

West Indies Yacht Club Resort: When Cultures Collide

Jeffrey P. Shay
University of Montana

In early December, Patrick Dowd, a 30-year-old management consultant, stared out his office window at the snowy Ithaca, New York, landscape. Dowd reflected on his recent phone conversation with Jim Johnson, general manager of the 95-room West Indies Yacht Club Resort (WIYCR), located in the British Virgin Islands. Johnson sounded desperate to pull the resort out of its apparent tailspin and noted three primary areas of concern. First, expatriate manager turnover was beginning to become problematic. In the past two years, the resort had hired and then failed to retain three expatriate waterfront directors and three expatriate food and beverage directors. Second, although the resort had not initiated a formal guest feedback program, Johnson estimated that guest complaints had increased from 10 per week to more than 30 per week over the past two years. The complaints were usually given by guests to staff at the front desk, written down, and passed on to Johnson: usually, they were centered on the deteriorating level of service provided by local British Virgin Islands employees. Many repeat guests claimed, "The staff just doesn't seem as motivated as it used to be." Third, there appeared to be an increasing level of tension between expatriate and local staff members. In the past, expatriates and locals seemingly found it natural to work side by side; now a noticeable gap between these groups appeared to be growing.

Johnson had come to know Dowd and his reputation for being one of the few expatriate management consultants in the region who seemed to have a real grasp on what it took to manage effectively in the Caribbean. The two had become better acquainted a year or so earlier when the world-renowned sailing school that Dowd was working for, Tradewind Ventures, was contracted to develop new family-focused programs to be offered by the resort. Through this experience, Dowd gained in-depth knowledge of the resort. Dowd's reputation and knowledge of the resort prompted Johnson's call to see if Dowd would be interested in working as a participant observer at the resort to determine the underlying reasons behind his three major concerns. Johnson requested that Dowd work at the resort during three Christmas holiday weeks to observe resort staff during the peak season. Dowd would then present an analysis of his observations and make recommendations regarding what actions could be taken to improve the situation.

All individuals and events are real but the name of the company and its managers and staff have been disguised at the request of the organization. The author also wishes to acknowledge the company's management for their assistance in gathering data for the case.

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Although Dowd had never provided consulting in this specific area (i.e., an analysis of the cultural influences on the behavior of workers in the Caribbean), he gladly accepted the challenge: It coincided with this personal experience in the region and recent courses on cross-cultural management that he had taken at Cornell University. Dowd moved over to his bookcase and pulled books, brochures, and other information off the shelf and began reading. He was departing for the British Virgin Islands in one week and wanted to get a head start on his background research.

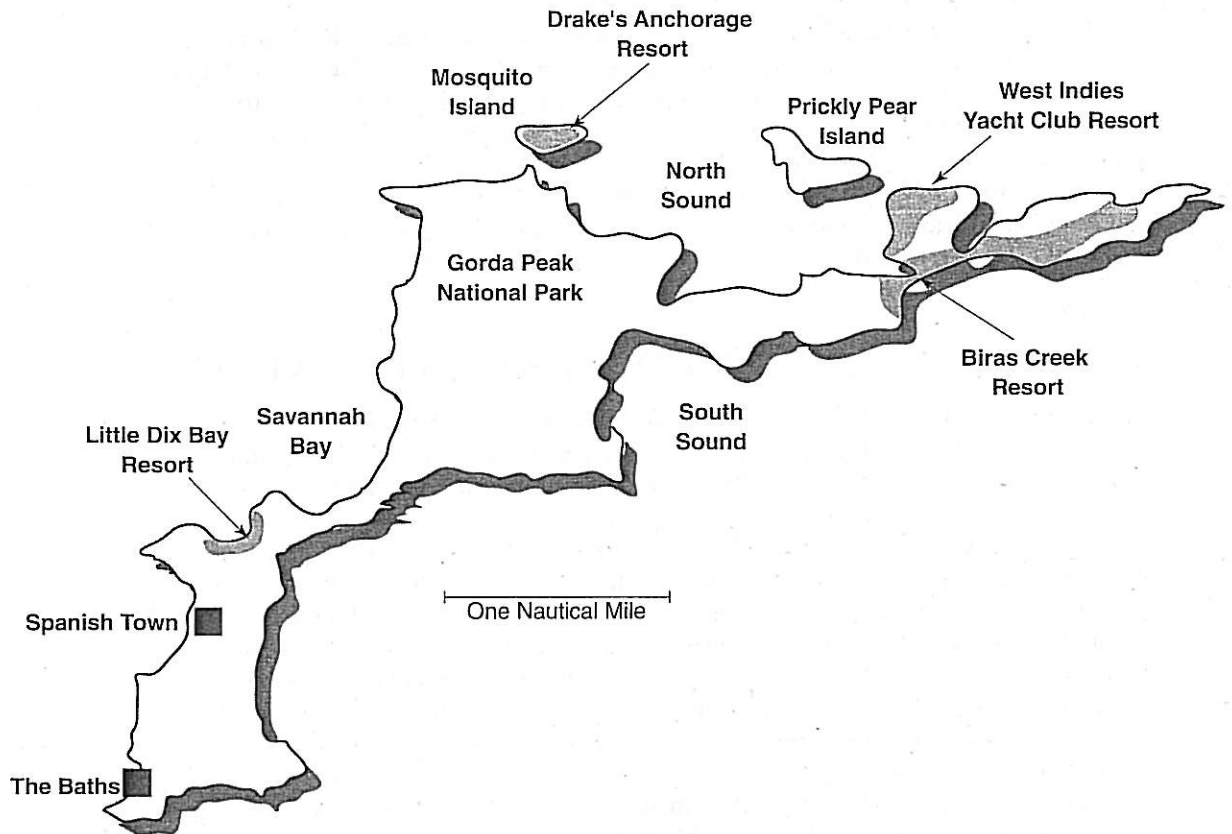
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS' TOURISM MARKET

