2006 SITE CRYSTAL AWARDS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Inspired Outstanding Superior
Crystals Awards Judges

SITE established the Crystal Awards in 1980 as a means to recognize the unique blending of objectives and imagination that enable motivational programs to be successful in achieving business objectives. The 2006 entry and judging process was completely electronic to provide a level playing field and renew the focus on each program’s ability to achieve its business goals. Incentive campaigns, special/motivational events or promotion campaigns held between 1 June 2005 and 31 May 2006 were eligible. Entries were evaluated by an independent panel of judges in the areas of return on investment, creativity and mechanics.

Generous support was provided by 2006 SITE Crystal Awards Committee Chair Polo Looser, MCI (Schweiz) AG; and 2006 SITE Crystal Award Committee Vice-Chair Michael Goldsmith, CMP, Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority. Other committee members included Padraic Gilligan, SITE Board Liaison; Victor Mena and Paul Flackett, SITE.

The judging panel for the 2006 SITE Crystal Awards was composed of individuals well-versed in the field of incentive/motivational travel.

Judges Evaluating Entries Were:

- Tyler Davidson, Editorial Director, Meetings Media Magazine
- Peter Dunn, General Manager, Incentives & Loyalty, The GET Group
- Sandra Eagle, Director of Content, Meeting & Incentive Travel
- Barbara J. Hollister, Director Industry Relations, Carlson Marketing Group
- Bill Laviollette, Managing Director & Publisher, Incentives & Meetings International
- Joe Lustenberger, Director of Marketing - North America, EUROMIC Inc.
- Barbara Scofido, Editor, Corporate Meetings & Incentives Magazine
- John C. Touchette, Senior Manager, Meetings & Special Events, Raytheon Company
- Johnathan Vatner, Senior Associate Editor, Meetings & Conventions Magazine
Dear SITE Member,

*Inspired. Outstanding. Superior.*

Those are the words that portray the best of the best. Those are the words that depict the industry’s highest honor. Those are the words that illustrate the SITE Crystal Award.

As incentive and travel industry professionals, we are often challenged by decreased budgets, shortened planning time, language and cultural barriers and the constant need to always “wow” our clients. Regardless of the challenges we face, we never stop doing what it is we are here to do. Our creative juices never stop flowing, our desire to deliver quality incentive and travel programs and events never ceases. Despite all the obstacles we as professionals may need to overcome during the implementation of our programs, we always strive for excellence as our end result. Then there are those professionals among us who have overcome some of the most difficult obstacles, who have delivered outstanding programs, who exemplify the true meaning of inspired, outstanding and superior. Those individuals are the recipients of the SITE Crystal Award.

I am excited to report we received a great number of entries this year making the selection process highly competitive. Each entry was reviewed by an appointed panel of distinguished judges from the industry who had the unenviable task of making some tough decisions from a stellar group of entries. Each entry embodied the determination, creativity and above all, the hunger to deliver above and beyond expectations. Ten programs exceeded those expectations, and are the recipients of the 2006 SITE Crystal Awards.

My sincere thanks goes out to Polo Looser, MCI (Schweiz) AG, for once again volunteering his time as the Crystal Awards Committee Chair, and to Michael Goldsmith, CMP, Las Vegas Convention & Visitor Authority, for serving as Vice-Chair as well. Also on the committee were Padraic Gilligan, SITE Board Liaison, Victor Mena and Paul Flackett, CITE. These hard working individuals made this year’s event a success. Their hard work, in collaboration with the headquarters staff, made the awards submission process efficient for both the members and the judges alike.

Please take the time to read through the individual entries found in this special edition of InSITE. These programs showcase some of the toughest obstacles to overcome, as well as very creative approaches to rewarding participants. These programs are proof that the incentives provide the positive results our clients strive for.

I congratulate all the winners for their inspiration and vision, and thank all those who entered this year for your hard work and willingness to participate. May you continue to be inspired. I encourage everyone to begin to make plans now to submit an entry for the 2007 SITE Crystal Awards Recognition Program, where once again we will honor the “best of the best”.

