

# *island*

CAR RENTALS





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# *Exceeding client expectations*



Island Car Rentals is the largest and most highly regarded rent-a-car company in Jamaica. With over 40 years of industry experience and locations in Kingston and Montego Bay, Island Car Rentals has set the standard for the country's tourist transportation industry. As such, it is surprising to discover that the business – which has been inundated with accolades since its inception – was started "purely by accident."



"Myself and a partner of mine were realtors, and we had the largest real estate brokerage firm in Jamaica at the time," says Managing Director Michael Campbell. "We bought an office building uptown in Kingston, and we had a leaseback agreement with the vendor. It was a car rental company, so we decided to use their rental to pay the mortgage on the building because we had too many carrying costs."

"A month after we moved in, we discovered that the entire staff of the car rental company were about to lose their jobs because the

Island Car Rental

owner was leaving Jamaica, which also put us in a bind because we had the lease agreement with him," he continues. "I have a mantra that I live by, which is, 'We're constantly faced with opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.' Considering we owned the building, the staff had been there for 20 years, and the business was doing well, all we needed was a telephone line and a few cars, and we could continue paying the mortgage."

Ironically, the day after the bank approved Michael's business proposal, the Jamaican government banned importation of cars into



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Jamaica. In line with Michael's mantra, however, he refused to succumb to the seemingly dire circumstances.

"I saw an ad in the paper the following morning for the sale of Avis' second-hand fleet, and that's how we started out, just to pay the mortgage," he explains. "Eventually, because real estate in Jamaica was dying at the time, my partner and I saw further opportunity with the car rental business."

The pair decided to invest more significantly into the business, and were successful in

capitalizing on the failings of the big-name international car rental companies.

"We would get clients coming over here from Avis and Hertz with smoke coming out of their ears because they couldn't get a vehicle," says Michael. "Out of that, we developed our mission statement, which reads: 'The mission of Island Car Rental is to achieve consistent, superior levels of customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and profitability, while contributing to the growth of the tourism industry in Jamaica, and remaining the leader in the Caribbean car rental industry.'"



Caribbean's Leading  
Independent Car  
Rental Company



Jamaica's Leading Car  
Rental Company



Jamaica's Leading Car  
Hire

Having started out with only the four cars that were leftover from the previous operation, Islands Car Rentals now boasts a fleet of over a thousand vehicles. The company also features a staff compliment much larger than competing car rental companies, giving them the capacity to offer services that are "way beyond what anybody else can offer."

"When we originally started out, the big boys in the business were the multinational companies, such as Avis, Hertz, and Budget," says Michael. "Today, in Jamaica, if you take all of them and add them together, we're bigger than that."

"We have a pproximately 250 employees, mainly maintenance and drivers, providing breakdown service anywhere in Jamaica, anytime of day. If you get into trouble, you call us and we will come and get you. We have about ten teams standing by at all times, ready to go," he adds. "We also offer buses for tours, staff outing transport service, driver service, chauffeur service – anything you want, we will supply it."

## UNDERSTANDING SERVICE

As Jamaica's premier car rental company, Island Car Rentals maintains very close ties with its two major vehicle suppliers – Toyota



and Suzuki. Michael describes the company's relationship with these two partners as being "fantastic, absolutely incredible."

"When I call Toyota to place an order, it's quick and easy. When the cars arrive, they send me an invoice, I pay them, and they deliver them to me without any hassle," he says. "As for Suzuki – a few years ago, the Suzuki dealer here in Jamaica presented us with an award of appreciation for supporting Suzuki for over 20 years. It has actually been even longer than that, but we'll accept the 20!"

Having strong relationships with suppliers is

a common trend throughout the company's entire supply chain. According to Michael, Island Car Rentals forgoes written agreements with their suppliers, giving them the freedom to walk away at any point.

"We say to them plain and simple, 'If you can find somebody that delivers service better than us, you're free to go,'" he says. "We now have a reputation in the market where suppliers keep coming to us. That word of mouth in the industry is huge because a lot of companies in Jamaica don't understand service, and we do. Service must not equal a client's expectations, it must exceed it."





## ON THE CUTTING EDGE

In order to preserve their position at the forefront of the transportation industry, Island Car Rentals is constantly seeking out new technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their services. For exam-

Island Car Rental

ple, Michael sends his employees to the Car Rental Show in Las Vegas every year to ensure that the company stays on top of the latest advances. He also insists that staff members provide at least one or two innovations annually.





"The bottom line is, our technology is cutting edge. We're constantly investing in our software, and as a result, we're moving onto our 5th operating system now," he proclaims. "I believe that if you're doing something today the same way you were doing it 10 years ago, then you're doing something wrong. You need to evolve."

The company is equally proactive in regards to sustainability. They observe numerous green initiatives, and are "constantly exploring new possibilities" in order to do their part in helping the environment.

"We store all of our used oil for recycling, we're very strict with electricity usage, we reuse and recycle paper. We also recycle our greywater, and we store thousands of gallons

of water that we take off our roofs," says Michael. "We have an agreement with a garbage disposal company that does recycling compactors, which costs a fortune, but we pay them to do it. We're also in the process of doing surveys to go completely solar for all our energy needs. Those are just a few things that come to mind."

## GROWING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Last year, Island Car Rentals won both the 2014 Jamaica's Leading Car Rental Company award and the 2014 Caribbean's Leading Independent Car Rental Company award. They also won Jamaica's Best Transportation Company at the Hospitality Jamaica Awards, and earned a citation from the Jamaica Customer Service Association for providing top



quality service. Michael explains that the accolades are tremendous because they give the company a sense of "legitimacy, professionalism and scope."

"When somebody searching for car rental in Jamaica sees Island Car Rentals, they don't know who we are, so they might think we're a fly-by-night car rental company. When they see the awards there, and that this is our fourth consecutive year for winning the Jamaica's Leading Car Rental Company award, it makes a heck of a difference," he says. "My employees have taken an oath to win the Ja-

maica's Leading Car Rental Company award ad infinitum – They are motivated to win every year."

Island Car Rentals has been winning local awards for several years now. In 2006, they were given a citation from Jamaica's Tourism Product Development Company for consistently providing the best quality service over a 5-year span, which "wasn't even contested." They also won two awards from the Ministry of Tourism in 2008 at the Tourism Service Excellence Awards – an event created to stimulate high quality service among all





tourism entities in Jamaica.

"We won both the Kingston Resort Area Champion award and the overall National Tourism Service Excellence Champion award," says Michael. "These awards took into consideration all of the hotels, attraction operators, ground tour operators, and everyone else in the tourism industry, and we came out on top."

Despite their overwhelming success, however, Island Car Rentals has no interest in taking away business from other companies.

Instead, they would prefer to "grow the market" and see the entire industry thrive.

"The new highway constructions in Jamaica will cut the travel times tremendously, so it's going to make it easier to get around Jamaica. With that, we see the significant growth of the car rental industry," he concludes. "As per our mission statement, we offer a deliberate policy of growing the tourism industry, not just our share of the car rental industry. We want to grow the pie, not take other people's share."

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