Thirty-six islands, 16 of which are inhabited, make up the 59-square-mile chain of British Virgin Islands (BVIs) (Exhibit 1). Unlike the neighboring islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix, which underwent extensive tourism development during the 1970s and 1980s, the BVI government carefully planned and restricted growth. The result was a carefully carved niche in the Caribbean market—positioning the island chain in the exclusive/ecotourism market segment.

From 1950 to 1970, the BVIs hosted the traveling elite. During the early 1970s, the introduction and rapid growth of bareboat chartering (boats ranging from 28 feet to 50 feet, which chartered [rented] to tourists qualified to take the boats out without the assistance of a licensed captain) made the small island chain affordable for tourists with moderate budgets as well. Bareboat charters offered a unique vacation opportunity—one that connected tourists with the islands' rich natural beauty and intriguing history by allowing tourists to visit quiet harbors and villages that were void of larger cruise ships and large hotels. The BVIs' calm waters and steady trade winds were soon filled with charter boats as the chain of islands quickly became known as the premier chartering location in the world. By the early 1990s, there were more than 500 charter boats available in the Virgin Islands, with the largest company, The Moorings, managing more than 190 charter boats in the BVIs alone. Although charter industry growth in the BVIs drew the attention of major developers, the combination of strict government regulations constraining the size of new hotels and resorts and the limited access provided by the small Beef Island Airport kept these developers and mass tourism out. As a result, smaller midscale to upscale hotels and resorts were developed in the BVIs.

UPSCALE HOTELS IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Although several midscale hotels were developed and operating in the BVIs by the mid-1980s, there were only four truly upscale hotels in the island chain in addition to WIYCR (Exhibit 1). Each of these hotels provided three meals per day (not including alcoholic drinks) and access to activities (e.g., water sports equipment) as part of the price for the room. Biras Creek was an independent resort located adjacent to WIYCR's property and overlooked the North Sound of Virgin Gorda (Exhibit 2). This resort featured 34 rooms, one restaurant, three tennis courts, a private beach with a bar, a small marina, and several miles of nature trails. Peak season double occupancy rates for Biras Creek ranged from \$395 to \$695 per night and, similar to WIYCR, this resort was only accessible by sea. After facing high turnover of expatriate resort managers and expatriate assistant managers for the past five years, Biras Creek implemented a policy of hiring individuals for these positions for three-year contracts. After the contract was completed, managers were required to seek employment elsewhere. The

exhibit 2 Virgin Gorda and Its Luxury Hotels

owners felt that most managers became less effective after three years because they suffered from burnout.