Thank you,

Lex Granaada
SITE President
SITE once again offered the Crystal Award Chapter Challenge incentive program to all SITE Chapters this year. The Chapter with the highest number of entries submitted received the following:

♦ $400 USD to support Chapter expenses or an upcoming meeting

♦ One (1) complimentary registration for the winning Chapter President (or his/her delegate) to attend the SITE International Conference 2006 in Barcelona, Spain

♦ A press release highlighting the Chapter’s involvement in the Chapter Challenge for Crystals program to be used at the chapter’s discretion.

 SITE is pleased to recognize the SITE Southern California Chapter as the 2006 winner of the Chapter Challenge for Crystals. Congratulations!
check in, a “Taste of Argentina” welcome dinner pre-registered room keys. Following the group wine were served to guests as they picked up their Hyatt Mendoza at nearly 10 pm, glasses of Malbec reserved motorcoach. Upon arrival at the Park twelve-hour trek to Mendoza on board a newly arranged for the group.

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Quick and calm thinking by Mendoza, were cancelled. This trip, spanning these two diverse cities in Argentina, gave Wise Incentives the opportunity to offer participants a program with many options both active and relaxing. Participants enjoyed activities from shopping and gastronomy, to cultural arts and sporting events. In planning the event for their client, Wise Incentives faced an unexpected challenge when Aerolineas Argentina Airlines went on a two-day strike beginning the day of the group’s arrival in Buenos Aires. This strike severely impacted the execution of the planned program, as all Aerolineas Argentina domestic and international flights, including the group’s connecting flight to Mendoza, were cancelled. Quick and calm thinking by Wise Incentives and their travel partners in Argentina averted what could have been a disastrous beginning to the program. In less than 24 hours, a block of rooms were reserved at the Sofitel Buenos Aires for the unplanned first night, which was originally to be in Mendoza. A welcome dinner and entertainment was also arranged for the group.

The next day the group embarked on a twelve-hour trek to Mendoza on board a newly reserved motorcoach. Upon arrival at the Park Hyatt Mendoza at nearly 10 pm, glasses of Malbec wine were served to guests as they picked up their pre-registered room keys. Following the group check in, a “Taste of Argentina” welcome dinner was held where guests enjoyed regional cuisine, wines from Mendoza and entertainment as they shared stories of their bus adventure.

Over the next three days, the group enjoyed several exciting and creative programs. “Adventure in the Andes” offered a trekking and horseback riding adventure through the beautiful foothills of the Andes Mountains where the group enjoyed stunning views. The riders and trekkers later met up for a barbecue lunch at a special campsite built exclusively for the group. The final night in Mendoza, Wise Incentives arranged for a buyout of the 1884 Francis Mallmann Restaurant, which is commonly referred to as the ‘hottest’ restaurant in Mendoza.

The next day when the group arrived back in Buenos Aires, there was nothing but fun in store. One of the most notable events was “Two Can Tango” at the tango club, Bar Sur. When the guests arrived at the club, they were entertained by live music, singing and professional tango dancing. Afterwards, individual tango lessons were offered to the participants by the professional dancers.

On the final night of the eight-day excursion, Wise Incentives planned an extravagant “Farewell Argentina Gala” at Circulo Militar. Guests were treated like royalty as they entered the venue on a red-carpet. During cocktails, a video compilation of the week’s activities played to the surprise of the participants. A string quartet provided background music while trays of hors d’oeuvres were served. Doors opened to the marble rotunda where up-lighting showcased the intricate columns, statues and the magnificent stain glass dome in the room. Pin lighting highlighted black and white clothed tables with arrangements of beautiful white flowers. Guests dined on a three-course gourmet meal and during dessert, the lights dimmed and spotlights shined on the gold-gilded wrought iron balcony. To everyone’s amazement, “Evita” appeared and sang “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina.” Following the performance, the performer posed for photos with each couple. Just as participants thought the evening was over, opera singers entered the room, bringing down the house with a selection of popular arias.

