sharon Daniel-Munroe,
Marketing Assistant**

TTMF OSH Policy Statement

In compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2004, TTMF has developed occupational safety and health programmes suitable to its environment. The Company will ensure that employees at every level are kept continually aware of conditions and behaviours in all work areas that have the potential for injury. Any employee who, with sound reason, knows that his/her performance of a job is unsafe or damaging to health, is not required to carry out that work without first advising the responsible officers and having the hazard/s or potential hazard/s eliminated.

To the greatest degree possible, TTMF will maintain an occupational safety and health programme conforming to the best current practices of similar organizations. Success in such a programme depends on cooperation in all safety and health matters, between supervisor and employee, and between each employee and his/her co-workers. Only through such an effort can a safety and health programme that is in the best interest of all be established and preserved.

Greening Technology - computers and conservation

For decades, there has been much talk of global warming and its devastating impact on the planet. This has caused many companies to start thinking about ways in which they may conserve energy, thus releasing less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

While computers may not be first thing you'd think could help the warming situation, there are simple things that you can do to contribute to conserving the environment.

Green your PC

To make our computers more efficient and environmentally friendly, we can start by putting them on "standby" or in "hibernation" mode when they haven't been accessed for more than 10 minutes. You should also remember to turn off your computer, including the monitor, at the end of the work day.

You may be wondering - what is the difference between standby and hibernation modes? In standby mode, power is saved by shutting down the hard drives, fans and monitors, which are high power consumption devices. The computer still uses power to save the data in memory, so you can restart very quickly by pressing any key on your keyboard. If however, power is lost while in this state, the data in memory will be lost.

In hibernation mode, Windows XP saves the data in memory to the hard disk. Then the power is cut off completely, so this preserves more battery life. When you restart the computer, it takes a little longer to "boot up" because the data saved on the disk must be restored to memory. This method uses disk space to store the memory data

Due to the functionality of our system here at TTMF, and the requirement to maintain network connectivity, it is recommended that we use the standby mode. However it will be very useful to use the hibernation option at home. To put your computer in either hibernation or standby mode,

- right-click on your desktop and select "Properties";
- go to the "Screen Saver Tab", and click on "Power";
- in the "Power schemes tab" set the appropriate time for standby (10 minutes) and hibernation modes (1 hour).

**Contributed by
IT Department**

Paperless trail and recycling

As far as possible, we should reduce our use of paper. This requires that we use e-mail and fax systems more efficiently. Not only would this save on paper, but also on the amount of toner we use. The Nautilus Digital Storage system, which will be on-stream at TTMF for 2010, will effectively decrease our dependence on the use of paper.

To reduce our paper use, we can also recycle material. For example, we can reuse paper that has been printed in error as scrap or shred paper, which is then sent to be recycled.

You can make small, but important, contributions in order to conserve the environment. Set a green goal for the year, and encourage everyone in your office and at home to do the same. Remember, "take care of the Earth and she will take care of you".

Policy Compliance and Governance

- making it omnipresent

Corporate governance refers broadly to the rules, processes or laws by which a business is operated. By implementing policies, businesses attempt to create a structured approach to support good governance. One fundamental policy that is common to the majority of businesses is the Code of Business Conduct. This policy typically stipulates the way the business and its employees are required to practice their business. It outlines an approach to business that makes for honesty, integrity and trust in corporate life.

In order to ensure effectiveness, such policies must be communicated consistently and repeatedly. One of the most effective risk management techniques for strengthening this aspect of governance is through the continuous assessment of compliance. It is critical that policies are driven from the Board of Director's level, and communicated via a top-down approach with accountabilities assigned at an executive or management level. This aids the effectiveness with which policies are implemented as detected breaches can easily be linked to the assignee or owner. More effective than enforcement is the measurement of compliance.

