

Digicel shuts down Loop News; plans SportsMax closure

AN UNDISCLOSED number of employees have been left jobless following the immediate shutdown of Loop News and the planned closure of SportsMax.

However, Antonia Graham, head of group communications at Digicel Group, says the company's human resources team is actively supporting affected staff through the transition.

In an e-mail exchange with the *Express* yesterday, Graham said, 'Our HR team is focusing on supporting the team affected in this transition. We always do so in a careful and respectful manner, and we won't be commenting on specific figures.'

The Digicel Group announced the planned winddown of its SportsMax and Loop News business units as the company deepens its focus on scalable, enterprise-grade services through Digicel Business in a release yesterday.

It stated that the move represents a strategic repositioning of the company away from consumer-facing media and towards integrated ICT services, following its recent 100% acquisition of Symptai.

Launched in 2002, Sports-Max became known as the 'Home of Champions', offering premier sporting content across the Caribbean and helping shape the careers of many on-air and behind-the-scenes talents. Loop News, launched in 2014, quickly grew into a widely used digital news platform, winning several awards and building a strong community of readers and viewers across the region.

Liam Donnelly, group chief business officer, said, 'This is a strategic repositioning to ensure Digicel is best placed to deliver secure, scalable services for the future. While we are proud of the legacy of SportsMax and Loop News, we are now focused on where we can create the greatest value for our customers and the communities we serve.'

Digicel confirmed that employees affected by the closures have been informed. The company also stated its commitment to providing transition support and to managing the process in accordance with local labour laws.

Donnelly added, 'We extend our gratitude to the teams behind these brands and to the audiences who welcomed them into their lives. Their work has left a lasting mark, and we thank them for it. Likewise, we would like to thank the readers and viewers of Loop News and SportsMax for spending time with us over the years. It's been a privilege to inform and entertain you.'

SportsMax will broadcast for the final time on August 8. Digicel noted that the sports content previously carried by SportsMax will become available through other sports channels after that date. Loop News has ceased operating as a news provider with immediate effect.

Digicel added that Trend Media will continue to operate under Digicel Business and will now increase its focus on ad tech and digital media management for brands.

Loop News also issued a statement thanking its audience and marking the end of its operations on Facebook yesterday.

'We're proud of what we have achieved and of the people who came on the journey with us. Since our inception, Loop has become a trusted source of news, winning several awards and building a passionate, engaged community of readers and viewers,' the post read.

Loop News thanked its supporters and stated, 'We are deeply honoured to have been a part of your daily lives.'