As a result of the incentive trip, Infinity Broadcasting experienced a 26% increase in new business. The client was confident that this was a direct result of offering the “Tango Argentina” incentive travel program. The company also realized a 22% increase in incremental sales from existing advertisers, and felt the lure of Argentina as the incentive destination was responsible for the increased profits. The program design afforded the client many opportunities to create long-lasting business relationships and nurture already existing relationships in a relaxed setting. The “WOW” factor proved to be ten-plus and surpassed everyone’s expectations.
Ovation Group and Borealis Incentives Crack the ‘Code’ and Give the ‘Royale’ Treatment to SONY®

Most Outstanding Travel Reward Program — Up to Three Nights, Under 200 Participants

The destination management company, Ovation Group, partnered with the Incentive House, Borealis Company to deliver an incentive program to reward the entire SONY Pictures Home Entertainment Belgium and Netherlands staff for exceeding sales targets last year. The goal of the incentive program was not only to reward the staff, but to also establish closer contact between the Belgium and Netherlands staff after a series of internal changes. Additionally, SONY wished to generate excitement around the release of three new movie titles, *The Da Vinci Code*, *Open Season* and *James Bond: Casino Royale* to align the entire team with the core SONY brand.

“Let Us Entertain You” was the tagline used for the much anticipated event. Every program detail was chosen on how well it would entertain the guests. The 60 strong SONY Pictures Home Entertainment team knew they were being taken away for a “sales conference” for two nights/three days in June. They had no further information as to the destination and itinerary. The only instruction they received was to bring their passport.

On a stunning June morning, the team was instructed to leave their desks and board a motor coach outside their office. They were then taken to the VIP terminal of Brussels International Airport where a private, SONY logoed aircraft awaited them. The team was informed they would arrive in Copenhagen within one hour. When the aircraft touched down, they were actually in Dublin, Ireland! When they exited the airport, two “party buses” awaited them. Festivities commenced aboard the buses and continued until they returned to the airport three days later!

Each “party bus” was configured like an upscale nightclub with plush velvet booths, cocktail tables, DJs and a live musician. Before they could properly settle they were divided into four teams and given one hour to solve a series of tasks and codes. Points were awarded for this activity and then accumulated over the following three days based on additional activities. Next, it was back to the hotel where a meeting room had been transformed into a SONY themed cinema with cutting edge AV, sound and lights.

Participants were then given 30 minutes to prepare for the evening’s activity. In their hotel rooms they found a brown cassock or robe and a white face mask in imitation of “Silas,” one of the main characters from the SONY film, *The Da Vinci Code*. When they arrived down to the hotel lobby they were arranged into a procession and taken to the awaiting transportation – a fleet of horse drawn carriages! Dressed in monk’s cassocks they made their way to the Guinness Brewery. In keeping with SONY’s desire to continually surprise the team, they didn’t visit the brewery at all, but proceeded to the residence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin where the restaurant “Fire” is housed, for an exclusive dinner themed event based on the *Da Vinci Code*.

The next morning all participants assembled in the hotel lobby for a briefing where a fleet of SONY branded Land Rovers awaited outside. In teams of four they followed the coded instructions in each vehicle and eventually arrived at an isolated country farm where further “country pursuits” took place. An informal but upscale barbecue was then served, followed by more activities of a quirky and bizarre nature such as sheep racing, hay bale rolling, sheaf tossing etc.

As a direct result of this event the SONY Managing Director was able to identify among his sales team new levels of alignment with core corporate objectives. In addition, the offices in Brussels are being refurbished and people have to work in challenging conditions, but there have been no complaints as all sales staff have gelled as a real team and feel appreciated by the company.
TBA Global Events was given the challenge of making this year’s Leader’s Summit dinners for their client, BISYS Insurance Company, unique and stand-out events. BISYS wanted to be sure to convey the message that they appreciated their employees’ efforts and achievements. TBA made sure its client’s message was clear.