Compliance assessment detects the causes for breaches or non-compliance within the business. Some common causes resulting in non-compliance or breaches are as follows:

- Lack of awareness: personnel's lack of awareness of the policy's existence or contents.
- Lack of accountability: when failure to adhere to policies is not linked to an owner it is a challenge to reprimand and implement remedial measures.
- Inconsistent monitoring: enforcement is sometimes ineffective when adherence thereof is not monitored.

As a result, businesses must adopt strategies which are geared towards mitigating these causes. These strategies include creating awareness, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and reporting policy compliance.

In generating awareness among staff about policies, policy cascades are performed as part of the orientation programme for new employees. Annual refresher cascades are implemented in order to keep the policies "alive" and foremost in people's minds. To support this measure, policies are made easily accessible via manuals or intranet links to policy databases.

Of course, this approach is futile if employees are sensitised about policy compliance, but there is no system of accountability. It is important to hold personnel accountable at all levels when breaches are detected.

As with most programmes, continuous monitoring of policy compliance levels will support sound risk management. Quarterly assessment of policy compliance by the Internal Audit Department, consistent reporting of breaches to senior management, the development of remedial plans, and consistent follow-up of the progress of implementation will help to ensure that good corporate governance is maintained.

Policy compliance is a business-wide initiative, as it involves the support at all levels. All employees should familiarise themselves with relevant policies, so that they can operate with greater confidence.



**by Waheeda Ali,
Manager – Internal
Audit**

Movers and Shakers

- new faces and promotions

Within the past few months, TTMF has welcomed a complement of new staff. We extend a special, Insight welcome to all of our new team members.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Account Servicing

Marissa Grenade-Allen – Mortgage Assistant

Sharlene Chong Ling – Mortgage Assistant

HDC Unit

Duane Duncan – Mortgage Officer

Leon Grey – Mortgage Officer

Corian Shimon Tim Kee – Mortgage Assistant

Renaud Stephen Singh – Mortgage Assistant

Daniel John – Vault Attendant

Chaguanas Branch

Ava Mohammed – Mortgage Officer

Keeva Connell – Mortgage Assistant

Arima Branch

Marsha Dyer – Mortgage Assistant

Wendy Mohammed – Mortgage Officer

Mortgage Services – Lending

Miriam James – Customer Service Representative

Nezelle Clarke-Ashby – Administrative Assistant

Kerry Gibson – Customer Service Representative

Finance

Linda Lake – Accounting Assistant

Amanda Eugene – Accounting Assistant

Administration

Sharon Cools-Lartigue – Manager

Human Resources

Jhanahj Phillip – HR Assistant

Promotions/Transfers:

PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS

Head Office

Adilah Caracciolo – Mortgage Assistant (HDC)

Cheryl Ann Strachan – Mortgage Officer (Lending)

Ava Bain – Mortgage Assistant, Account Servicing (Securities)

Glenis Tanisha Douglas – Mortgage Officer (Collections)

Ria Inniss – Mortgage Officer (Collections)

Renée Miller – Mortgage Officer (Collections)

Marsha Tuckett – Mortgage Assistant (Lending)

Rodney Ettienne – Office Assistant (Administration)

Ria Rullov – Mortgage Assistant (Account Servicing)

Sharon Escandón – Mortgage Officer (Collections)

Yvette Maynard – Mortgage Officer (Lending)

Nezelle Clarke-Ashby – Senior Administrative Assistant (Lending)

Terry Lynch – Mortgage Officer (Lending)

Arima

Maureena Jackson – Officer-in-Charge (Arima)

San Fernando Branch

Ronise Placide – Customer Service Representative

Giselle Arrindell-Lynch – Mortgage Assistant

The EOQ League

Becoming a star in the workplace might be easier than you would imagine. All that is required is a simple formula for success - dedication and enthusiasm, mixed with a constant quest for knowledge.

This is the formula that Judith Farrell, Tricia Williams and Lisa Lee Quay – TTMF’s Employee of the Quarter (EOQ) 2008 awardees – have mastered. *Insight* spoke with these ladies to find out what makes them tick.



