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***Transcription of the recorded interview with Mr. Gerado de Veer***

1. ***Would you consider Renaissance to be eco-friendly?***

Yes, Renaissance is eco-friendly. They partner with EarthCheck which is one of the largest certifications globally. They comply with the standards every year and have been doing so for five years, so they have a five-year certification with EarthCheck.

1. ***Do you believe waste management is something that should be promoted more or be made aware in elementary school?***

The awareness in Aruba right now is very little, starting anywhere is important and elementary school is a great place to start. However, raising awareness is not the only thing that is important, it should be more of a cultural thing that people need to get used to in Aruba. Mr. de Veer says that people here are not used to waste management, how it works and where everything goes. Everybody knows it goes to the dump, but people are not aware that there are so many other alternatives. He believes awareness is one of the biggest challenges we have on Aruba. So not only should we start in elementary school, we should start in many other places.

1. ***Do you think that nowadays enough time is spent regarding the problems of waste management?***

Mr. de Veer says that you do hear more about it in the news, but he believes that a lot more can be done. Awareness is very low at the moment, but he thinks that it’s not just the responsibility of the government, it’s the responsibility of each and every one of us living on Aruba, he says that each of us have a social responsibility. He explained that people just keep throwing things in the trash, then it goes to the dump and that we’re not really helping ourselves. So, not enough time is spent regarding the problems of waste management.

1. ***Is Renaissance Resort & Casino contributing to waste management in Aruba? If yes, how is it going?***

Renaissance Resort & Casino is contributing to waste management with the help of Ecotech Aruba N.V. They have already been working with Ecotech for a long time and it has been going well. Ecotech does not send anything to the dump, everything goes to their facility, Eco gas, and they have different procedures and processes in place to either recycle or to ship it abroad for recycling. Another procedure is that they burn some of the waste or store them. Furthermore, Renaissance also has some procedures in their kitchen, they save the cooking oils in big bins and Ecotech will come and pick them up for recycling. Regarding all the leftover food on the property, this will go in separate bins in the kitchen and every morning Santa Rosa picks them up and feeds the pigs with the leftover food.

A few other standard procedures that Renaissance has are:

In the kitchen Renaissance has grease traps, to collect and recapture the grease for it not to end up in the sewers.

Housekeeping places in each room a card with instructions on replacing the towels in the bathroom or leaving them. They also use a card for the sheets of the bed with the same instructions. This will reduce the use of energy. Making the hotel Ecofriendly.

1. ***Is it making a difference at the hotel and for the guests that come here?***

US customers are the most interested and they have been asking if the hotel is contributing to waste management. They want to see more of waste management everywhere they go, the people from the US are used to waste management starting from their homes and this is not something that people in Aruba do. US customers are happy to see the initiatives in the room and throughout the hotel. They are also very happy that Renaissance sees waste management as a serious and important responsibility. Another point that Mr. de Veer brought forward was that the hotel throws all waste together in one container, Ecotech will pick the waste up and they have a system in place where they filter & separate the waste from plastic, metal, glass, carton etc., into different containers to recycle. Mr. de Veer believes that there is a possibility to start separating the waste at the hotel. In order to do so there must be a large volume of waste and everyone staying at the hotel should participate and be responsible for separating their waste. This will make the process much easier.

1. ***Personal and professional impression of waste management in Aruba?***

Mr. de Veer believes that Aruba has a long way to go; Europe and US is already managing waste well. Aruba is a very small island and that makes it even more important to take waste management seriously. We have limited space and a lot of our waste are going to the dump and the waste can end up in the ocean, this is really bad for the marine life. All the bad smells and burning of the waste can also be bad for humans. Aruba is really missing a lot of awareness on the importance of waste management.

1. ***Desired future of waste management in Aruba?***

Mr. de Veer explained that the desired future is for everyone to be more conscious and participate. Therefore, it should not be just one company or the government institution only, but it should be a team effort. Awareness is a key factor for everyone to see how the environment is being taken care of. It is a big step in recycling and taking care of the trash and waste.

He emphasized that awareness should start in school, government and private entities via advertisement and all aligning towards the same goals for five or ten years down the road. The two goals he mentioned were, where do we want to be and what do you want to do, then create a plan and implement it in the school, businesses and the government.

1. ***Obstacles seen in getting this desired future scenario?***

Mr. de Veer commented that the biggest obstacle that can disrupt this desired future scenario is changing behavior, he stated that it is a difficult task, but it is not impossible. Therefore, changing the mindset and behavior of people to take ownership and be part of this change could be the biggest obstacle of all.

It starts from this generation to create the awareness, create the facilities. He thinks with awareness, and the right tools and the right businesses and government it will work well, but goals need to be set and adhere to.

1. ***What is the Renaissance doing to make awareness?***

In awareness they are not doing much, but they are making sure they are doing their portion to make it as eco-friendly as possible. They are not advertising or doing anything in the community, but within the company they are extremely eco-friendly. For example, on the Renaissance Island they use solar panels to reduce the amount of energy used at the restaurant on the island. They have added quite a lot of solar panels to cover a big part of the energy consumption on the island. The chemicals that they use are locally made and are biodegradable and environmental friendly. These chemicals are purchased from Bio Pro and Eco Lab. They want to make sure that any chemical that they purchase does not have a negative impact on the hotel or on the island. They take care of the different areas of the hotel, for example where the chemicals are stored there are standards that they must comply with to put concrete floors so if anything leaks, it does not go into the soil. Mr. De Veer also said that the Renaissance do beach cleanup in alliance with Starbucks.

1. ***Market for improved waste management in Aruba (who would pay for better waste management in Aruba? e.g. recycling)***

According to Mr. de Veer, businesses are already doing this with Eco Tech and they are doing a very good job with waste management. He also recommends that Shelimar and Eco Tech should provide the service of different garbage bins to separate the waste, but first the people should be educated on how to do that, but at the end of the day it is up to the people if they want to separate their waste. He said this could be one of our long-term goal. Mr. De Veer said the government has a big role in it. They can do a lot to implement these actions. But at the end of the day the host community needs to get involved.