



MINISTRY OF LABOUR  
& SOCIAL SECURITY



# THE PRODUCTIVITY PULSE

A Bi-Annual newsletter from the **Jamaica Productivity Centre**

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## CAN FLEXITIME REVERSE THE HISTORICAL PRODUCTIVITY SLOW-DOWN?

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(Indust. & Systems Eng.), CLSSS, CEM, PE

Chief Technical Director

Jamaica Productivity Centre



Flexibility is utilized every day, whether we want to or not as time is the most precious and costly resource that we each possess. Therefore, it is not surprising that many are increasingly seeking flexible work arrangements to maximize or efficiently utilize their time.

Flexitime is a topic that has received much attention in the past and is endorsed by some and opposed by others in Jamaica. It is not uncommon to hear persons talk about what they would do with extra time if flexible working time was implemented at their place of work.

Despite all the benefits, statistics show that firms and organizations offering flexitime have only grown minimally. According to one source, flexitime has increased in the USA by only 4-5% in the last decade. **Cont'd.....Page 3**

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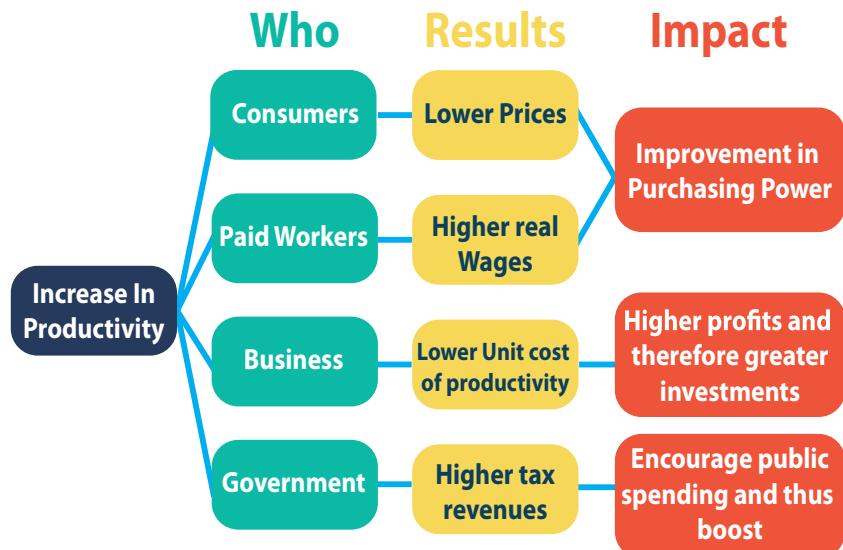
#### Productivity Quote

“ If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress. ” -Barack Obama

## What is Productivity?

Productivity measures how well resources are used to produce goods and services (efficiency) that meet the needs, requirements and expectations of the consumer (effectiveness). It is calculated as the ratio of outputs to inputs.

Adopting a productivity-centric attitude will lead to the continuous improvement in the potential of our resources.



### Labour Productivity by Sector (2019)

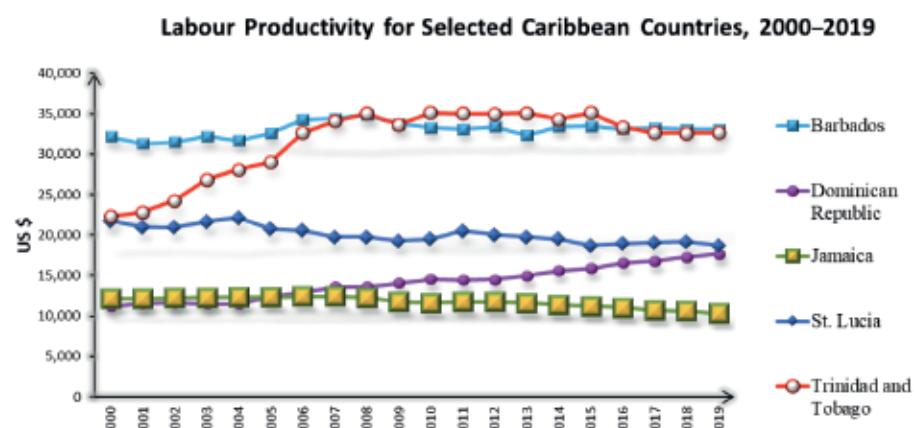


The chart to right shows that Jamaica has the lowest labour productivity when compared to the other caribbean countries.

