Employees Who Vote for Recognition

Winners, Destinations off the Beaten Path:
Colt Technology Services UK Requires a Different Kind of Motivational Program

Colt Technology Services UK promotes itself as “Europe’s information delivery platform.” Colt provides major organizations, midsize businesses and wholesale customers with a powerful resource that combines network and IT infrastructure with expertise in IT managed services, networking and communication solutions over a 21-country network that includes 38 major European cities.

Colt prides itself on being a customer-centric business, and to ensure that objective is achieved, the company established the “Inner Circle” recognition program. For seven years, the Inner Circle has honored top employees across business, services and countries who consistently deliver exceptional performance throughout the year, and live the client’s values.

Colt’s agency partner, Universal WorldEvents UK, identified what the leaders of Colt needed to boost energy in the eighth year of the program was a departure from the conventional. Based on an earlier presentation from Creative Travel, they encouraged Colt to make a bold statement by taking the top 10% achievers to Kerala, India.

Nicknamed “God’s Own Country,” Kerala has been described by National Geographic Traveler magazine as one of 50 destinations of a lifetime and one of the world’s 13 paradises. It is a destination with limited luxury hotels and small room inventories. But Kerala has never been considered to be a real incentive destination. It receives very little group business as it is an area with no iconic monuments or sites which are symbolic of a stereotypical North Indian incentive. It is a destination with limited luxury hotels and small room inventories. But Kerala was the perfect choice for a company looking to invigorate its best workers with a new and marvelous experience.

With the destination chosen, Universal WorldEvents created a 12 month digital communications campaign intended to inspire dreams and instill excellence in the hearts of the employees. Contrary to most motivational programs, the Inner Circle campaign invites Colt employees to nominate and vote for winners via a dedicated program website. In total, 900 nominations were made and 4,800 Colt employees cast votes to determine the 91 esteemed employees who would experience “God’s own country” first-hand.

Running a full corporate incentive program in Kerala had been a dream of the Creative Travel team; once they were challenged with making it a reality, there was much to coordinate with local partners. Creative Travel realized early on that planning would have to be a process of education that instilled an out-of-the-box thinking approach into a culture that was used to the laid back tranquil ways of the Kerala backwaters.

Finally, the Colt Inner Circle group arrived. After a warm greeting at Kochi International airport, the group was transferred to the backwater area of Kumarakom and the extraordinary experiences began. Since the region is very famous for its elaborate and exotic Hindu temples festivals, Creative Travel produced a spectacular temple festival complete with elephants, decorations and musicians exclusively for Colt. Additionally, the trip included river explorations on traditional houseboats, snake boat race challenges and a cooking competition judged by a tough critic — the hotel chef. Participants ingested the sights and sounds of Kochi shopping for saris, spices and more. As a part of an “Investing in the Future” corporate social responsibility day, they also visited St. Thomas Girls School.

The Colt Inner Circle awards evenings was meant to be the official crowning of the winners and Gundu Island served up the perfect location. Uninhabited, tucked away in the luxury of uninterrupted cool breeze from the Arabian Sea, the private island was transformed as Creative Travel recreated a small traditional and typical Kerala Village. To start the evening, the guests assembled on the lawn of their hotel for a sundown champagne reception, followed by a sunset cruise along the Kochi coastline that delivered them to the island, and then a red carpet welcome. Music and color were present everywhere through traditional Thapoli dancers, a troupe of drummers, colorful gates and passageways to the thatched huts, elegant tables and dance floor — all shipped from the mainland especially for the event. The surprises and delights of the night made this Inner Circle award ceremony a memorable one.

The leaders at Colt Technology Services took a risk on a “land so pristine, so natural and so green, that no heart can leave untouched” and it paid off. Successfully hosting a large-scale event at such an unexpected destination was testament to tremendous coordination, trust and attention to detail among partners. The event even stimulated future economic growth in the region, since local suppliers learned how to create future sustainable income from this previously untapped opportunity.