Tricia Williams EOQ 3

“Getting the job done regardless of the obstacles and frustrations involved is what shows your true mettle,” says Judith (EOQ 1 and 4), the only employee to receive two EOQ awards in one year. “Seeing others satisfied and fulfilled due to my efforts motivates me to do my best. It is very rewarding and gratifying to assist others in need. It’s also great to have your colleagues’ support.”

Through the Staff Top Achievement Reward (STAR) programme, TTMF encourages peer-to-peer referrals to identify top performers. STAR acknowledges employees who have exceeded their personal performance objectives and represent the behaviour and practices of the “ideal” TTMF employee. The Company’s core values – customer focused, integrity, teamwork, results oriented and empowerment - are benchmarks by which EOQ’s are rated. Not only do Judith, Tricia and Lisa share these qualities, they also share a deep sense of spirituality.

“The bible says ‘and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,’” says Lisa (EOQ 2). “To me this means that whatever we do we must do it with honesty and to the best

of our ability as though it is being done for the Lord and not man.

“On a personal level, I assess or evaluate my success on how well I perform my role as a wife and mother and the part I play in my family members’ lives so that we can function as an effective unit. On a professional level, I assess my success on how I am able to motivate those who work with me to perform at their optimum level and on how I am able to achieve the goals I have set for myself.”

Tricia (EOQ 3) agrees with this sentiment, saying:

“Success does not only depend on you the individual, but how well your performance enables your team to function efficiently, whether it be at work or at home.”



Judith Farrell EOQ 1 and 4

by Sharon Daniel-Munroe, Marketing Assistant



Lisa Lee Quay EOQ 2

Tips from our EOQs 2008

How to manage conflicts and get the job done

- Keep people and problems separate
- Listen to all sides objectively
- Agree to disagree
- Set out the facts
- Explore options together
- Encourage open discussion
- Agree on a way forward.

TTMF’s Employee of the Quarter recipients continue to set a fine example of excellence in the workplace. While one’s definition of success depends on individual belief systems, the fact is that excellence is born from habit.

Early bird tips for the hurricane season

It's never too early to prepare for the hurricane season, which normally starts in June and ends in November. While Trinidad and Tobago has often been spared the extreme wrath of major hurricanes that can cause widespread damage, it's still important for residents to prepare for the unexpected. Here are some tips to be mindful of:

Before the Storm

- Determine safe evacuation routes inland.
- Learn location of official shelters.
- Make emergency plans for pets.
- Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights, generators and battery-powered radio and cell phones.
- Buy food that will keep and store drinking water.
- Ensure you have first aid supplies and medications.
- Buy plywood or other material to protect your home.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Trim trees and shrubbery.
- Review your insurance policy.
- Fuel and service your vehicles.
- Board up windows in case the storm moves quickly and you have to evacuate.
- Store lawn furniture and other loose, light-weight objects, such as garbage cans and garden tools.
- Have cash on hand in case power goes out and ATMs don't work.

After the Storm

- Keep listening to radio or TV.
- Wait until an area is declared safe before entering.
- Watch for closed roads. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road. Turn Around Don't Drown!
- Avoid weakened bridges and washed out roads.
- Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from power lines.
- Check gas, water and electrical lines and appliances for damage.
- Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Never use candles and other open flames indoors.
- Do not drink or prepare food with tap water until officials say it is safe.
- If using a generator, avoid electrocution by following manufacturer's instructions and standard electric code.

Remember this is only a guide. The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense.

Contributed by
IT Department

Hurricane Names for 2009

Ana, Bill, Claudette, Danny, Erika, Fred, Grace, Henri, Ida, Joaquin, Kate, Larry, Mindy, Nicholas, Odette, Peter, Rose, Sam, Teresa, Victor, and Wanda.

During the Storm

- Listen frequently to radio and TV for bulletins of a storm's progress.
- Stay away from windows and doors, even if they are covered.
- Turn refrigerator to maximum cold and keep closed.
- Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Unplug small appliances.
- Fill bathtub and large containers with water in case tap water is unavailable. Use water in bathtubs for cleaning and flushing only. Do not drink it.