Drake's Anchorage was an independent resort located on the 125-acre Mosquito Island, an island situated at the northern entrance to North Sound (Exhibit 2). This small resort offered 12 rooms, a beachfront restaurant, a protected anchorage for charter boats, a picturesque hiking trail, and four secluded sandy beaches. Peak season double occupancy rates ranged from \$400 to \$600 per night. Expatriate managers oversaw operations at this resort as well. Guests staying at this resort were primarily interested in a relaxing, secluded vacation with limited activities.

Little Dix Bay Resort opened in 1964 as part of the Rockefeller Resort chain. In 1993, after a multimillion-dollar renovation project, Rosewood Hotels and Resorts, a Dallas-based company, acquired the management contract for the resort. This resort offered 98 rooms ranging in price from \$480 to \$1,000 per night during peak season for a double occupancy room. This resort was located on the northwestern shore of Virgin Gorda and overlooked the Sir Francis Drake Channel, a channel cutting through the heart of the BVI chain (Exhibit 2). In addition to a fine-dining restaurant, the resort offered small boats (i.e., Sunfish, Lasers, and Whalers), waterskiing, and day excursions to snorkeling and diving sites for guests. These amenities made Little Dix the WIYCR's strongest local competitor. Under the management of Rosewood Hotels and Resorts, expatriate managers often rotated every two to three years from one Rosewood prop-

offered attractive vacation components to their employment contracts. This allowed the organization to pay lower wages and to decrease excess labor during off seasons. Managers, forced to retain staff regardless of their productivity levels, rationalized that excess labor costs were offset by lower wages in the region, avoidance of costs associated with training a new employee, and the need for extra staff during peak season.

Hotels and resorts also realized that although many entry-level employees could continue to be trained on the job, locals seeking managerial positions would require more formalized training. Unfortunately, neither the BVI nor the U.S. Virgin Islands had developed hospitality management training programs because there was no critical mass of local managers required to start such programs. Instead, hotels and resorts sent promising young staff to service training programs in the Bahamas and Bermuda in an effort to prepare them for management positions.

THE WEST INDIES YACHT CLUB RESORT

In 1964, the Kimball family sailed into the North Sound of Virgin Gorda (Exhibits 2 and 3). The sound's natural beauty captivated the family, and they knew it was a place to which the family would soon return. Nestled on the mountainside of the innermost point, the Kimballs found a shorefront pub and five cottages known as The West Indies Resort. The cottages were rustic, with only cold water running in the bathrooms. It was at the resort's pub that Joe Kimball met Armin Dubois, the property's eccentric owner. Dubois had been a pioneer Virgin Islands yachtsman who had found paradise on these shores and never left.

Under Dubois's management, an old diesel generator supplied lighting, and water was collected on the roofs and stored in cisterns that doubled as cottage foundations. The pub and restaurant served mariners when Dubois felt like it. Dubois established his own protocol. Mariners blew foghorns just off the main dock, and Dubois responded as to whether or not he was open for business. Even after being invited ashore, guests were unsure as to how long the hospitality would last. Dubois was notorious for turning off the generator to let guests know they had overstayed their welcome.

By early 1973, after several visits to North Sound, Kimball asked Dubois if he would sell or lease property so that he could build a family cottage. Dubois replied several months later that he wasn't interested in selling or leasing a small piece of property but would entertain an offer to buy out the whole property. In late 1973, Kimball did just that.

Kimball's painstaking attention to detail fostered development of the property's unique character. His vision was to provide a truly ecology-conscious and comfortable place for travelers to enjoy an environment perfect for sailing, fishing, snorkeling, diving, and combing beaches. To accomplish this, Kimball maintained many of Dubois's earlier practices. For example, the resort continued to generate its own electricity and collect and distill its own water. In addition, the resort used gray water (partially treated water) to irrigate the hillsides and used solar power wherever possible. In sharp contrast to the multistory designs used by other Caribbean developers, Kimball constructed 55 individual bungalows that were scattered along the hillside and preserved the natural beauty for which the resort was known. Kimball differentiated the resort from others in the region by acquiring the world's largest resort fleet of sailboats (e.g., J24s, JY15s, Cal 27s, Freedom 30s, Lasers, Sunfish, Rhodes 19s, Mistral sailboards) and powerboats (e.g., Boston Whalers and sport fishing boats). These carefully selected boats were easy for even inexperienced guests to handle. These acquisitions in conjunction with the resort's sailing instruction program established the resort's repu-

