

# **COCI High School Entrepreneurship Presentation 2021**

# **REPORT**



*April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021,  
revised August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.*

**St. Maarten Chamber of  
Commerce & Industry (COCI)**

**By: Sharilyn Bryson, BDO**



# Introduction

## The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry (COCI)

The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry (COCI) is a non-profit organization whose main role is to ensure that all businesses and legal entities on St. Maarten are registered in its Commercial Register. In addition, the Chamber also serves as an advocacy group for the business community.

## The need for Business Knowledge and an Entrepreneurial Mindset

In August of 2020, COCI sat out to restructure a lot of its internal and external processes. With that in mind, we sought to tackle a noticeable issue that we were faced with. Clients often came into the Chamber and our Business Center seeking information and knowledge on business processes here on the island. Common questions we received were *“How do I start a Business on St. Maarten?”*, *“What’s the difference between a Sole Proprietor, N.V. or B.V.?”*, *“Where do I go first, Chamber or Government?”*.

Over the years it has become very apparent that insufficient business knowledge and awareness in the general community was not where it should or could be. Therefore, COCI decided to tackle the issue twofold.

First, we would need to provide free educational webinars for the business community, business enthusiasts, and the general public. We developed a 2021 year program called **COCI Business Webinars**.

Secondly, we developed an initiative in which we would reach out to students in secondary/ advanced vocational institutions and provide basic business information, which we titled **COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation**.

**The invitation letter presented to schools in December 2020.**

## **COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation**

### *The Chamber's High School Entrepreneurial Initiative*

*The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry (COCI) has a lot in store for the calendar year 2021 – 2022. One of the Chambers' biggest initiatives for 2021 is to be more involved with the youths of St. Maarten. This initiative stems from our Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) in which the Chamber seeks to build a sustainable program towards educating and stimulating an entrepreneurial culture amongst youngsters.*

*On Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Chamber reached out to 10 secondary institutions and 1 advanced vocational institution and proposed our “**COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation**” initiative.*

Dear Sir/Madam,

The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry (COCI) would like the opportunity to engage and inspire the youths of St. Maarten towards entrepreneurship and innovation.

As you may know, the Chambers' main role is to maintain its Commercial Register by, ensuring that all St. Maarten Businesses and Legal Entities are registered. In 2021, COCI plans to be more involved with the St. Maarten Community. Therefore, per our Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), one of our main areas of focus will be geared towards the youths of St. Maarten. Through your assistance, we hope to achieve this goal.

We propose conducting a presentation on Entrepreneurship to high school (exam and pre-exam) students. During our presentation, students will learn the Chamber, the importance of innovation, entrepreneurship, determination, and how to start a business (on St. Maarten).

The Chambers' main interest in this project is to start and maintain yearly presentations geared towards our youngsters. We would like to see the youth inspired and curious about solving their issues, as well as island-wide matters. The Chamber knows of the talent and potential of the younger generation and would like to help to better equip them.



## **The invitation letter presented to schools in December 2020.**

Therefore, with your consent, we are asking you to allow us to schedule a date and time to conduct our presentation.

### **Presentation overview:**

- **Topic:** COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation
- **Goal:** Engage, inspire, and provide high school students with Business insights and knowledge on Entrepreneurship.
- **Learning objectives:**
  - Entrepreneurship. Key concepts and explanations will be provided
  - Inspirational innovative entrepreneurial stories. Stories are intended to show how an idea, hobby, or happenstance can turn into a business.
  - Legal entities. Students will learn the basic difference between various legal entities
  - Starting a business on St. Maarten (what is required),
  - and Information on COCI
- **Type of presentation:** Interactive PowerPoint presentation
  - The presentation will be made by COCI, and the students are expected to actively engage, ask, and answer questions.
- **Age group(s):** Exam and pre-exam students (15 – 19 years old) or 18+ (advanced vocational students).
- **Duration:** 45 minutes
- **Proposed date and time:** TBA

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our BDO Ms. Sharilyn Bryson directly.