Checklist of items to carry to the shelter

- First aid kit
- Medicine, prescriptions
- Baby food and diapers
- Games, books, music players with headphones
- Toiletries
- Battery-powered radio and cell phone
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- A blanket or sleeping bag for each person
- Identification
- Copies of key papers such as insurance policies

REMINDER: If you are told to leave, do so immediately!

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Mr Popular - Sheldon Romano

Just call him Mr. Popular. In fact, he is so popular that he can't escape invitations to "limes" or potential customers who gravitate towards him inside and outside of TTMF's walls.

"People are always calling me from all over," he says. "I know too many people. When I'm out liming people come up to me saying hey I want to talk to you about getting a house. Even during Carnival when I playin' mas, throwin' waist. I tell them this is not the forum. But call me on Ash Wednesday."

This is the life of Sheldon Romano, Mortgage Assistant, Mortgage Origination, and self-described "constant TTMF salesman".

"My navel string is buried in TTMF," he adds. "I've been coming here since my schooldays. That was back in the 1980s when TTMF was on Queen Street. I would pass by after school to meet my mom who worked here, and during the August vacation I would always have a job at TTMF, shredding paper."

Sheldon became a permanent employee in January 1997 when he joined the team as a courier, and eventually moved to the Mortgage Services Department as a Loans Clerk. A recipient of a 2008 Long Service Award, he recently celebrated his 11th anniversary with the Company. Everybody knows him as the affable, go-to-guy for planning exciting social events. But what is he like outside of the workplace?

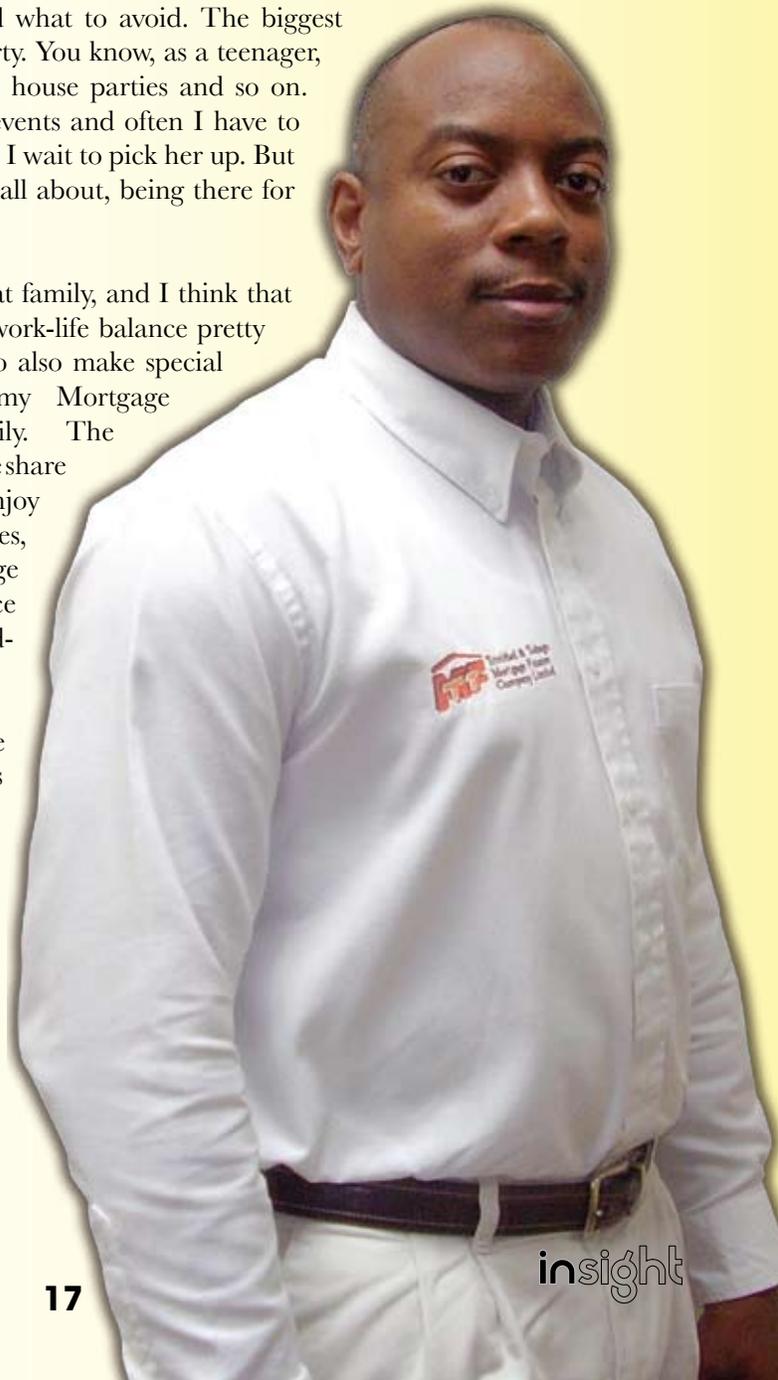
"I'm the same inside and outside of work," he says. "I like to lime, and play sports. Everybody knows I love football. I also like cricket, and I watch a lot of sports and CCN. Any news you want to find out about world events, ask me."