## Jamaica's Productivity

Over the last two decades, Jamaica has had weak and declining levels of productivity. From 2001- 2019, labour productivity, capital productivity and total factor productivity, recorded annual average declines of 0.6%, 0.2% and 0.4% respectively.

In 2019, labour productivity for the Services Producing Sector was larger than for the Goods Producing Sector. The industry with largest labour productivity was the Electricity & Water Supply Industry, while the industry with the lowest was Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing.



Source: ILOSTAT Database explorer (January 2021).  
Output per worker (GDP constant 2010 US\$)

# PRODUCTIVITY ACTIVITIES OF THE JAMAICA PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE

## Current Initiatives

How is the Ministry of Labour and Social Security through the Jamaica Productivity Centre working to improve productivity in Jamaica?

Identify initiatives particularly in the Public Sector that will advance the National Productivity Agenda.

This initiative is intended to enhance innovation, competitiveness and the production of higher value added goods and services.

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1 Develop a National Productivity Improvement Policy. This policy will be a guide to help decision making/operations which will promote the improvement in the efficiency of process and support the conditions that drive a better quality of life in Jamaica.

3 Productivity Education/ Sensitization This will ensure that all citizens of Jamaica — including our youth - will be knowledgeable of what productivity is and how to be more productive at school, in business, at work and in their daily lives. Through public education and sensitization we aim to provide timely productivity research and measurement as well as benchmarking.

## SHARE WITH US HOW YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION IS PRODUCTIVE TODAY!

Use the hashtags #LevelUp #ProductivityDay #6/20 #ProductivityIsEverybodysBusiness

- Got other ideas or contributions?
- Want to be a part of the Productivity Movement?

Contact us at:  
 jpc@mlss.gov.jm  
 jamaicaproductivitycentre  
 Jamaicaproductivity  
 (876) 922-1598  
 @productivityja



Stay tuned to hear more about our activities leading up to World Productivity Day 2021.



## CAN FLEXITIME REVERSE THE HISTORICAL PRODUCTIVITY SLOW-DOWN? CONT...

The International Labour Organization (ILO) states, the practice of flexible time (or flexitime) allow workers and employers to schedule working hours flexibly on a daily and weekly basis. It focuses on introducing flexibility into how regular working hours are spread. Further, it contemplates that both the employer and the employee are going to work together to achieve an arrangement that balances the requirements of the particular workplace with the interests, needs and commitments of the employer outside the workplace (Flexitime and 'time banking' schemes, ILO Information Sheet No. WT-14, May 2004).

*The practice of flexitime allows for variations in work arrangement such as:*

- **Ability to vary the number of hours worked per day up to a maximum level**
- **Ability to vary the time of day worked**
- **Ability to vary the number of hours worked per week**
- **Ability to vary the days of week worked.**

Studies conducted in the US show that 30% of workers would take a pay cut for more flexible work arrangements. In other words, some workers favour flexible working time over money, and with the inability of many firms and organizations to pay for the value added by some employees, it may be a worthwhile consideration during wage negotiations. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 20 million Americans actively choose part-time work.

Persons who favour flexitime include semi-retired or retired individuals, college students and those with family obligations e.g. young, sick or elderly family members. Also those who prefer to engage in deliberate, careful work-life balance or persons who want to explore other life opportunities. All of which would make up a large portion of the population.