The two special audiences TBA planned dinners for were the Top 125 Agent Qualifiers and the Premier Top 40 Agent Qualifiers and their significant others. Planning two events for similar groups of people was not a problem for TBA who made it a point to make both groups feel appreciated and wanted, while at the same time, providing the “wow” factor to these stellar groups.

Faced with the test of finding the right Canadian venue that would blow away the Top 40 Qualifiers audience, TBA chose to hold the first event at an exclusive and unusual location; the Petit-Seminaire Chapel in Quebec City, Canada. This gorgeous chapel was first built in 1750 and is a part of the museum of Civilization in Quebec City. This location is not only breathtaking, but its remarkable history in Canada surpassed any ballroom facility. The interior of the Chapel resembles the Trinity Church in Paris. The main and side alters are white marble, complimented by red cherry woodwork with ceramic tile floors. The stunning atmosphere and subdued lighting provided an intimate and special surrounding appropriate for the VIP status of the Top 40 Qualifiers.

The prestigious Cirque du Soleil was secured for the evening’s entertainment, honoring the fact that Cirque du Soleil originally emerged from Quebec City. Upon arrival, a “Gypsy Jazz” musical trio welcomed guests while the Master of Ceremony, dressed in her circus attire as a Major Dames announced guest introductions. The circus atmosphere mesmerized the guests as the performances featured some of the most famous acts. This amazing experience was definitely different than anything the guests had seen and proved to be over the top.

For the second event, the Top 125 program, TBA Global Events had to completely transform the ballroom used for the morning’s general session into the setting for the evening dinner. The client wanted the ballroom to be unrecognizable for these guests who’ve “seen it all.” TBA Global Events decided to develop an elaborate 18th Century Masked Ball for the evening. Not only did participants get to dress up and wear masks, but they also took part in a live theater performance! To build enthusiasm and anticipation for the 18th Century Masked Ball, invitations and sequin and feathered masquerade-style masks were sent to guests the evening prior.

Entertainment for the Top 125 dinner was provided by a local theater group who performed “The Man in the Iron Mask”. The characters consisted of actors and the guests; the actual Leader’s Summit qualifiers! Once the guests were seated for the feast, the show began. As the first course was served, “La Madame de Saint-Laurent” kicked off the play and continued the storyline for 15 minutes. During the second course, Part II of the play revealed a surprise - The Man in the Iron Mask entered the room. The celebrity appearance had the audience’s anticipation on a rise and after 20 minutes, the third course was served as Part III of the play began featuring a Minuet that allowed the guests to participate in a traditional dance of the 18th century. The guests then engaged in conversation with one another as they discussed the actions of the play and tried to determine the outcome of this mysterious love story. With the fourth course the guests were intrigued and impressed with the unique entertainment and cheered wildly as the play concluded in Part IV.

TBA Global Events’ client was ecstatic about the success of the Top 40 Agent dinner and also thought the 18th-Century Ball for the Top 125 qualifiers was a huge favorite! Many of the company’s employees remarked that they felt the company’s commitment to their success was evident by the level of attention to detail and all the extra touches the Leader’s Summit provided. The client raved that the experience was extraordinary and has already secured TBA to create and manage their next annual incentive event in Hawaii.
Preparing and serving five star-quality cuisine at a catered event is hard enough when the event is held in a ballroom or high-end venue. The recipe for success gets much more complicated when the event is on the beach of a remote island with no water or electricity and without simple amenities such as a kitchen or toilets, and a kitchen crew and wait staff that have never worked off-site, and the threat of a hurricane.

Extraordinary Events delivered a truly amazing event at the “Gala Night” for the Cemex Executive Summit in Cancun, Mexico. The Cemex Executive Summit is a two-day executive conference which reunites nearly 300 of the company’s top managers from its numerous operations around the world. The objective of the conference is to share the company’s strategy and vision, as well as the goals and challenges the company is facing, provide networking opportunities to build relationships that foster teamwork and enable executives and employees to capitalize on synergies and initiatives worldwide, while attending a platform for employees to learn about new business trends in the current global market.

