

Crystal Winner: Harith Productions

Client: Pharmaceutical Company

Program: “Embrace the Emerald Isles”

Partners: Ovation-Ireland, Westin Dublin



Harith Productions and Partners Embrace the Emerald Isles for Pharmaceutical Company

How do you deliver an exceptional motivational program to Ireland for a client's top salespeople within a limited budget? Harith Productions was given that challenge by a major US Pharmaceutical Company: create an experiential program that would educate, entertain, and motivate participants to even higher levels of performance. The majority of the President's Club winners had participated in previous trips so the objective was to deliver, not merely a reward trip, but a motivational event filled with extraordinary experiences.

Designing incentive programs is “a team sport” and that mantra resonated throughout the planning process. Harith Productions engaged DMC Ovation-Ireland because of their strong relationships with local suppliers, solid sustainability practices, and, above all, passion for creating incredible events. The Westin Dublin was selected as the hotel because of its location in the heart of the city and its reputation for culinary and service excellence. The planning team became like a family with the passion of each person fueling other team members to excel. To foster teamwork, Harith Productions hosted appreciation gatherings where partners were recognized and shared credit as one team. Following the event, each partner received a commendation booklet including photographs, a commendation letter and credits on the program Playbill.

A day before the guests were to arrive in Ireland, the team learned that President Obama was scheduled to make a public address less than two blocks from the hotel and all streets around the hotel would be blocked off. Airport transfers would be forced to drop off the guests and their luggage a significant distance from the hotel. The teams sprang into action and devised a plan where hotel bellmen would greet each guest at the drop-off point and personally escort them and their luggage to the hotel.

On the first full day, the group was treated to an once-in-a-lifetime adventure at the Ballyknocken House and Cookery School, a charming Victorian farmhouse that is home to popular TV



Chef and Food Writer Catherine Fulvio. After learning about the local herbs, vegetables and fruits grown on the grounds, the group was divided into small teams and treated to a hands-on cooking demonstration to prepare lunch. Evening dinner was a group feast at the famed Oliver St. John Gogarty in the Temple Bar neighborhood. The next morning, the guests departed for a tour along the North Dublin coast enjoying the panoramic landscape before arriving at Malahide Castle, one of the country's oldest and most historic sites.

The gala dinner, “Explore the Emerald Isles,” was the culmination of an extraordinary trip and served as testament to teamwork in action. The hotel's ballroom was large relative to the group's size. To ensure that guests did not feel lost in the grand room, the team devised a layout incorporating both the stage and dining tables in one setup. This innovative design gave the ballroom an intimate feel and made each winner feel equally honored by providing a front row seat. Cognizant of the limited budget, Ovation secured staging that was repurposed from a previous event and, after the event, was repurposed again into equipment for a children's playground.

The hotel's chefs created a culinary masterpiece with each dinner course replicating an Emerald Isle landmark, including an edible piece of art with the message “Eat with Your Eyes.” To ensure quality and efficient service, during set-up the wait staff rehearsed the service, as they were also featured as entertainment. The synchronized

service, musical menu, verbiage describing the menu items' histories, song and dance during the awards, and a native Irishman infusing humor and facts in his welcome remarks contributed greatly to the dining experience.

Throughout the planning process a goal was to create an incentive experience that was environmentally sustainable and would educate guests of ways to continue sustainability practices. The “locavore” concept was designed into all functions with ingredients from local farms. The Ballyknocken experience further emphasized the “farm-to-fork” concept. Local restaurants, supporting the locavore philosophy, were selected within walking distance of the hotel. The hotel contributed to sustainability by offering a credit for each guest room that chose not to have linens refreshed daily.

From the outset, the biggest challenge was to create an exceptional event for a very small group with a limited budget. According to the client, Harith Productions and its partners exceeded expectations of even the most seasoned President's Club winners. The program exemplified appreciation and recognition and delivered all the touches that made each winner feel like royalty. The “Embrace the Emerald Isles” program has been recognized for setting a new benchmark, delivering a memorable motivational experience while at the same time maximizing a limited budget and creating strong partner alliances. •