Sheldon is also a family man. Married with two daughters and a son, he's devoted to guiding his children along the right path, and protecting them.

"Parenthood is serious business," he says. "The way things are going now, I'm always giving them speeches on how to carry themselves and what to avoid. The biggest one likes to party. You know, as a teenager, you're into the house parties and so on. I drop her to events and often I have to 'kill time' while I wait to pick her up. But that's what it's all about, being there for my kids.

"I've got a great family, and I think that I manage the work-life balance pretty well. I've got to also make special mention of my Mortgage Services family. The camaraderie we share helps me to enjoy the 'up' times, and to manage stress and face challenges head-on."

We're sure Sheldon's colleagues would say the same thing about him.



GET TO KNOW YOUR MANAGER



What date did you join TTMF?
September 8, 2008

Previous employer:
Unilever Caribbean Limited.

Position held:
Audit & Risk Manager.

Educational qualifications and/or associations:
Chartered Accountant, Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), and Associate Member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE).

20 things you didn't know about Waheeda Ali, Manager – Internal Audit

Currently pursuing a designation in Fraud Examination with the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE). Graduate of Holy Faith Convent.

Originally from:
Chaguanas.

Currently from:
Chaguanas.

1. What is your favorite food?
Pizza with pineapple.

2. Three words that best describe you?
Quiet, Honest, Meticulous.

3. One weakness?
Sweets.

4. What's your idea of a good time?
Getting together with family or close friends, chatting, playing a good game of cards, dinner and music.

5. What are your hobbies/interests?
I like to spend time with my family, enjoy reading, painting, etc.

6. Best TTMF experience?
Shortly after joining I had the opportunity to share in a team building exercise and management social with my TTMF Colleagues.

7. Personal motto?
Hard work brings great rewards.

8. Best book you ever read?
I don't have a best book but I like to read novels and inspirational literature.

9. Favourite colour?
I like the colour blue.

10. Your idea of success?
"I believe success is being able to live well, laugh often and love much. It's gaining the respect of young and old, leaving the world in a better state

than you found it, never lacking appreciation for the earth's beauty and never failing to look for the best in others or give the best of yourselves".

11. Greatest achievement?
Becoming ACCA-certified and obtaining Chartered Accountant status at an early age.

12. What advice would you give to someone aspiring to be in your position/a similar position?

Take time to smell the roses and observe the scenery. Don't only focus on the long-term objectives to the extent that you miss out on the thrills of the journey. Recognize and appreciate the lessons of life.

13. If you had a chance at another profession, what would it be?
I think I would have been a lawyer.

14. Who is your role model(s)?
I don't particularly have a role model; but I love, admire and respect my parents and grandparents.