The “Gala Night” event was the final night of the conference and was held at Zama Beach Club on Isla Mujeres, an island of breathtaking beauty, but a nightmare as an event locale with no electricity or running water, and only one palapa as any formal type of shelter. Entertainment for the evening was none other than the Grammy winning, international superstar, Seal.

A major challenge the team faced was creating a menu that would please an audience of 300 guests, mostly men from 38 different countries. Extraordinary Events turned to Master Chef, Patricia Quintana, Mexico’s most treasured chef and cookbook author. Quintana traveled from her restaurant in Mexico City to give attendees a true taste of the flavors of Mexico. During cocktails, Quintana’s menu featured local delicacies from the sea, paired with a variety of indigenous spices and chilies. At dinner, she served duck wrapped in Mayan banana leaves, a difficult dish to prepare off-site. It was done to perfection and served with her very unique tamales. Dessert offered a trio of traditional puddings.

Because this was the first time Quintana had catered an off-premise meal, Extraordinary Events hired catering director, Joann Roth, to serve as an advisor to Quintana. With the assistance of Roth, Quintana knew to prepare many of her ingredients beforehand, cooking off only a few essential elements at the on-site professional field kitchen that had been painstakingly delivered by ferry.

Tables at the event were lit by candlelight and covered in linens in the color of sea foam and embellished with taupe embroidery. Centerpieces consisted of a clear glass vase filled with small seashells and topped with a glorious display of fragrant roses in a tribute to Seal’s biggest hit, “A Kiss from the Rose.” Executives were seated with new colleagues in keeping with the client’s desire that everyone leave the conference with more knowledge of other offices and other teams.

As quickly as it began, the rain stopped and the event team moved out to dry off all the tables, remove wet cushions and linens and reset for the show which, in spite of the rain, went on without a hitch.

In the end, this event demonstrated all the objectives the client had set out for its executives – teamwork, innovation and flexibility in the face of change and challenge. This gala dinner provided a much-needed networking opportunity which gave the employees the chance to gain a better understanding of the history and future plans of Cemex.

Crystal Winner: Andrea Michaels, Extraordinary Events, Sherman Oaks, California, USA
Client: Cemex
Program: Cemex Executive Conference

Most Outstanding Catered Event at an Incentive Program
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ombining the cultural, scenic and cosmopolitan aspects of Cape Town, South Africa, along with a true Big Five game safari near the Kruger National Park in a number of the top Private Game Reserves, was only the beginning of a fantastic incentive program developed by Dragonfly Africa (Pty) Ltd.

Dragonfly Africa presented an extremely high-end dinner on behalf of BMW North America as part of an incentive trip to South Africa. The trip was designed to reward the top achievers which consisted of New Vehicle and Certified Pre-Owned Sales Managers and Client Advisors, as well as Financial Services Managers who earned this award over the course of a year. The trip allowed participants to enjoy two very diverse locations while coming away with a balanced, but highly authentic African experience. In terms of this award, the dinner was a culmination of a five-day program in which the participants came together in an entirely unique situation to celebrate the end of a successful trip and receive their relevant awards and acknowledgements for qualifying.

The objective of the dinner was to surprise the participants, since providing a catered event of such magnitude in such a remote location is truly challenging. The exclusive nature of a Private Game Reserve makes it difficult to bring together a couple of dozen participants, but in this case, Dragonfly Africa had to cater to more than 200 people.

