



Inside the Boardroom is a bi-weekly feature that speaks with CEOs and other business leaders in The Bahamas



The Bio: Branville McCartney

Branville McCartney is the founder of Halsbury Chambers. In 2006, the firm hosted the first ever International Legal Conference, through the ILM, in The Bahamas. He is a former director of the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce. Branville is also a former Cabinet minister and currently serves as the leader of the Democratic National Alliance (DNA).

We must remember to enjoy life

Guardian Business: What do you look for in your staff? What advice would you give Bahamians interested in your field?

Branville: Expectations of staff in a legal office is both similar and very different from other businesses or professional firms. Similarities are easy to pinpoint. You want hard-working, honesty, diligent and highly committed persons at every level. But you also want in your attorneys and their support staff that something extra - the willingness to fight for justice, to get the best for your clients you can, taking on their needs as if they were yours, bringing the full force of the law to their case or situation. You want lawyers with fire in their belly.

As far as advice, though the legal professional is very competitive and crowded in The Bahamas, it is an excellent and rewarding field when you know what you are doing. There is always room for those who have integrity and are determined to work hard and well.

GB: Tell us about your corporate culture? What are its core values?

Branville: The corporate culture at Halsbury Chambers is, I think, a bit different from many law firms. If I had to sum it up in one word, it would be assistance. Every attorney is committed to resolution of client matters, but beyond that, we are committed to community. The Free Legal Clinics which we founded in 2005 exemplify our corporate culture. The law should not be a mystery reserved for people in a kind of secret fraternity. It should be expressed in a way that allows every person to understand how it applies to them. We also have a strong business culture so we marry legal excellence merging with sound business judgment with a goal of delivering the highest level of professional legal service with ethics and integrity. We are committed to exceeding expectations



through consistent innovation and excellent customer service, locally and internationally.

GB: Do you think legalized gambling will improve the economy?

Branville: My position on gaming is very clear. Funds from legalized gambling, if managed correctly, will provide much-needed support for education, youth development, sports and culture, including historic restoration and preservation. Management and transparency are key to ensure that revenue raised is not diverted to other line items or pet projects.

GB: What was your first job? Did you earliest work experiences have an impact on how you conduct business today?

Branville: Working at my father's pharmacy, Willmacs Pharmacy, on Collins Avenue. I was six years old when I first stated working. I initially wanted to be a pharmacist. My responsibilities were taking out the garbage, cleaning the shelves, wrapping gifts and packing boxes.

GB: What should be done with the Bahamas Electricity Corporation?



Branville: Privatize BEC. The faster, the better. I do not buy the argument that we have to "fix it to sell it." One of the biggest complaints that all businesses have in The Bahamas is the cost of electricity. The successful investor will not need a "fixed" BEC. They will buy based on potential and will configure cost of upgrades in any bid once the process of privatization is introduced. We MUST find a way to reduce the

foreign direct investment.

GB: How can we generate new revenue?

Branville: There are two ways to generate new revenue: Providing incentives for existing businesses to encourage expansion and to introduce new industries. New industries generate new revenue. We need to encourage our light manufacturers. I have heard the figure that some 12,000 people are employed in manufacturing in this country. We are not paying enough attention to them. There is room for development in agribusiness, mari-culture and information technology. Enhancing our tourist product is no longer a luxury; it is essential if we are to take advantage of key to urism interests - cultural, sports, religious and medical tourism. We must also focus on increasing airlift and on creating more opportunities for Family Island travel in conjunction with a stay in Nassau or Grand Bahama. In tourism, must upgrade our tours and create exciting new excursions. Our waters are the most exquisite in the world and yet we do not use them as we should.

At the same time, we need to cut our expenses by privatizing Bahamasair, the Water and Sewerage Corp. and BEC - all entities which the government pays too much every year to subsidize. By privatizing, we will also be able to reduce the size of the public service. We must do a better job of monitoring public expenditure, reducing wastage and collecting outstanding taxes.

GB: What is the biggest challenge facing your business or sector?

Branville: Finding quality attorneys. We have approximately 1049 attorneys in the Bahamas today but you

would be hard-pressed to find 100 good attorneys.

GB: Briefly, can you describe a life experience that changed how you approach your work today?

Branville: When I was younger, I used to work 12 to 14 hour days. I had a young family and I realized that there must be a balance in your life. You must always consider what is important in life and make that your priority. I heard it said that if you enjoy doing what you are doing you would never work a day in your life. I guess today I am not working.

GB: What keeps you grounded? Do you have any major interests other than work?

Branville: My belief in the Almighty, my wife and my family all keep me grounded. Knowing that life is short and you ought to ensure that you do what is right while you are here... helping those who are less fortunate and enjoying yourself... not stressing. My father always told me: "Bran, if you do not enjoy life... God will call you a fool!" Well, I do not mind anybody else calling me a fool, but I really do not want God to call me a fool! Major interests include spending time with my family, cooking, playing tennis, reading and traveling. And of all of those, it is my family that is by far the most important. I am so fortunate to have an incredible, intelligent and beautiful wife whose enthusiasm for life lights up every room she enters and to have three fabulous children. Just recently, I have taken up a little gardening. I love to spend time in my yard and at home. It keeps me centered and grounded and provides that inner strength that reinforces a commitment to make a difference.

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