On **September 14, 2014** the Jamaican Parliament passed the Employment (Flexible Work Arrangements) Miscellaneous Provisions Act. This was followed by the Senate passing the Act on October 21, 2014 paving the way for regularizing flexitime which has been a common practice over the years especially in the essential

services and other sectors.

There are several justifications why firms or organizations in Jamaica should consider implementing flexible working time. First, according to UNICEF Situation Analysis ([2002](#) and [2006](#)) there are **37,000 children** living with disabilities in Jamaica – needing special care from working parents or care-givers. Secondly, in **2002, 45%** of Jamaican households were female-headed (UNICEF Situation Analysis of Jamaican Children, [2005](#)). Third, it is projected that by **2050**, the elderly population- 65 years and older, will increase by **18.5** per cent. (PIOJ, 2019) In 2019, 10 per cent of the estimated projection was recorded. Fourth, flexitime may well be a temporary solution to the traffic congestions resulting from road construction. Fifth, flexitime may be a way to reverse the decline in labour productivity over the last 60 years. This may occur through the following channel - Inflexible hours combined with low wages, place pressure on employees that leave them struggling to strike a reasonable balance between time for work, time for self and time for family. The end result is that workers are more stressed, labour productivity is reduced, critical timelines are missed and quality of work or service suffers. The nation also suffers from the social repercussions and spurs the vicious cycle of slow or no growth.

Flexibility is increasingly important for firms and organizations and by extension national growth, as the fact is that technology has been changing the face of the traditional workplace.

*Benefits of a flexitime include:*

- **Lower overheads due to reduced physical time in office**
- **Improved morale and job satisfaction**
- **Reduced stress and fatigue**
- **Greater staff retention and easier recruiting of capable employees**
- **Productivity gains**

It is noteworthy however, that if the flexitime scheme is not monitored or administered properly, there is a potential for abuse. Given the costs of not doing and the benefits of implementing, flexible hours may well be worth the consideration and effort of employers. Please share with us which flexitime practice has been working for you at [jpc@mss.gov.jm](mailto:jpc@mss.gov.jm).



MINISTRY OF LABOUR  
& SOCIAL SECURITY



# FLASHBACK MESSAGES FROM WORLD PRODUCTIVITY DAY 2019

On June 20, 2019 World Productivity Day was celebrated for the very first time in Jamaica. The Jamaica Productivity Centre shared some productivity tips and tools that they can use in their everyday personal and professional lives.

It has become second nature for us to say 'Have a Productive Day!' But what does this truly mean? At the end of each: task, day, week, month or year; how do you assess if you have indeed been productive? The key to improving our standard of living is the recognition that it is the combination of the actions of individual Jamaicans that stimulate positive economic growth. We hope that for the rest of this year and beyond you will partner with the Jamaica Productivity Centre (JPC) in a bid to advance

and grow our economy. JPC develops and implements programmes to assist individuals, companies and firms to improve the things they do and the way things are done in order to optimise their efficiency and effectiveness. Productivity when injected in any process can translate to increased competitiveness. Doing things better doesn't have to be hard. Below some of our productivity ambassadors share tips and tools they have used to reap

personal/professional rewards. These productivity concepts are recommended for anyone who wishes to be more productive! We implore all organizations to join with us in our #BeProductive campaign and try one of our productivity tips recommended by our ambassadors below. Share your initiatives with us and tag us on one of our social media platforms with the hashtags #LevelUp #BeProductive #6/20 #WorldProductivityDay.



**The Late Honourable Shahine  
Robinson MP.**  
Minister of Labour and Social Security



**The Honourable Zavia  
Mayne, MP.**  
Minister of State  
Ministry of Labour and Social Security



**Mrs. Colette Roberts Risdien  
Permanent Secretary**  
Ministry of Labour and Social Security



**Mr. Metry Seaga  
Former Chairman**  
Jamaica Productivity Centre

As a representative of the people, I use my time and energy in an organised and efficient way to achieve results. I urge all Jamaicans to welcome the change of processes and systems. Let us all acclimatise to the changes of the Digital Age

When you have multiple roles it is important to keep organized in order to keep on schedule. Technology helps me with time and resource management. But, it requires discipline to stay on track. The use of gadgets and software help me to work smarter and not necessarily harder.