We hope to have informed you sufficiently and looking forward to your favorable response.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Jude Houston  
Executive Director

Bertaux Fleming  
Vice-President of the Board

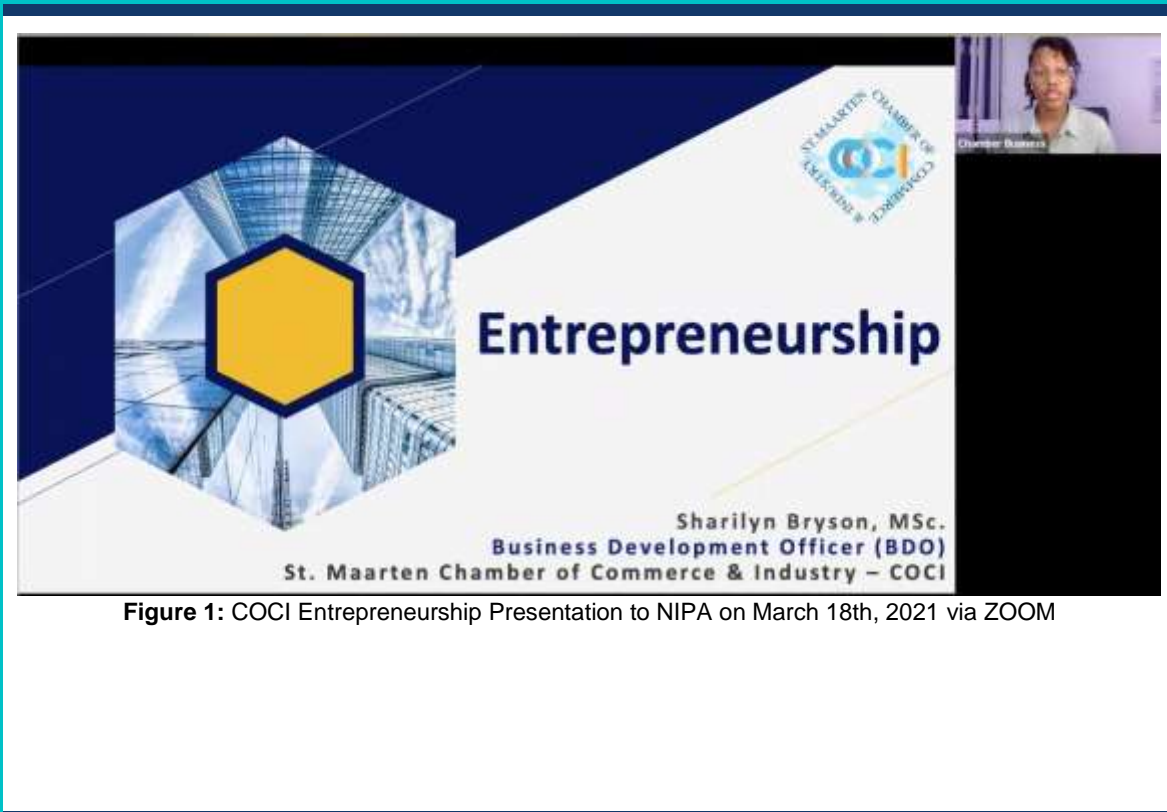
Our **COCI Entrepreneurship Presentations** commenced in March of 2021 and ended in June. The presentation was prepared by COCI and was presented to ten (10) of the eleven (11) institutions. Presentations were conducted in-person and in some instances via virtual means given the Covid-19 guidelines. Institutions that have received presentations during our presentation include;

### Secondary/ Advanced Vocational Institutions

- St. Maarten Academy PSVE, held on **March 4th**, via ZOOM, 63 students
- National Institute for Professional Advancement (NIPA), held on **March 15th and 18th**, via ZOOM, 46 students
- Caribbean International Academy (CIA), held on **March 22nd**, in person, 10 students
- St. Dominic High School, held on **April 8th**, via ZOOM, 41 students
- Charlotte Brookson Academy (CBA), held on **April 14<sup>th</sup>**, in person, 29 students.
- Mac High School, held on **April 15<sup>th</sup>**, in person, 35 students.
- Milton Peter College (MPC), held on **April 18<sup>th</sup>**, via ZOOM, 58 students.
- Academy CAPE division, held on **May 10<sup>th</sup>**, in person, 28 students.
- Vocational High School, held on **May 12<sup>th</sup>**, in person, 28 students.
- Sundial High School, held on **June 1<sup>st</sup>**, in person, 35 students.