exhibit 3 Recent Marketing Initiatives at West Indies Yacht Club Resort

Fast Tacks Weeks. Initial efforts to fill slow-season periods centered on leveraging the resort's competitive advantage. Fitch developed the Fast Tacks Program, which targeted specific sailing groups and utilized the resort's vast sailing resources. These groups ranged from racing to cruising, from families to couples, from senior citizens to young adults. During certain weeks in the historically slow fall season, sailing celebrities were invited and gave specialized seminars to guests. Perhaps the most widely noted week is the ProAm week, in which guests are assigned to teams with some of the top match racing skippers in the world. In addition to becoming a major source of income to the resort, the weeks have become a key free advertising vehicle. Articles in sailing magazines have served not only to promote the weeks themselves but also to increase reader awareness of the sailing experience that the resort can offer.

Family Weeks. To change the resort's image, Fitch marketed special programs during traditional school-break periods to families. These weeks provided special services, including instructional and recreational programs, for children and young adults. By providing a fun yet safe environment for children, the resort left parents free to spend time alone enjoying activities designed for their tastes (e.g., harbor sunset cruises). In addition, there were several family excursions planned throughout the week that offered families an opportunity to enjoy exploring reefs and other islands together.

Capturing the Market Earlier. In addition to the family weeks and Fast Tacks weeks, marketers realized that there was another market that they had been ignoring that could significantly reduce some of its occupancy cycle troubles. Instead of waiting until a couple had established themselves or started a family, why not get them when they were tying the knot? After all, the resort provided one of the most romantic atmospheres in the Caribbean. Moreover, the majority of weddings in North America, the primary market for the resort, occurred during the slow periods of summer and fall. In response to this revelation, the resort began to actively market wedding and honeymoon packages. The resort hoped that these guests would return for second, third, and fourth honeymoons and bring their children when they started their families.

Despite the resort's prime location for water sports activities and strong reputation as the premier water sports resort in the Caribbean, management remained concerned about being able to match the service levels provided by competitors. Increased availability of water sports at competing resorts threatened WIYCR's differentiated market position. WIYCR managers knew that some former guests were vacationing at nearby Little Dix Bay because that resort now offered similar water sports activities and had rates that overlapped those offered at WIYCR. Guests had been dissatisfied with the declining level of service they had experienced during their last visit to WIYCR. WIYCR managers feared that this trend might continue if changes were not implemented soon.

The WIYCR Organization

Company Headquarters Kimball insisted on managing strategic planning, finance, and reservations activities from an office in Chicago, Illinois (see Exhibit 4). He wanted to live in the United States and attend to other investments (none of which were in hospitality) and argued that these activities were easily separated from the day-to-day operations that took place at the resort. As the resort expanded and Kimball grew older (he was now in his 70s), he visited WIYCR less frequently and never during peak weeks. Moreover, Kimball, who once prided himself on knowing the name of each employee at the resort, knew fewer and fewer of his employees by name. As a

result, when he did visit the resort the local employees thought that Kimball seemed increasingly removed and distant.

Marketing and Special Promotions Kimball firmly believed that marketing activities should take place close to WIYCR's target geographic markets. As a result, Tom Fitch, the 32-year-old marketing and special promotions director, managed from a small office in the southwestern corner of Connecticut. Fitch grew up as an active sailing competitor on Long Island Sound (an area that stretches from New York City to the southeastern tip of Connecticut) sailing circuit and was well connected within the sailing industry. Fitch's strong sailing background coupled with being centrally located within the largest sailing community in the United States afforded great opportunities for promoting the resort with its target market. Unlike Kimball, Fitch was always on property during the high season and special promotions weeks. Fitch believed that it was important during these weeks for him to tend to the special needs of guests he had attracted to the resort. Local employees often underestimated the work required to plan and market these programs. Seeing him socialize with guests while on property, local employees questioned whether his job was really full-time once he left the resort and returned to the states. After all, they saw him only periodically when he came in for a few weeks, threw large parties, and frantically tried to assure that the guests' needs were met.