The Ministry is on a path of modernisation to improve service delivery to our clients through the use of ICT. As a result, we have seen greater levels of efficiency, productivity and increased customer relations. By integrating the use of relevant ICT and mobile devices in this Ministry, we are able to stay connected. That way, we get more done even while on the go.

As an entrepreneur and a person who has had the privilege of being involved in the governance and operations of several companies, I have always been cognizant of the importance of partnerships for productivity. Shared vision, knowledge and resources are key to accomplishing tasks in a more efficient and effective manner. Regardless of the task at hand, I find that the input of person(s) who are experienced in that area optimizes the end results. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

## Flashback Messages Cont'd

**Mrs. Tamar Nelson**  
Chief Technical Director  
Jamaica Productivity Centre



We are living in a time of emergent and dynamic change, which can be difficult, frustrating and a struggle to handle. How we prepare for and manage these changes can impact our productivity. Remember change is inevitable, but amid its ensuing difficulty lies opportunity. Be open to change as well as to new ideas and innovations, be flexible and agile, believe it can be done and have fun doing it! Also, inspire others along the way to do the same.

**Andre Molyneaux**  
Technical Resource Officer  
Jamaica Productivity Centre



Before tackling a new task or project, my first step normally involves removing clutter which is simply sorting- separating the necessary items from the unnecessary items.

This activity is considered to be "low hanging fruit" that is easy to complete and leaves you with a feeling of accomplishment, a positive vibe that will thrust you into the large project. Your environment is now sorted and has "the clean room feel". You are now ready to dive in and be productive.

**Jonathan Isaacs**  
Senior Productivity Specialist  
Jamaica Productivity Centre



If you can't measure, you can't manage it. In charting the path towards productivity improvement, measurement becomes an essential component in realising this. For 2019, I have focused on applying personal measurement systems to ensure the desired efficiencies and effectiveness of specific tasks are achieved. This could simply mean managing your time for an activity.

**Rachel Barham**  
Past President Productivity Club  
Immaculate Conception High School



Begin each day by setting goals and focusing on one task at a time; always start with the most important one. As students it is important to use productivity tools and applications, an example is 'grammarly' which reduces your editing time.

**Jeffrey Azan**  
Managing Director



Select n' Start :

- 1) Wake up with enough time to spend time on yourself in the morning; win the morning conquer the day
- 2) Set a time to rest and recharge; no matter how you flick the switch a burnt out bulb won't shine
- 3) Make time for personal development; higher levels achieve greater rewards #LevelUp

**Karl Williams, Bsc, MBA**  
Vice President of Human  
Resources  
Sagicor Jamaica



Creating a weekly, 'Check in List' at the beginning of the week aids in executing the tasks that need to be completed. Each day during the week, spend some time checking in with your list, to update and of course check off completed items. Your list helps you to organise, prioritise, stay focused and importantly helps you get things that must be done completed. #WriteIt #TypeIt #Let'sDoThis

**Dr Silburn Clarke, DBA, FRICS**  
Chairman  
Spatial Innovision Limited  
Board Member - JPC



"Quality of management is the single most significant factor impacting employee innovative work behaviour and output within our organisations based on recent local and global research. This factor is even more vital as economies, firms and societies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution are distinguished by being either "innovation-rich" or "innovation-poor".

**Dr Marina Ramkissoon**  
Psychology Unit  
University of the West Indies



Over the years, I've become known as a person who gets things done and for continuously making improvements. For 2019, I have shifted focus from 'doing things better' to 'doing better things'. The latter is more strategic and transformational

**Collette Barham**  
Office Manager  
Jamaica Productivity Centre



Spend more time doing the things that you love. Understand that you are not entitled to anything but must work consistently for what you want to achieve.

