



CHRISTMAS ON *HR* AVENUE

DECEMBER 2025 | ISSUE NO. 3



CHRISTMAS: CARIBBEAN STYLE

Christmas is celebrated with common practices such as decorating trees and homes, exchanging gifts, and singing carols. However, globally there are diverse traditions that vary significantly by country. Let's look at the **CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS OF TWO (2) CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES:**

Guyana: At Christmas time in Guyana, the streets are often lined with shoppers buying gifts, as well as Masquerade bands playing and dancing. The Masquerade bands are an important part of Guyanese culture. They parade through the streets performing their dances in very colourful outfits and playing instruments like drums and flutes/recorders. Some people in the masquerade are dressed in different characters which have special dance moves. Usually, there are many different groups on the streets at the same time. Christmas time is not without favourite foods. A popular Christmas food in Guyana is the Pepperpot, a meat stew made with beef, pork or mutton, flavoured with cinnamon and a sauce made from cassava root. This is often served for breakfast at Christmas time. The Pepperpot is a national dish from the native Amerindians, one of the six (6) races of Guyana, native Amerindians.



Dominican Republic: The Dominican Republic (DR) does not have fir trees, but what they do have is a special kind of Christmas decorations called 'Charamicos', a slang word for a dry tree branch. Traditionally, Charamicos started as small handmade Christmas trees from straw, branches and bendable wood, which were painted white - to look like snow. However, overtime it has evolved to various shapes and colours. Additionally, in the DR there are 'Aguinaldos', informal parties which often start in one house and move to different local houses, as more people join in. At these parties, there is singing and dancing, as well as food and drink. The DR has its own version of 'Secret Santa' known as 'Un Angelito' (a little angel). With this activity names are placed in a container and pulled out at random, each person will receive a little gift from his/her little angel. Christmas Eve is called 'La Noche Buena', meaning 'the good night'. This is the special time to celebrate and have the Christmas meal. A main dish at this time is 'cerdo asado' (roast pork). It is a big family meal and people can travel from around the island and other countries to spend Christmas with their families.



Sources:
<https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/guyana> <https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/dominican-republic>

THE MAGIC OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent Management is a strategic cornerstone of Human Resource Management (HRM) which focuses on attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining skilled employees to drive organisational success. It ensures that the right people are in the right roles at the right time. This Christmas, Human Resource Managers and Directors can give the gift that keeps on giving, a workforce that is aligned to the organisational mission and vision. Here is the **MAGIC THAT TALENT MANAGEMENT DELIVERS**, not just at Christmas, but all year round:

1. Aligns Talent with Business Goals: Talent Management helps align workforce capabilities with the organisation's long-term objectives. By identifying critical roles and skill gaps, Human Resource Managers can ensure that recruitment, training, and performance efforts support the organisation's strategic direction.

2. Enhances Employee Performance: Through continuous development, coaching, and feedback, employees are empowered to reach their full potential. This leads to higher productivity, innovation, and overall organisational effectiveness.

3. Reduces Turnover and Builds Loyalty: A strong talent management system recognizes and rewards employee contributions. When employees see clear career paths and growth opportunities, they are more likely to remain committed to the organisation.

4. Strengthens Leadership Pipeline: Succession planning within talent management ensures the organisation has a ready pool of capable leaders. This reduces disruptions and ensures continuity when key roles become vacant.

5. Promotes a Positive Organisational Culture: Talent management fosters a culture of learning, recognition, and inclusion. It builds engagement, boosts morale, and helps attract top-tier candidates who align with the organisation's values.

6. Improves Organisational Agility and ROI: By strategically managing talent, HR ensures that the organisation adapts quickly to market changes. It maximizes return on human capital investment through efficient use of skills and potential.



Sources:

<https://theconversation.com/understanding-others-feelings-what-is-empathy-and-why-do-we-need-it-68494> <https://medium.com/thrive-global/5-ways-to-show-you-care-this-christmas-f33e554bbc32>

CHRISTMAS AFTER HURRICANE MELISSA



The yuletide season encapsulates an atmosphere of peace, joy and goodwill. While many embrace the joy of the season, there are others who experience emotional turmoil. For many in Jamaica's workforce, Christmas 2025 is predicated to be unprecedented, following the passage of Hurricane Melissa and its catastrophic impacts on not just Jamaica's economy, but on the psychological wellbeing of individuals. Research suggests that individuals experience increased emotional challenges over the holidays, and emotional turmoil can linger even long after a natural disaster. As the festive season approaches, it is clear that this will be the reality for many Jamaicans in both rural and urban areas in the aftermath of the hurricane. Here are **THREE (3)** suggestions that can help employees alleviate the emotional turmoil as a result of the devastation suffered.