Jim Johnson, General Manager In the WIYCR organization, the general manager traditionally oversaw all functional areas of the hotel and played an important role in strategic planning. Jim Johnson, the 48-year-old expatriate general manager originally from the United States, was hired in 1990 on the basis of his extensive hospitality experience and academic training. His experience included several years as assistant manager of Little Dix Bay Resort and a master's degree in hospitality management from Cornell University. Johnson worked from his home in Miami, Florida, most of the time in order to spend more time with his family, provide his children with stronger educational opportunities than those offered in the BVIs, and reduce the number of expatriate permits that the resort required. Johnson averaged approximately two weeks at the resort per month, staying for longer periods of time during the high season and shorter periods of time during the low season. Johnson spent most of the time while at the resort in his office and in meetings with the heads of the various departments. Local employees often referred to him as a "behind the scenes" manager; he provided detailed goals, objectives, and actions for his staff but was not present for the execution of plans. Johnson generally felt confident in his management team, especially his property manager, whom he personally recruited and hired.

Kent Mawhinney, Property Manager The property manager was generally the second in command at the WIYCR and was responsible for implementing the general manager's plans and monitoring the results. Kent Mawhinney, the 40-year-old property manager from the United States, had been hired by Johnson almost three years ago and had an impressive background that included working on the management staff for six years at Caneel Bay, a Rockefeller Resort located on nearby St. John (in the U.S. Virgin Islands). Mawhinney was a hands-on manager who believed that "management by walking around" was needed in the Caribbean. Resort employees knew Mawhinney as a manager who was willing to get his hands dirty, and they greatly appreciated this attitude.

Kristin Singiser, Rooms Division Manager The rooms division manager was responsible for two departments at the WIYCR: housekeeping and the front desk. To many guests, it seemed like Kristin Singiser had been at the resort forever. In fact,

DOWD ARRIVES IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

On December 15, Patrick Dowd arrived at WIYCR. He found it hard to imagine the imminent transformation of the serene British Virgin Islands into an environment overwhelmed by a frenzy of holiday tourist activity. Within a few days, thousands of tourists would invade the BVIs, stretching its natural, human, and capital resources to their limits. The natural beauty that the islands offered was a familiar sight for Dowd, who had spent 10 years working as a management consultant for small- to medium-sized hotels in the Caribbean. Tradewind Ventures, a world-renowned sailing school, introduced him to the British Virgin Islands through summer employment as a skipper and operations director in 1986. For the next six years, Dowd worked year-round for Tradewind Ventures as a management consultant during the winter months and operations director during the summer. During his tenure with Tradewind Ventures, Dowd added the Cabarete Beach Hotel (Cabarete, Dominican Republic) and the West Indies Yacht Club Resort (Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands) to his client base. In addition, Dowd had completed his bachelor of science and masters in business administration at Babson College. The primary point of differentiation between Dowd's consulting services and those offered by the larger consulting companies rested in his understanding of the Caribbean market and, most important, its people. His understanding had evolved through interactions both professionally and socially with local nationals from the region. Mike McClane, manager of a nearby charter boat company, respected Dowd's ability to understand the local nationals, saying, "You really must understand my employees. Heck, Small Craft [employee's nickname] considers you a friend, and I'm the only other outsider I know of to accomplish that. It took me five years; you've done it in two summers!"

Driven largely by his desire to study the challenges associated with expatriate management assignments, Dowd had entered the doctoral program in hotel administration at Cornell University the previous September. Dowd hoped that his understanding of the local culture would be enhanced by what he had learned over the past semester in the classroom at Cornell. His first semester introduced him to theoretical explanations for differences in behaviors across cultures. He wondered whether these tools would be helpful for interpreting behaviors and then communicating what they meant to Johnson and his managers.

DOWD'S OBSERVATIONS OF OPERATIONS

Night had fallen on the Caribbean, and as the North Sound Express (a ferry that took passengers from the Beef Island Airport on Tortola to various resort locations on Virgin Gorda—see Exhibit 1) approached the main dock at WIYCR, Dowd noticed the familiar stride of a former colleague from Tradewind Ventures. Dave Pickering, a 22-year-old Cleveland native, had been working in the water sports department for nearly a month and was looking forward to Dowd's arrival. Pickering had worked with Dowd for the past three summers as a skipper and program director at Tradewind Ventures. Although Pickering had worked in the Caribbean for these three summers, his interactions had been primarily with the expatriate staff that Tradewind Ventures brought down each summer. Working side by side with the locals was a much different experience. Pickering had been hired by WIYCR two weeks earlier as part of the water sports staff. He was primarily responsible for teaching sailing lessons, taking guests out on the larger boasts, and signing out water sports equipment to guests.