Be grateful and happy for where you are at this point in your life and do not rehash the past.

# WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH... PRODUCTIVITY DESPITE CHALLENGES



## Marina Ramkissoon, PhD

Senior Lecturer, Psychology Unit, Department of Sociology  
Psychology and Social Work.

Associate Dean - Graduate Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus Productivity Ambassador, JPC

Dr. Ramkissoon has over 10 years' experience teaching HRD, work motivation, organizational learning and social psychology.

We've all faced tough situations, and our reactions may be common. The 'going' gets rough often, sometimes every day. The recent popular phrase "the struggle is real", seems to aptly capture our everyday realities. You may be able to relate to one or more of these tough situations and the typical responses: "I am tired of trying to convince my colleagues of...I'll just keep quiet", "This report is due tomorrow but I'm so exhausted...I'll rush it through in the morning", "I have so much to do and no one

appreciates how hard it is...what's the point?" or finally, "I'm not feeling well...better call in sick".

The reactions to tough times identified above, if characteristic of the average employee, could easily reduce the overall productivity of a firm. Toshinobu Kasai, in a 2016 article written for the World Economic Forum, indicated that "Overworked employees report more health problems, and as a direct consequence are less productive and use more sick days". A 1991 study out of the University of California, Berkeley, by Clair Brown and Vince Valvano showed that employees responding to difficult relationships with colleagues by displaying adversarial attitudes and distrust were also highly unproductive. Yet another study by the Aberdeen Group in 2013 demonstrated that drops in productivity were directly related to lack of recognition of staff by the leadership of the organization.

But what is a 'tough' situation really, and what makes some persons so productive and successful despite challenges? A Harvard Business Review research report by Zenger and Folkman (2018) called "7 Traits of Super-Productive People" showed that highly productive people did and/or had the following: i) stretched

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# SAFETY AND 5S IS KEY TO PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT



**Atsuo Kanai**  
Former Japanese consultant  
Jamaica Productivity Centre



Do you know the meaning of "Safety First"? Two years ago, I found the slogan of "Safety First" which is very popular not only in Japan but also in many other countries, while visiting a warehouse in Kingston. We tend to think it means only that safety is very important for us, but the original words are "Safety First, Quality Second, Production Third", stated by Elbert Henry Gary, the chairman of U. S. Steel in 1906. That is, he put priority on them. This is the essence of the words.



A WAREHOUSE IN KINGSTON

"Making Steel and Killing Men", which William B. Hard announced, says that 1,200 of 10,000 workers got death or seriously injured in the accidents every year in the iron mills in Chicago those days. In 1906 Elbert Henry Gary hammered out the management policy considering safety work as No.1 priority, organized in-house safety committee and focused on the measures concerning safety work. Then occupational accidents decreased rapidly, and the quality of products was improved at the same time as a result. And finally the productivity also went up along with it.

I used to work for a company manufacturing motor bikes as a production engineer for 30 years. Through this job I had learned the order of the importance between C, D, Q, E and S shown in the picture. That is, E is more important than C, D and Q, but S is the most important of all, while C, D and Q are still important for a manufacturing company.



BASIC CONCEPT

Suppose that there would be a big explosion including casualties in the premises, who can say that the company could be still existing next morning. This could be true even for Toyota.

**5S** is one of major activities in safety. Originally being started in Japan more than 50 years ago, it has become a part of Japanese culture even in small sized companies and is spreading worldwide now, because it could help them to eliminate the possibility of such a disaster. Though JPC has implemented lots of workshop concerning **5S** so far, it is still a big issue to develop 5S in the workplace in Jamaica continuously.

