

Crystal Winner: *Borealis Incentives, Belgium*

Client: *Printing Company*

Program: *"President's Club"*

Partners: *Grassroots, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, JW Marriott Beijing, Air Berlin, British Airways, Emirates, Lufthansa*

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Crystal Awards
RECOGNITION PROGRAM
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Borealis Incentives Delivers Extraordinary Exotic Experience for Esko Graphics

Keeping a long-standing motivational program fresh and highly desirable is a challenge for many organizations. Following a highly successful incentive travel program to Rio de Janeiro, Borealis Incentives of Belgium was challenged by Esko Graphics to discover a destination and design a program that would exceed the previous President's Club results. After an assessment of needs and objectives, Borealis recommended a program to Mauritius—a fascinating, world-in-one-island, and slice of paradise. Mauritius is an island nation off the southeast coast of the African continent in the southwest Indian Ocean. Famed for cobalt-blue seas, white sandy beaches and luxury hotels, Mauritius is also loaded with historic sights, cultural diversity, geographic variation and almost limitless activities. Its single biggest asset is the relaxed charm of its warm and welcoming people, a multi-cultural populace of Chinese, Indian, French and African people.

When Mauritius was unveiled as the destination for the 2012 President's Club, all potential winners got to work—selling, working overtime and signing deals. Sales targets were set higher, and in only three months after the incentive was announced, some sales representatives had already reached their goals. As the trip was limited to the ten leading salespeople, it was the first time in the history of President's Club that representatives met goals but did not secure a top position – a testimony to the motivating power of Mauritius.

The island is known for its paradise beaches, palm trees, blue lagoons and resorts, but there is so much more to do and to see. Borealis and its DMC partner Solis Indian Ocean took on the client's challenge to build a program that included interaction with the local people, the culture and the history of the island. The planning team invested a lot of effort, researching and fine-tuning the program to design an extraordinary motivational experience. Apart from the hotel, nothing in the itinerary was standard. The DMC confessed that most of the activities and venues had never been used before!



"I would like to thank you for the fantastic incentive trip to Mauritius. I have travelled the globe for many years, but words can hardly describe what we experienced. From day one you convinced me to use extraordinary services and locations that I wasn't sure would work, but all of your ideas blended together to make this into a fantastic project. Staff are already exceeding themselves to take part in the incentive trip next year."

— Armand Gougay, Vice-President
EMEA, Esko Graphics

Although Mauritius is an exotic and beautiful destination, it is also far away. Since participants came from all over Europe, Borealis worked with Air Mauritius to book feeder flights. They arranged for a third of the group to travel to Paris by high-speed train to catch a flight. Instead of using mini-buses, tractors, used to transport local workers to the fields, and sailing boats were employed for transfers. Following a 12-hour, overnight flight and transfer, winners arrived at the resort of Lux Le Morne and were pampered with a five-star breakfast on the beach topped off with shoulder and neck massages under the palm trees.

The planning team secured private island properties, rather than typical resort venues, for the events. When it was decided that the venue for the BBQ lunch was too "touristy," the lunch

was staged on a remote island that had never before been utilized for a group event. Other unique activities included cooking a meal with the island natives using ingredients purchased from the local market. A self-drive route exposed participants to the local flavors: coffee, tea, pineapples and sugar cane. Participants were brought to a sugar cane plantation by tractors and were involved in cutting the cane, crushing it and relishing cocktails made from the fresh juice. During a sailing trip, participant's harvested local fishermen's fishing cages and, although found no fish, were delighted to discover a bottle of local rum.

Tourists rarely experience authentic Mauritius culture. The program included a corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity to La Caza, a shelter house in the capital city of Port Louis, where the island's poor are welcomed for a meal, medicines and conversations with volunteer workers and others in a similar situation. One of the volunteers was a local celebrity, with her own Oprah Winfrey-like talk show on national radio and television, who serves as a liaison between the shelter home and local government. When the program participants learned about this, they spontaneously organized a collection of monetary donations for the shelter.

The result of the out-of-the-box thinking and creative efforts of Borealis Incentives and its partners was an unforgettable, incentive travel program that delivered appreciation to the President's Club honorees, and engagement with the local community and destination. The ultimate measure of success was a 36% sales increase attributed to a well-structured incentive program that engaged a sales force to strive for exceptional performance. •