Pickering extended an enthusiastic and firm handshake as Dowd got off the ferry. "Welcome to The Rock," he said. "The Rock" was the term coined by expatriates to

Johnson. The discussion continued until Dowd's eyes began to grow heavy. He climbed in a dinghy and headed back to the resort.

Johnson arrived at the Clubhouse Restaurant just a few minutes past 8 AM. Dowd had already found his way to the breakfast buffet and sat with a plate full of local fruits and pastries. Johnson seemed rushed and told Dowd that he would have to keep the meeting short. Johnson told Dowd that he did not want to influence Dowd's observations by explaining what he thought were the problem areas at the resort. Instead, Johnson would point out departments generating complaints and let Dowd observe without any biases. Dowd realized that this would be difficult because he knew so many of the employees, but it was a role in which Dowd had been successful in the past. Dowd found that getting to the bottom of problems in organizations in the Caribbean often required gaining acceptance by the group, a status that was achieved only through gaining local employees' trust and establishing friendships. It was only then that employees would open up. Johnson wanted Dowd to focus on front desk, food and beverage, and water sports services and indicate that the resort's staff was at Dowd's service in terms of discussing operations. Johnson finished his coffee, wished Dowd luck, and left. As he watched Johnson walk out the door, Dowd thought, "It's always so easy to pick out the expatriate down here . . . we always seem in such a hurry."

Dowd finished his breakfast and made his way down the shoreline to meet with Mawhinney, the property manager. He was greeted by Mawhinney at the top of the spiral staircase leading to the administrative offices. Mawhinney told Dowd that he was leaving on his daily rounds and asked Dowd to join him. Mawhinney had extensive experience working in the Caribbean, and Dowd knew he would be a rich resource. As they walked off to their first stop, Dowd bluntly asked Mawhinney what he thought the main problems were at the resort. Mawhinney replied that the most basic problem was getting plans implemented. When Mawhinney managed in the United States, his employees had been concerned with the opportunity for advancement and really worked hard to prove themselves. In the Caribbean, things were different. Local employment laws almost guaranteed jobs, and employees knew this. As a result, employees were more concerned with fitting in with their coworkers than with making a good impression. The resort had provided opportunities for some of the locals to be promoted, but few seemed interested. In his opinion, locals did not want the added responsibility, even if it meant more money. In some cases, the resort thought that rewarding the best employees with a title and some authority would help management gain more control over their employees. The result was an employee with a title who was unwilling to take on any of the job's responsibilities. "If the employees only realized what they could have if they worked a little harder and took these positions seriously, they could move up in the organization," Mawhinney commented.

The property tour took about an hour. Mawhinney visited each department head, a mix of local nationals and expatriates (see Exhibit 4). His conversations instilled a sense of urgency to get the resort in shape for the coming week. In each case, he offered assistance in any way necessary to ensure reaching the resort's desired goals and objectives. Dowd was particularly impressed by the amount of detail that Mawhinney recalled regarding each manager's immediate challenges. Mawhinney pointed out to Dowd that one of the main differences between managing in the United States and managing in the Caribbean is how managers have to communicate with employees. Because there is a 70 percent functional illiteracy rate on the property, he could not rely on memos as he had in the States. Instead, he managed by physically demonstrating to his staff what had to be done. For example, Mawhinney's maintenance staff had been told several times that garbage was to be placed in a specific storage area. The staff

be some inconveniences. Therefore, it was her job to greet guests on the dock and tell some of them that they would have to stay on board one of the resort's larger charter boats for a few nights until rooms became available. Meanwhile, other families were told that the children and parents would be staying at opposite ends of the resort. As if dealing with understandably irate guests was not enough, her staff had made several disturbing remarks:

They asked me, "Why is everyone always coming down on us about providing good service when Chicago pulls a stunt like this?" I just don't know how to reply. My staff faces angry guests all day as a result of this fiasco. How can I expect them to be courteous when the guests are so mad and the staff had no influence on the situation? The worst part is that Chicago has done this to us to for the past three years. Each time, I tell my staff to just manage this time and I'll try to make sure it doesn't happen again. I go to bat for them but seem to strike out every time.

