



For Immediate Release

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“MANUFACTURING NEEDS LEVEL PLAYING FIELD”
National Bakery CEO Launches Bold Ones 2014

KINGSTON, Jamaica, January 23, 2014 – “Jamaican manufacturing needs a level playing field if it is to succeed, that’s what we’re asking for. Reduce and do away with the bureaucracy that presently faces the business sector.”

National Bakery’s Chairman, Gary ‘Butch’ Hendrickson made this call at the official Launch of National Bakery’s 2014 ‘Bold Ones: New Champions of Manufacturing’ campaign. The event recently took place at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel.

Eight Jamaican companies were honoured as New Champions of Manufacturing. They are: Spring Vale Enterprises, Lincoln Gordon and Sons, EcoFarms Jamaica Limited, Lifespan Company, Irie Rock Limited, Journey’s End Wine Company, Bartley’s All in Wood and D’Nex Step Sandals and Accessories.

This is the third such programme, bringing National Bakery’s total sponsorship of some 27 new manufacturers to almost \$90 million. Over the next six months, the selected companies will receive multimedia promotional packages, extensive advertising and publicity – including being featured graphically on the sides of the national baking trucks as they traverse the island – and will be hosted by National Bakery at its Pavilion at the upcoming EXPO JAMAICA 2014.

Mr. Hendrickson called particularly for the removal of duties on manufacturing inputs, citing a recent instance where his company, having invested some J\$420 million in new equipment, found itself facing additional tariffs of \$80 million.

Continuing, Mr. Hendrickson said, “I’m really hoping that our Governments will grasp the critical importance of added value. Manufacturing creates added value, which in turn creates profits, new jobs and overall a better economy and quality of life for Jamaicans.”

To the entrepreneurs selected, Mr Hendrickson said the selection team was impressed with the professionalism and enthusiasm demonstrated by them and urged them to “be Jamaican without apology, but put forward the best of Jamaica.”

In giving his endorsement of the 2014 ‘Bold Ones’ programme, Jamaica Manufacturers’ Association (JMA) president, Brian Pengelley, also called on the Government to work more assiduously in reducing and eliminating costs and waste so as to create a truly business-friendly environment.

The manufacturing sector, Mr. Pengelley said, remained a critical sector to the economy. It employs some 75,000 persons, earning over USD 900million from exports, and contributes some 13% of all taxes collected as well as 8% to GDP.

“We appreciate the strides made to date, but we as manufacturers would still want to see the Government tackle a number of serious issues, including tax reform, removing bureaucracy, stabilizing currency movements to allow for better planning, reducing energy costs and crime,” Mr. Pengelley said.

Also speaking at the launch Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ) President, Christopher Zacca, lauded National for starting and sustaining the initiative, describing it as “a great positive start to the year.” Mr. Zacca said it was long established that small and medium enterprises were key to development, particularly in transitioning economies such as Jamaica’s, as they contributed to job growth, improved innovation and community development.

He countered however by saying that the SME sector was the most vulnerable to a poor business environment, high taxes, inefficient and costly bureaucracy, corruption and crime. In light of this Mr. Zacca said, “for the country to achieve its full economic potential, major improvements in the business climate will be necessary, to nurture, facilitate and encourage small businesses.”

He added that great progress had been made but that the PSOJ, in seeking to further advance the cause of Jamaican businesses, was presently developing a multi-point agenda for the promotion of the sector and to foster greater co-operation between large and small enterprises.

This year’s ‘Bold Ones,’ being the third group chosen since 2010, had the privilege of hearing testimonials from two of the initial Bold Ones, Michelle Smith of Chocolate Dreams, and Dennis Hawkins of Spur Tree Spices.

Calling the programme “a dream come true” Smith told the audience that the inclusion in the programme has had a significant positive impact on her company. “We recently completed a mini-expansion at our plant, have also increased our presence in the retail market through outlets at Loshusan Supermarket in Kingston and at the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, and we recently completed our first export order to Antigua.”

For his part, Hawkins, speaking on behalf of business partner Mohan Jagnarine, said that since its ‘Bold Ones’ campaign in 2010, the sauces and spices company had moved to a much larger base, had quadrupled output, more than doubled sales and had grown exports to the point where they now accounted for 70% of total sales revenue. He encouraged this year’s class of Bold Ones to plan and carefully consider their overheads and expenditure needs, and to put a proper financial records system in place. Mr. Hawkins also emphasized the importance of believing in their brands and in particular, encouraged them to wear their brands, citing numerous valuable business contacts made locally and overseas by virtue of wearing his Spur Tree branded shirt.

Replying on behalf of the eight chosen companies, Sandra McLeish, Managing Director of Springvale Enterprises, thanked National Bakery for the wonderful opportunity provided by the programme, “Your incredible generosity has made us all very happy, and are excited to embark on this tremendous journey.” The entrepreneur also acknowledged the previous ‘Bold Ones’ for sharing their experiences and said that the companies were eager to learn from their more established counterparts and from the National team.

ABOUT NATIONAL BAKERY (Continental Baking Company)

National Bakery is the leading manufacturer of baked goods in Jamaica, offering a wide range of products under three distinctive brands: National, HTB, and HoMade. Started in 1952 as a family-owned bakery, the company has expanded from its humble

beginnings to become the top producer of breads, buns, crackers and other baked products in the island.

The company operates on a 220,000 sq. ft. complex with a state-of the-art biscuit and bread plant. There are over 700 people in the National family. National distributes its freshly made products islandwide each day. The company also exports a variety of its products to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and other Caribbean Islands.