As for what the eighth Inner Circle program meant to Colt, across a variety of metrics including satisfaction, perception, intentions, learning and business impact results demonstrated more than 97% satisfaction. It was one program that absolutely delivered on all objectives.
Philips Lighting is a solution-minded organization with a culture that embraces the ideals of continuous improvement. With a belief that innovation can come from all of its employees, each year Philips Lighting leads a global Quality Improvement Competition (QIC) that attracts participation from thousands of the company’s professional workforce. This unique motivational program fosters a significant level of employee engagement and ultimately generates better products, services and efficiencies for the company.

When Philips Lighting and their agency Gattinoni & Co looked to hold the QIC European semi-finals in Sicily they turned to the team at BlueStone. Considered the gate of the Western civilization, Sicily is situated in the very heart of the Mediterranean Sea, just off the southern tip of mainland Italy. This location would prove an ideal setting to inspire five waves of QIC events that would be produced back to back and serve 400 of Philips Lighting’s best and brightest team members from throughout the continent.

The European semi-finals were the next step after the national competition and the outcome would place top competitors in the world finals. The aim of the program was not only the competition, but also to provide interactive fun with “High Quality” as the keyword of the entire event. The program required unforgettable experiences set in the medieval town of Taormina, Sicily that was to be replicated for the 80 participants in each of the five segments.

This event that would honor innovation and invention called upon BlueStone to theme the entire trip — from the gala dinner to the team building activities to the farewell dinner. Selecting a theme that was strictly bound to the destination, and was recognizable and interactive for the participants, BlueStone invited guests to become part of the world of the “The Godfather.” However, the differentiator in this program wasn’t the theme in and of itself, but the way BlueStone fully committed to the theme and Sicilian experience.

The pinnacle of the Italian immersion experience was when a two hundred year old Sicilian villa was transformed into Don Corleone’s mansion for the gala dinner. “The Godfather” welcomed each guest personally — but only after his “bodyguards” searched them — then they were escorted to the main hall to encounter a Maestro teaching the art of Sicilian hand-drumming. The evening delivered many distinctive destination touches. As a highlight, Philips requested a traditional puppet show; this posed a challenge — an authentic puppet show didn’t fit into the budget or timing of the gala dinner. BlueStone presented an alternate solution — a “living” puppet show with actors in specially-made armor who moved like puppets to delight and amuse the audience. This was a perfect evening where the winning QIC projects were announced and celebrated.

The next day was structured as a team-building experience. Armed with digital cameras and a guide book, participants competed in a game that required capturing images per special instructions that included lunch with a breathtaking view on the gulf of Taormina and time to enjoy the city. To cap off the day, a farewell dinner featured a trio of strings and piano and the powerful intervention of an opera singer. Integrated into the evening were images of the day and awards for the teams acing the competition.

During this program, there was one challenge that really demonstrated BlueStone’s commitment to effective operations: The eruption of Iceland’s Eyjafjallajokull volcano. This stalled the departure of the second wave group and the arrival of the third group. After an extensive search, guests were transported home aboard three buses to France, Germany/the Netherlands and Poland/East Germany. But the third group was not able to arrive. As this European QIC program is vital to setting up the competitors for the world competition, not running the third segment was not an option. With many hurdles to overcome, Gattinoni, BlueStone and all the partners were able to successfully welcome the third group to Sicily just after group number five.

Participants for the Quality Improvement Competition European semi-final most assuredly departed feeling valued by the Philips Lighting organization. With each QIC event, employees proudly post the legacy of their participation and awards earned on on-line profiles and business resumes. Clearly, the QIC program incentivizes participants by letting them feel part of a dynamic and creative company of which they will want to be part of in the future.
Fuji Xerox Australia is one of the continent’s leading document management technology and services companies. They claim four guiding values: customer first, continuous improvement, ethics and integrity, and teamwork. As a principle driven organization, it is no surprise that leadership chooses to invest in motivational programs that build business and bond teams. But they not only invest in the programs, they measure the results.