A total of 372 students received our presentation!

# *Highlights*



**Figure 1:** COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation to NIPA on March 18th, 2021 via ZOOM



**Figure 2:** COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation to CIA on March 22nd, 2021.



**Figure 3:** COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation to Charlotte Brookson Academy on April 14th, 2021



**Figure 4:** COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation to MAC High on April 15th, 2021.



**Figure 5:** COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation to St. Maarten Academy on May 10th, 2021.



**Figure 6:** COCI Entrepreneurship presentation at St. Maarten Vocational Training School on May 12th, 2021

**Figure 7:** COCI Entrepreneurship presentation at Sundial School on June 1st, 2021.





# **COCI focuses on Economic Resilience through Entrepre- neurship Nurturing.**

As part of The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce & Industry (COCI) business support initiative, COCI organized a series of Entrepreneurship presentations geared towards high school students.

Through this initiative, COCI desires to foster an entrepreneurial culture among the youths within our educational institutions. The Chamber sees this as an opportunity to engage, inspire, and educate the youths of St. Maarten on entrepreneurship and innovation. The Chamber would like to see the youths inspired and curious about solving their issues, as well as island-wide matters. The Chamber knows of the talent and potential of the younger generation and would like to help to better equip and advance their potential.

The Chambers' BDO Ms. Bryson has reached out to all high schools on the Dutch side and asked for their willingness to allow us to conduct our Entrepreneurial presentation to the exam and pre-exam students. Thus far, 7 schools and approximately 260 students have received the presentation, and 3 schools are scheduled to receive it in the upcoming months.

During the Chambers' presentation, students will learn the importance of entrepreneurship, innovation, sacrifice, determination, the various types of legal entities, and the steps needed to start a business on St. Maarten. Additionally, students are presented with several inspirational stories on entrepreneurs that started their business as a child, teenager, and adult.

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The Chamber aims to maintain these presentations yearly, as well as, develop other youth programs where students can showcase their creativity and novelty ideas while offering practical solutions.

## Closing Remarks

In conclusion, The St. Maarten Chamber of Commerce is very pleased with our 2021 initiative, and that we were able to engage with so many students! 372 exceed our expectations. Each schools' active participation and willingness to assist us in our initiative was instrumental in our success.

We cannot say **THANK YOU** enough to every school.

We are also happy to announce that COCI will continue its school engagement during the school year 2021 – 2022. Schools were officially notified in June and presentations are to commence in September.

## Future Aspirations and Improvements

1. Better communication between **Principle – Teacher(s) – Students**
  - We aim to establish a better line of communication between Principle, Teacher(s), and Students. There were two instances in which key stakeholders were not aware of the Chamber's initiative, and or of the arrival of the presentation on our set date.
  - This was also made apparent with some student's tardiness to the Chamber's presentation, be that in-person or online via Zoom.
  - **Solution:** Establish clearer objectives as it pertains to the preparation process for our presentations, that way all parties involved are cognizant and held accountable.
  
2. In-person presentations are more impactful.
  - Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Chamber made it possible to receive our **COCI Entrepreneurship Presentation** via ZOOM. Be that as it may, we experienced better student engagement when presenting in-person in contrast to online.
  - Possible explanations:
    - The speakers' in-person presence and active call for participation from the students.
    - Time of day/period students received the presentation. Students are more lively in the mornings and are more tired in the afternoons, and during test week.
    - Another drawback with online presentations was that not every student has internet access and or a stable connection, at school or home. This also made it difficult for students to receive a "complete" picture/ understanding.
  - **Solution:** For the school year 2021 – 2022 COCI presented each school with useful suggestions as to how to accommodate our in-person presentations. This was presented to schools in our second invitation letter sent in June. However, online presentations will remain a close second option given the ongoing pandemic.

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