To find an environmentally friendly location, suitably flat and able to be cleared for the event was one of the challenges. It required lengthy negotiations with the National Parks Board, the Sabi Sands Committee, individual Bush lodge owners, and many more. Being in a Private Game Reserve adjacent to the Kruger National Park, the site was exposed to many wild animals, including the “Big Five,” consisting of elephants, rhinos, leopards, lions and buffalos. They are called the “Big Five” not because of their size, but because they are the most dangerous of all animals to hunt. If a hunter were to just injure one of these animals instead of killing it, he would then become the hunted. Each one of these animals has a reputation for pursuing its attacker with intent to kill. This presented a risky element for staff setting up prior to the event, as well as co-coordinating and directing over 200 participants to the site, after a game drive, after dark. Night time is when many of the big predators, such as Leopards and Lions, do their hunting, so particular care needed to be taken.

On-site, Dragonfly Africa made use of staff recruited by the incentive house, JNR Incorporated. These key players were Peter Striffolino, a well-renowned and highly experienced chef who had catered similar events all around the world, and Yvonne Short from Conservation Corporation Africa, who edited and published three cookbooks. Their talents were well supported by a brigade of chefs from Londolozi and a 27 person wait and bar staff.

Dragonfly Africa covered all the bases with a large Bedouin tent that was flown in from Cape Town to serve as the structure for the event. A generator was brought in for some aspects of the catering along with stoves, burners, plate warmers, bain-maries, chaffing dishes and a considerable amount of crockery and cutlery.

Since BMW had very specific requirements for the look and feel, special tablecloths were shipped from the USA. Silver cutlery, crystal cut glassware and a special wooden deck were also part of the décor.

To provide hot meals, five special insulated hot-boxes were sourced in the USA and shipped to South Africa. This allowed much of the food to be prepared in the camp kitchens and then transported to the event—a 20-minute distance by Land Rover.

Appetizers included tiger prawns on skewers with sweet chili dip and biltong and butternut bruschetta. For the main course, salad of roast duck on a bed of lentil salad was served with grilled cinnamon pears and ginger dressing. The menu also offered grilled filet of beef with merlot reduction and caramelized sweet onions and roasted potatoes. Dessert included chocolate marquis with candied orange segments with cinnamon essence and clotted clove cream.

As a special conclusion to the program, a local school was funded by the dinner initiative. The school survives purely on the donations of clients that visit the Nature Reserve, and BMW was excited to be a part of such a worthy cause while awarding their employees.

Crystal Winner: Michael Waller, Dragonfly Africa (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa
Client: BMW North America
Program: BMW North America Grand Travel Award Gala Dinner
USMotivation ‘Wows’ the F5 Circle with the Sights and Sounds of Aruba

The F5 Circle of Excellence Sales Incentive Program is a long-running awards trip that rewards F5 Networks, Inc. sales force and system engineers from North America and 14 other countries. This year’s awards trip included a five-day/four-night extravaganza to the Hyatt Regency Aruba in January of 2006. USMotivation was happy to be a part of this incentive program once again.

The main objective of the F5 Circle of Excellence incentive program is to increase international sales growth by unifying and growing the sales teams worldwide. Along with motivating them, F5 and USMotivation had to consider different cultures and communities when devising an event schedule. Each event had to take into consideration many different diets and cultural restrictions so each participant would feel welcome.

USMotivation and F5 were able to “wow” their Circle of Excellence top performers with a once-in-a-lifetime extravaganza that would not soon be forgotten. This included deluxe accommodations, fabulous food, outstanding events and extraordinary activities.

The final night party was the pinnacle of the F5 Circle of Excellence experience and was anything but ordinary. Each night’s cocktail reception and dinner led up to the final night party on the Hyatt Beach.

In keeping with an Aruban tradition of Carnivale, the Farewell Carnivale Beach Bash occurring on the final night was an unbelievable undertaking, offering participants great food, fun and games, lively entertainment, the longest conga line in history and lots of laughter.