For this particular program, the company’s ISMD engagement score (their reporting indicator) moved up a significant 7% YoY from a base of 65% to 72%, deeming the overall financial aspects of the program a success. But true success rested in completing the program with the delivery of an incentive quality experience that would reward both the participants and their invited partners, strengthen loyalty to the company, provide team building encounters, and leave the participants with the desire to do it all over again in the next program qualification cycle.

In stepped Dragonfly Africa. Nine years earlier, Dragonfly had invited Conference Focus Australia to their first Australian Incentive Educational and the team had created such a remarkable experience that almost a decade later, when Conference Focus Australia had the right business partner opportunity, they looked to Dragonfly Africa and entrusted the team with care for their client Fuji Xerox Australia and the 106 participants who would embark on this journey of a lifetime.

Together, a magical trip of six days and five nights was created with the intent that participants would experience Zambia and Botswana in a deeper and richer way then an individual traveler could replicate on their own. In addition, the program needed to respect and reflect the fact that Fuji Xerox Australia was a well-recognized company for its commitment to sustainability.

To accomplish this, Dragonfly Africa used their many years of experience in the region and solid relationships with local chiefs, hotels, tourism officials, airport staff and suppliers to navigate hurdles and strict Zambian policies were all professionally handled.

Some experiences, like the tour of stunning Victoria Falls (the largest waterfall in the world,) elephant interactions, and dinner on the Royal Livingstone Hotel lawns are traditional on activities in this region, but from there the predictable soon gave way to a host of optional excursions that spanned a broad range of interests. These included a tranquil spa visit, a tour of the historic Chief Mukuni Village, visiting the Walking with Lions conservation project, flying over Victoria Falls in a microlight plane or helicopter, bungee jumping from the Victoria Falls Bridge, taking an elephant-back safari, white water rafting, and rappelling or gorge swinging in the Victoria Gorge.

Low-key or daredevil, there was something for everyone.

When Dragonfly sought to select the most appropriate CSR experience for the Fuji Xerox group, they recommended a day trip to Botswana’s Chobe National Park and a visit to Mulwani Basic School, a local primary school for orphans and children with HIV/AIDS. The first hurdle was to facilitate a border crossing into Botswana for the 106 guests. To ensure smooth passage, a dedicated team was stationed at the checkpoint ahead of time and stayed in contact with their hotel counterparts. To arrange the visit to the school, the company worked amidst limited road and communication networks, communicated with the local charity organization, ensured that adequate supplies were available, coordinated an afternoon of activities for the school children, and worked through language barriers between guests, children and teachers. With help from African Impact and the Happy Africa Foundation, the group was given supplies to paint the school in one morning. Guests grabbed sanding pads and brushes and painted the walls cornflower blue, then returned later in the afternoon to play soccer with the students. Some even had spare time to start prepping and painting the interior walls of the classrooms. Both groups expanded their worldviews.

From dinner with Shangaan Warriors in a Boma to a sunset cruise on the African Queen double-decker boat, the program designed by Dragonfly, Conference Focus Australia and their partners proved that Livingstone and the region serves as truly a distinctive destination for a motivational program. As for the leaders at Fuji Xerox Australia, they have proved that a well thought out motivational program can both recognize exemplary employee efforts while supporting the bottom line.
Walters DMC Create a Motivational Experience Where Everyone Wins Under the Values of KPMG Meijburg & Co.

KPMG Meijburg & Co. stands as one of the most prominent tax law firms in the Netherlands, employing more than 750 highly educated professionals dedicated to the business of Dutch and international tax law. The organization uses the following words to define the core of their service: expertise, a proactive approach, excellent quality, and high speed of response.