**5S** is a series of steps taken for ensuring proper Sorting, Setting in order, Shining, Standardization and Sustaining as a precondition to the workplace management, such that;

#### ① Sort :

To sort necessary things with unnecessary ones in a workplace and to throw away unnecessary ones

#### ② Set in order :

To prepare necessary things in a designated place to utilize them whenever they are needed

#### ③ Shine :

To eliminate unnecessary material attached to necessary things

#### ④ Standardize :

To keep practicing 3S of ①Sort, ②Set in order and ③ Shine all the time

#### ⑤ Sustain :

To sustain rules of good behavior



*Jonathan Isaacs (Senior Productivity Specialist)  
from the Technical Assistance Services Unit (TASU)  
presenting on 5S.*



*Jonathan presenting on 5S Method.*

If you are interested in 5S, please contact JPC immediately. Surely you can make a big progress in productivity in your workplace.

## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH... PRODUCTIVITY DESPITE CHALLENGES CONT'D...FROM PAGE 6

themselves to achieve more, ii) were consistent in their rate and degree of productivity over time, iii) possessed the knowledge and expertise to do the work, iv) competed and strived for results, v) anticipated and solved problems, vi) initiated action, and vii) sought to collaborate. Perhaps when these super-producers are faced with tough situations like difficult colleagues, impending deadlines, or illness, they employ their skills to overcome the challenges. The 'toughness' of the situation may therefore be in how it is perceived and our preparedness for it, rather than in its objective reality.

Zenger and Folkman do not shed light on why these super-producers react differently, compared to the average employee. According to Rooke and Torbert (2005) however, the problems or tough situations we perceive, are directly related to our 'action logic' or mindset. An action logic basically describes the rules we store mentally that guide how we react to a situation, and are tied to our degree of adult development. A leader with an "Opportunist" action logic for example, sees the world and the problems in it, in terms of unilateral winning and losing. A tough situation for him would be when his power is threatened or

questioned. A 'Diplomat' on the other hand, feels challenged when she has to show leadership by doing something unpopular which may cause others to dislike her. She would happily relinquish power for the sake of being liked. For an 'Expert' leader, a difficult situation is when colleagues are not as efficient as her and 'waste time', and she cares little whether she is liked or not. According to Rooke and Torbert's theory of leadership, the more we progress developmentally, hopefully with time, the way we see the world and the challenges within it, will change as well.

If we accept that tough situations are, at least partially, a product of our imagination and mindsets, and can be overcome through skill building and changing our perceptions, then there is good news for increasing productivity in firms. The famous self-help guru, Dr. Wayne Dyer, once said, "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." However, W. I. Thomas also famously said that "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". Perhaps productivity and tough situations come down to how we choose to perceive them.



# PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT: AN UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITY AMIDST COVID-19



**Written By:**

**Jonathan Isaacs**  
— Senior Productivity  
Specialist, Jamaica  
Productivity Centre

The **COVID-19 PANDEMIC** has drastically shifted the global economic landscape. The World Bank forecasts that Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will contract by as much as five (5) percentage points. Locally, the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) has reported that the Jamaican economy has experienced a negative eighteen (18) percent growth during the period April to June 2020. These statistics provide a timely reminder of the fragile economic environment within which we operate.

Despite the gloomy realities there are several opportunities that can be pursued during this time. Firstly, an often neglected, but very potent opportunity is productivity improvement. Productivity improvement becomes increasingly important because it provides a gateway through which process inefficiencies and other productivity challenges faced by organizations can be minimized, and it also allows for sectors which have relatively low productivity, to increase value added output contributions to the economy. Businesses are widely regarded as the "engine of growth" within our economy. Data from the Jamaica Productivity Centre collected over the last eleven (11) years indicates that 47 percent of organizations/businesses with which the entity has worked, has suffered from some form of process inefficiency.



Let us consider for example, two organizations: Firm A and Firm B. Both firms manufacture bagged juices, however Firm A maintains a strong digital presence and provides an option for customers to pay online, while facilitating scheduled pick-ups or delivery of goods. On the other hand, Firm B requires customers to pay for and receive goods at their physical location. Which of the two firms would you say can boast higher productivity levels? If you answered Firm A, you are correct.