Upon entering the Carnivale Beach Bash, participants were greeted with a cool drink and could linger in the sand and watch the slide show video of their week in Aruba. A great dinner was next on the agenda and then special announcements and recognition of stellar performances were given. Next came the dancing. The energetic and lively local band, Oreo, kicked off the event in high style. When the band took a break after an hour of straight music, a marching band danced through the center of the event to the amazement of the participants. Deep purples, bright greens, and glittering golds illuminated the full moon night sky as revelers danced alongside the Carnivale Dance Troup and 10-piece steel drum band. Elaborate feathered masks adorned the faces of all the dancers. Echoed throughout the night were the sounds of hundreds of noise-makers and maracas as well as laughter and enjoyment from all the top performers.

The purpose of the end of the week Carnivale Beach Bash was not only to reward the top performers with an amazing and heart-stopping party, but also to give them a glimpse into the history of Aruba and provide them with an event they may never have seen if it were not for F5 and USMotivation. Also, the adults were able to thoroughly enjoy themselves and relax because they knew that their children were well taken care of by the Hyatt staff at Camp Hyatt Watapana. Children were entertained with movies, arts and crafts, fun foods for dinner and many laughs.

F5 achieved an overall “wow” factor and made special efforts to accommodate all top performers and included something for everyone no matter which country they called home. The excitement generated from this final night party is said to have motivated the sales teams to make sure they reach their goals next year in order to guarantee themselves a spot in the F5 Circle of Excellence. The event was a true experience, further cementing the commitment F5 has made to its sales teams around the world.

Crystal Winner: Jennifer Childress, USMotivation, Atlanta, Georgia, USA
Client: F5 Networks, Inc.
Program Name: F5 Circle of Excellence
Branded Experiences, Inc. was given the task to build an emotional sense of belonging to the “Winner’s Circle” employees of their client company. The program’s goal was to touch attendees’ hearts with an experience that they could relate to and associate with the company, and to instill in their attendees a sense that they belong to a company that cares, not only about them, but about their families and their values.

In order to convey this message, Branded Experiences, Inc. presented the client with an over-the-top “Welcome to Puerto Rico” concept for the first day of the company’s incentive trip to Puerto Rico. The reception featured 30 young children with flags, a 20 piece children’s choir, 15 teenagers with large banners, Paso Fino horses, local celebrity John Santana performing the National Pride song, and Miss Puerto Rico offering greetings.

Many challenges came about when implementing this welcome reception. Branded Experiences, Inc. went to a number of local schools in Puerto Rico to present their request for school children to participate in the presentation. This task proved to be difficult for the school officials to visualize exactly what the concept entailed and why they wanted the children to participate. However, after hiring a translator to help convey the message, the schools of Fajardo, Puerto Rico obliged. The next step was obtaining approval from the children’s parents. This whole process took months.

The largest challenge came on the day of the event when a tropical rain storm threatened the coast. Approximately 30 minutes prior to rehearsals with 85 people and six Paso Fino horses starting to arrive, storm clouds began to move into the area. With no other choice, Branded Experiences, Inc. moved the event indoors. All lighting and sound equipment had to be re-fitted into the ballroom. Luckily, the tropical downpour held off until the last piece of equipment was moved.

Sheets of 4’x8’ plywood were used to create a pathway for the horses to walk on so the carpet was protected. With 15 minutes to spare, the rough rehearsal was completed and the doors were opened to the attendees. While everyone on the team knew what had to be done, a completed full run through never happened. With more than 50 children between the ages of four and 15, all Branded Experiences, Inc. personnel could do was keep their fingers crossed.

When the time came, the show ran like clockwork. The children sang, the horses pranced and Miss Puerto Rico showed her magnificent smile as she welcomed the attendees to her country. With all 85 people standing proudly on stage, the company executive took the stage to thank each of the different performing groups for the spectacular heartfelt welcome. And with only a two sentence parallel, she stated how their company shares the values of family and culture as well. She shared that the company donated money to the children’s schools in this community rather than hiring an expensive choir. She also expressed how very proud they were to be able to help their community and have them perform for the attendees.