To retain leading market position, finding top graduate school talent is a priority. In Holland the highest Honors/Masters graduates in tax law and tax economics are highly sought after. Five major financial services firms compete for top talent and to ensure KPMG Meijburg attracts the best candidates a unique motivational program was born; a program that recognizes, engages and rewards both leading graduate students as well as existing KPMG Meijburg employees qualified based on achievements in previous year’s performance. The result? An interesting blend of seasoned expertise traveling and working alongside new generations of KPMG Meijburg’s leaders.

With South Africa selected as the destination of choice for travel experience, KPMG Meijburg’s agency Eventions partnered with Walters DMC to design and deliver a program that would accomplish all of their goals. At this point, the program appears simple for a manageable group to efficiently plan out if all was to go right in this one-day challenge. But the visit was ultimately about making a meaningful difference at Ezweni that would last beyond the one day. KPMG Meijburg wanted to ensure that 100% of the funds donated for improvements went to the school and surrounding community for job creation, and that a minimal environmental footprint was left behind.

Approximately 20 local contractors were hired for the project; when all hands worked together the results were amazing:

- Four Enviro Loo waterless toilets were installed
- Two classrooms had been completed
- 100 school desks had been assembled
- School text books, stationary and educational and sports equipment had been supplied

The program made a significant impact on the Lillydale community and helped school leaders take one step closer to their vision of expansion to accommodate 1,000 children.

Today, thanks to Walters DMC, KPMG Meijburg’s official Corporate Social Responsibility project is the Ezweni School. And with documented success for this uniquely designed incentive program, KPMG has created a winning formula for sourcing exactly the right candidates as future company leaders while keeping focus on rewarding and retaining existing top team members for the duration of their careers.
The pinnacle of many motivational travel programs is the corporate gala evening, and Amway China required not only one extraordinary evening, but it called on EventWorks to deliver five separate nights that would be sure to delight five different waves of the country’s top tier sales force.

Amway’s success is achieved through a highly motivated and rewarded network of independent business owners the world over. Believing that excellence is driven through generous rewards, Amway China established an annual travel award program that honors its leading 15,000 sales people by hosting them on a weeklong meeting and incentive trip in an international destination. While the programs leverage time together for training and instructional seminars, the main objective is to provide unique experiences that entertain and reward the Chinese sales force for a job well done on a five-star level.

When the group selected the Los Angeles and Anaheim, California area as its destination, EventWorks was challenged with developing and delivering an unforgettable program that would welcome five unique groups of 3,000 sales leaders each, spread over a one month time frame. The jewel of the trip was to be the gala evening that not only honored the group, but was to honor each of the 15,000 individuals.

Themed “You Are a Star,” the gala dinner was to be a celebration of the participants achieving middle class status through their success with Amway. The concept was to combine an understanding of the ancient Chinese Celestial Empire with a glamorous Hollywood night. It was to offer an “American” award show atmosphere so that for the one night, the reward recipients could feel like celebrities. It would take hard, thoughtful and clever work in order for EventWorks to get it right.

Communicating in a compelling way to a Chinese audience in an English speaking country was the first point of order. It took research and effort to design a logo and graphic that would resonate with the participants. The phrase “You are a star” did not translate to Mandarin or Cantonese, so the Chinese version was “You are a sparkling successful star that shines over Los Angeles.”

To begin the event demonstrating respect, each of the 3,000 Amway ‘successful stars’ needed to be recognized four times during the walk-in. A revolving media display with rotating guest portraits was constructed, and participants experienced a setting worthy of a night at the Oscars. Care was given to ensure the program transcended language barriers; each show included pyrotechnics, live action and entertainment choices that held universal appeal. In a multi-sensory experience, the honorees were thrilled and engaged by five American acts, a Taiwanese pop star and fifty additional musicians, stilt walkers, singers, athletes, aerialists, puppeteers and dancers.

To satisfy social responsibility and environmental concerns, menu options addressed all possible cultural needs, including Halal and vegetarian dietary requests. Vegetables were grown and harvested locally and all seafood was purchased under the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch guidelines. Long-lasting floral arrangements with succulents and air plants were used repeatedly, and kept fresh in a refrigerated container.