Over a lobster dinner, the two discussed many other challenges that Singiser had faced over the years. Much of the locals' behavior she had become accustomed to, but some things were still frustrating. "Sometimes you feel like the only way you can manage these people is to bash them over the head with it," she commented. Apparently, her style was to demonstrate exactly what she expected of her front desk staff, knowing that some of them would get it right and others would continue to do it their own way. When they continued to do it their own way, it was time for "bashing them over the head with it." Despite all of her frustrations, Singiser was probably the most respected expatriate on the WIYCR staff. Over her long tenure, she had adapted to the local culture, made close friends with locals, and recognized what it took to get things done. However, she still felt challenged when trying to motivate her staff. "Money, opportunity for advancement, all of the normal incentives—they all don't seem to make any impact," she said.

In previous conversations with Singiser's staff, Dowd had solicited their opinions. Most staff said that Singiser was different. She had a sincere interest in them and was involved with the local culture. She frequently took trips with her staff to the neighboring islands and invited employees to her bungalow for dinner on occasion. Sure, she was tough, but her staff felt that managers had to be that way sometimes.

As they finished their meals and enjoyed an after-dinner drink, Singiser suggested that Dowd spend at least a day working alongside the staff at water sports. That would give him an inside look at the department critical to the resort's success. After all, water sports were the main reason that guests chose the resort for their vacation.

Walking down the path to the water sports shack, Dowd knew that he had an interesting day ahead of him. He had extensive water sports experience but had only observed WIYCR's operations from a guest's perspective. Throughout the day, Dowd took mental notes on how the department operated and how the locals worked (or didn't work). Harrigan was behind the desk at the shack most of the day; his assistant Mitchell (a 25-year-old Virgin Gordan) raced about the harbor on a 15-foot Whaler (a small powerboat) taking guests out to boats. It was surprising that Harrigan allowed some of his senior staff to avoid work. Fergus and Muhammad (both in their late 20s and from Virgin Gorda), for example, conveniently wandered off during the peak morning rush. Guests were left standing in line for 15 minutes because the desk was short-staffed. With Fergus's and Muhammad's help at the desk, Dowd thought that the wait could be reduced to five minutes. The daylight sun was waning, and guests wanted to get out on the water. When some of the senior staff did interact with guests, they were reserved and not overly courteous. Guests asked questions, and the staff mumbled incoherent responses. However, one group of guests did have an advantage:

Reading the brochure, I really thought that the programs for the kids sounded great. However, the first few days my kids said that the staff weren't very interested in making them have a good time. They seemed like they were more interested in when they got off work than with making my kids have a good time. Then they had Dave. What a difference! The kids came back excited about everything they did that day. He was so energetic and interested in my kids.

I told the front desk that they should really spray for bugs out on the terrace or get one of those bug lamps. There are so many mosquitoes out there in the evening. The staff doesn't seem to be too interested in responding though.

We called maintenance the other day to tell them that our rooms are not fully operational in terms of things like showers, screens and faucets working. It's kind of surprising to be at a resort like this without at least the basics. They said they would send someone by today, but that was three days ago. I think I will go to one of the other managers next.

Today I went to the beach at around 10 AM, and they were already out of towels again. The beach attendant said that he would bring some back as soon as he found them. I guess he didn't find any because it's been three hours, although I did see him standing around at the other end of the resort talking with some friends. Do you think he even looked for them?

Listening to these comments, Dowd wondered which problems related to poor management relations with local staff, which related to simply poor work by the local staff, and which related to poor managing by the expatriates. One thing was sure—issues in all of these areas were beginning to affect the guests.

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

Dowd had been at the resort for just one week, and the information from interviews with managers, local employees, and resort guests along with personal observations filled his head as he began to prepare for his meeting with Johnson the following morning. It was clear that there needed to be some changes at the resort if Johnson was going to resolve the issues concerning expatriate turnover, increasing guest complaints, and the level of tension between some of the expatriate managers and the local employees. The first wave of peak season guests, those coming for the Christmas holiday, would arrive tomorrow and stretch the resort's resources to their limits. Dowd wondered how he could best use the information gathered to analyze the current situation and provide some course of action for Johnson that would address his concerns. Dowd sat at his table and began to organize his thoughts.