15. Most embarrassing moment?
I can't recall.

16. Had any life changing experiences?
Yes, I feel I have had a second chance at life.

17. If you got the chance to do something again, would you and what would it be?
Yes, stand up for myself.

18. Any elusive goals?
Making time for exercise, I am a procrastinator in that area.

19. Greatest fear/phobia?
I don't like to be in deep waters.

20. What's the one thing you'd like to do before you die?
Have children and a good family life, I guess that's two (2) things.

Welcome to Braingle

Fill out the entry form attached with your answers and place in the specially marked box placed in the Reception Area, 2nd Floor East. Participants from the branches may forward their entries to Karel Mc Intosh, Manager – Marketing and Public Relations, in a suitably marked envelope. The deadline for submission is May 13, 2009 at 4 p.m. No late entries will be accepted.

On your entry form, kindly include your relevant contact information and indicate your preference for one of the following: Ruby Tuesday, TGI Friday's or Zanzi Bar. Only one entry per person is allowed. Photocopies will not be accepted. No e-mail entries will be accepted.

The winner will be selected by random draw and announced on May 14, 2009. The competition is open to TTMF employees only. Management and members of the *Insight* Committee are not eligible for entry.

Insight's previous Braingle winner Stacey Silman (left receives her prize from Michelle Phillips-Lawrence of our Internal Audit Department.

Entry Form

Name:
.....

Contact Info:
.....

Ruby Tuesday
 TGI Friday's
 Zanzi Bar

RIDDLES

1. Can you read the following?
Yy u r, yy u b, l c u r yy 4 me.

A:

2. If a man was born in London, raised in Spain, came to Trinidad and died in San Fernando. What is he?

A:

3. What belongs to you but is used more by others?

A:

4. Which country makes Panama hats?

A:

5. What starts with "e" ends with "e" and contains only one letter?

A:

6. What is in seasons, seconds, centuries and minutes but not in decades, years or days?

A:

7. The more you have of it, the less you see. What is it?

A:

8. I am the beginning of the end, and the end of time and space. I am essential to creation, and I surround every place. What am I?

A:

9. What always runs but never walks, often murmurs, never talks, has a bed but never sleeps, has a mouth but never eats?

A:

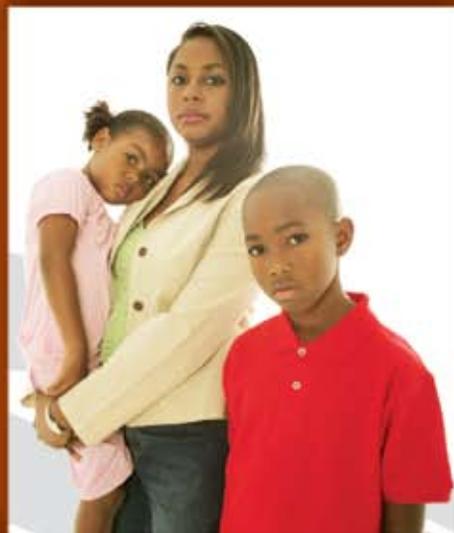
10. I never was, am always to be. No one ever saw me, nor ever will. What am I?

A:

Keep your family covered in the storm of your passing.

MORTGAGE COVER

*the plan that ensures your family
remains sheltered after this
turbulent time.*



In the event of your untimely passing, you don't have to leave your family with the additional grief of struggling to make mortgage payments.

TTMF and **CUNA Caribbean Insurance** offer you peace of mind with **Mortgage Cover** by providing insurance coverage on the outstanding balance of your mortgage.

Mortgage Cover



Trinidad & Tobago
Mortgage Finance
Company Limited

TTMF - from here... to Home.



CUNA MUTUAL GROUP

CUNA Caribbean Insurance Society Limited

Call for an information package: **623-TTMF** • e-mail: info@ttmf-mortgages.com • <http://www.ttmf-mortgages.com>