Again, each of the five evenings had to be meticulously replicated, so EventWorks occupied the venue for the month. They built tiered seating and elaborate staging that remained fixed throughout the program. And each entertainment talent, both local and national, were brought back to recreate the marvelous experience.

Through the “You Are a Star” program, EventWorks and partners at the Anaheim Marriott, Anaheim Hilton, Aramark Catering and the Anaheim Convention and Visitors Bureau were able to provide a truly outstanding experience for the top independent business leaders. It is this inspired sales force that will keep Amway China relevant and prosperous well into the next business year and beyond. •
Pacific World China Delivers Ultimate Experience to the Makers of the Ultimate Driving Machine – BMW

BMW Group employs roughly 8,000 people in the UK motor industry, plus an additional 11,000 in its 148 strong UK dealer network, making it vital to the organizational health and financial well-being that BMW’s most valuable team members are recognized, rewarded and ultimately retained.

Because of this, the BMW UK Dealer Business Conference requires partners who understand their corporate vision and ideologies, and are willing to incorporate those objectives into the annual week-long event. The main tenants of the travel portion of the program were to reward the UK’s 350 top performing dealers and staff by providing them with a high-quality experience, as well as foster an exchange of knowledge between the UK team and their selected destination counterparts.

Once BMW UK set its sights on China, their agency (Grassroots) sought a partner who could leverage their knowledge and relationships to deliver a complex program with a competent level of expertise and execution — they looked to Pacific World China.

The coordination and logistics of such a highly customized effort for a group this size in Beijing was massive in scope and expectation. It would demand a destination management company who was capable of organizing and leading all partners to work in concert to deliver a well-timed and well-run program.

In all, the program used more than 20 off-site restaurants, three notable government venues, 20 plus performances, ten scenic spots, 60 professional tour guides, and at the Imperial Gala Dinner at the Forbidden City 400 professional servers were hired so that dinner service was synchronized.

Adding to the level of complexity, the profile for an automotive company incentive participant tends to be a well-traveled individual. For that reason, planners intended to go to great lengths to ensure that everyone enjoyed a personalized experience. To support this, BMW Dealers chose from numerous options of high-quality activities, tours and dining experiences using an online platform, even at the very last minute. In addition, special requests were always welcome and every guest was treated like he or she was the only one who mattered.

In seeking the best experiences for the BMW program, Pacific World drew on deep relationships with local authorities to obtain access to unique, historic and stunning venues that were nearly always off-limits to corporate events. Using these connections, the company overcame security, transportation, power supply, tent construction and set-up time restrictions. And as a result, guests enjoyed gala dinners and lunches, complete with cultural performances at the Ancestral Temple of the Forbidden City, the Great Hall of People and the Great Wall of China. Pacific World also worked to proactively ensure that security clearance issues wouldn’t arise on the day trip to Xian through coordinating with local authorities ahead of time; guests were able to pre-check and thus easily board their chartered flights — with meal packs prepared according to individual dietary preference.

While Beijing is rich in culture and history, there is nothing more recognizable than the Great Wall of China. While most people had visited the Great Wall, a special preservation visit was arranged. This allowed program participants the opportunity to help restore a dilapidated section of the wall. Each member of the BMW team that wished to support the project were given a brick to place on the broken wall, and with the help of a local operator, they were able to place it on one of the world’s greatest monuments. In return, each person received a certificate for his or her contribution. Although this may not seem like much, as the saying goes, “a journey of a thousand miles starts with a small step.”

Every aspect of the program, from stunning historical venues and engaging cultural activities to gastronomical journeys and knowledge exchange with local counterparts, was specially and thoughtfully designed to engage and delight the BMW team. Through the efforts of Pacific World China, Grassroots and all the partners, the dealers traveled back to the UK with an expanded world view and a desire to meet new BMW counterparts on journeys earned through future BMW motivational reward programs.