EMBRACE EMPATHY: When disaster and crisis strike, employees benefit from the reassurance from their employers' efforts in monitoring and prioritising the emotional wellbeing of its staff. Providing access to initiatives or programmes that can provide mental health support, can be invaluable to employees. Regular check-in via established means of communication, or special meetings, can be used to lend assistance to addressing employees' concerns.

ENCOURAGE GIVING AND RECEIVING: The giving and receiving of gifts is a widely practiced tradition at Christmas time. This year, encourage staff to do something extra special, by offering to provide items or a special Christmas basket that can be given to either a shelter, a children's home or needy families who would be unable to celebrate the festive season. This will not only help employees to have a sense of community, but will also help the organisation's corporate social responsibility.

EMPHASIZE/ENTERTAIN GRATITUDE OVER GUILT: It is commonplace for people to experience survivors' guilt after a disaster. There may be employees for whom this sense of guilt poses a threat of having a crippling effect on their mindset amidst the sense of cheer the season is known to bring. Even as employees battle conflicting emotions this festive season, there is an opportunity to reflect on the things for which we are grateful. Gratitude possesses the power to transform mindsets, improve emotional wellbeing, foster resilience and deepen meaningful connections/relationships. Identifying things we are grateful for, writing 'thank you' notes to our family or colleagues, expressing appreciation and practising random acts of kindness, are ways we can cultivate gratitude in this season. These will not only strengthen personal and professional relationships, but will shift our focus and create positive mindsets.

This festive season, HR is presented with a unique opportunity to not just spread cheer, but to lend support to affected employees and their families, as they grapple with the effects of the Hurricane and the demands of the season.

Sources:

<https://hrinsidr.com/top-ways-to-help-employees-during-a-natural-disaster/>

CIVIL SERVANT OF THE YEAR AWARD 2025



The fourteen (14) finalists for Civil Servant of the Year 2025 who were presented with gift baskets at the Civil Service Week church service held on Sunday (November 16), at the Eastwood Park New Testament Church of God in St. Andrew.

Every year, Civil Service Week is observed in the third (3rd) week of November . This year, Civil Service Week was observed from November 16 - 22, 2025 under the theme: "Public Sector: Beyond Artificial Intelligence." The celebrations surrounding Civil Service Week shines a spotlight on the hard work of outstanding Civil Servants who have provided excellent customer service and who continuously contribute to Nation Building.

Due to Hurricane Melissa, and the devastation it carried in its wake across the island, the 2025 Civil Servant of the Year award ceremony was canceled. The emotional distress and displacement caused by the hurricane left many traumatized and grappling with fear. Recognizing the ripple effects from Hurricane Melissa and the impact being felt nationwide by the citizenry, many of whom are Public Sector Workers, the Civil Service Week Planning Committee and made the hard decision not to have the usual Award Ceremony. While there was no single winner for the 2025 "Civil Servant of the Year, the Civil Service Week (CSW) planning team chose to honour all fourteen (14) finalists at the Civil Service Week Main Church Service which was held on Sunday, November 16, 2025, at the Eastwood Park New Testament Church. The finalists did not leave the church service empty-handed, but they all received a lovely gift basket as a token of recognition.

"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value."

- Albert Einstein -

Source:

<https://jis.gov.jm/photos-civil-service-week-church-service-2/#:~:text=The%20Full%20Story,Andrew.>



See you in 2026!

Mrs. Desreen Smith
(Executive Editor)
Chief Personnel Officer (Acting)

Mrs. Rene Phillips
(Designer, Writer & Editor)
Director, Human Resource
Development and Public Education

Miss Tanesha Johnson (Writer)
Human Resource Information and
Development Officer

Miss Sallena Samuels (Writer)
Human Resource Information and
Development Officer

Merry Christmas

&

*Happy New
Year*

2026

*to you and yours from the
Office of the Services Commissions family.*

*We wish you all the peace
and joy of the season!*