Since Firm B is likely to suffer from process bottlenecks caused by queues that could be avoided, especially if the demand for their product is high. It could be argued that this is just a mere manufacturing example, however within the given context, it paints a picture of a situation which would require a targeted productivity improvement solution to minimize the inefficiencies faced by Firm B.

The Statistical Institute of Jamaica categorizes sectors into two main groupings: service producing sector and the goods producing sector. Throughout the period 2000 to 2018 the Jamaica Productivity Centre asserts that Hotels and Restaurants and Producers of Government Services have consistently lagged in Labour Productivity, relative to the other areas within the service sector. In simple terms, the output or value that each worker contributes to that sector, and by extension the economy, remained anemic.

Similarly, within the goods producing sector Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, and with Construction, suffer from very low productivity relative to the other areas. A key consideration is the fact that these productivity performance numbers are updated to 2018. Therefore, the possibility does exist that since the onset of **COVID-19**, the performance in these sectors could have worsened. The major opportunity

which presents itself in this situation is a greater need for the integration of productivity improvement within these sectors. This can be achieved by either reducing the waste that is inherent to the inputs in these sectors or by increasing the value-added output exponentially.

Although **COVID-19** has created high levels of uncertainty, productivity improvement continues to be

one of the most viable solutions to reposition our economy and increase the value-added output and contributions made by each sector. Additionally, businesses should explore the inefficiencies within their operations, and have as their ultimate aim, an increase in their productivity and by extension their competitiveness.



*The Honourable Karl Samuda, Minister of Labour & Social Security, visiting and engaging with the staff of the JPC as they discussed JPC's current and future initiatives.*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 20TH, 2021 IS WORLD PRODUCTIVITY DAY. STAY TUNED!

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JPC'S FORUM – PRODUCTIVITY IN FOCUS,  
QUARTER 4 SERIES

THEME: IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY:  
RECOVERING & ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORM  
FEATURE PRESENTATION BY JON MESSENDER (ILO)

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"TELEWORKING DURING THE COVID - 19  
PANDEMIC AND BEYOND"

DATE: MARCH 4, 2021



# SME Productivity Audit



## Productivity Audit Objectives

- Assess operational practices on the shop floor and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Identify areas for improvement in management practices.
- Assess company financial performance over a minimum of 3 successive years of operation and identify opportunities for strategic review.
- Benchmark key performance indicators where possible and identify priority gaps for short term focus.

## UNLEASH YOUR BUSINESS POTENTIAL

A Productivity Audit is a critical diagnostic tool used by any organization to establish a productivity improvement action plan that focuses on setting and achieving productivity goals over time in a coordinated and systematic manner.

The Productivity Audit establishes the current state of the entity's performance and identifies benchmarks and/or targets and performance gaps for improvement. Once these gaps are determined, you can prioritize improvement initiatives which focus on the significant productivity issues that will give the greatest impact on improving your business' profit and value added in the short term.

The Productivity Audit is the first step in the Jamaica Productivity Centre's Technical Assistance intervention process.

**GET STARTED TODAY !**

Give us a call or visit our office.  
We will be happy to help you grow your business.

12th Floor Air Jamaica Building, 72 Harbour Street, Kingston.  
Tel: 876.922.1598, 876.948.6168 Fax: 876.948.6328

For questions or feedback, or to partner with us in our productivity improvement campaign



- ✉ Email: [jpc@mlss.gov.jm](mailto:jpc@mlss.gov.jm)
- 🌐 Website: [www.jpc.mlss.gov.jm](http://www.jpc.mlss.gov.jm)
- >f [www.facebook.com/jamaicaproductivitycentre](http://www.facebook.com/jamaicaproductivitycentre)
- instagram:[@jamaicaproductivity](http://instagram:@jamaicaproductivity)