On completion of the executive’s short announcement, the song “Verde Luz” reprised and the children sang their hearts out as they made their way into the audience waving and passing their flags. The entire audience was given flags and stood with the children and waved the flags as the song played.

Attendees commented to executives that this was by far the most touching performance that they had ever attended. They felt as if the entire community came out to thank them for their efforts. The employees felt, and continue to feel, that they are part of a company that cares about them.
Sophisticated corporations seek high-octane, experiential events to reward their top sales people for a job well done, and to motivate them forward. Planning the Globe created a three-day incentive program for the 400 top performers of a major financial corporation. Despite numerous challenges, the program was viewed as a major success by the guests.

The Historic Greenbrier Hotel and Resort, located in the picturesque mountains of West Virginia, was the chosen venue. Planning the Globe held the first-night event at one of the Greenbrier’s famous spaces: the Bunker.

The mystique and curiosity of the Bunker provided the perfect setting needed to create the desired theme, “Mission Impossible.” The theme set the tone not only for the evening, but the entire day.

A private check-in area had been established where guests were ushered to awaiting CIA operatives who handed each couple a dossier of very detailed instructions regarding their mission. Guests were then offered an array of disguises and spy gadgets, as well as instructions as to where and when to rendezvous later that evening in full costume.

To add to the suspense, Planning the Globe convinced the CEO of the company to buy into the subplot by saying that the signature diamond studded award pins, which were handed out at the main awards gala, had been stolen and everyone was under suspicion. As guests assembled in the main lobby of the hotel, their understanding was that they would be transported to an off-site venue. However, they were left only to find the CEO announcing that everyone was under suspicion, and that they must follow him to an interrogation area! The desired affect of shock, horror, amazement and laughter was achieved.

On arrival, the excitement reached a crescendo as groups of 40 guests were taken into a decontamination chamber; unknowingly, the entry into the Bunker. After a quick blast of CO2 gas, guests were ushered forward into a futuristic world of high tech gadgets.

From the custom built DVD presentations, the futuristic décor, the overflowing food stations and martini bars, to the cleverly designed scavenger hunt which brought another interactive element into the mix, no detail had been left undone. The desired goal of guests getting into character had been achieved.

Even though the event went smoothly, the planning process did not. Planning the Globe faced several challenges during the pre-production of this event. Foremost among the challenges, and unknown at the time of contract signing, occurred when a major renovation of the Bunker was announced midway through the planning process. The renovation lasted until one week before production. This challenge was compounded by the fact that the space Planning the Globe thought they were getting was now going to be fundamentally different.

One solution that became a life line was befriending and then tapping into the builder’s knowledge and understanding of what changes were actually going to be taking place. Planning the Globe was even given access to the Bunker’s blueprints as a resource.

Planning the Globe never questioned whether or not the Welcome Night event would be perfect, despite the enormous challenges faced during the planning process. They pulled together as a team and delivered a unique, stellar and creative event. The result was an evening that many guests are still talking about today and a motivator for the company’s employees to strive to qualify for the program again in 2007.

“The event was the talk of the weekend and continues to be talked about today.”

Crystal Winner: David Felix, Planning the Globe, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, USA
Client: Financial Institution (confidential)
Program: Mission Impossible

2006 SITE CRYSTAL AWARDS
Fourth Wall Events was responsible for planning and executing three of the four evening functions for the IBM Golden Global Circle—IBM’s top tier incentive trip. Golden Circle attendees are an extremely select group, as the trip is awarded each year to only the top 1.5 percent of the company’s sales and service staff. Fourth Wall Events was tasked with creating evening events that would surpass the previous year.

The second night’s party presented the challenge of turning a public beach into a private venue at night, while maintaining the public use during the day. Fourth Wall Events’ goal was to create a one-of-a-kind, universally appealing, high-energy party with unforgettable décor and entertainment. This goal was executed by selecting the Atlantis’ West Beach as the venue. This choice of locale immediately made the evening stand out as unique to the IBM guests. But the venue also presented a day-into-night décor challenge. This challenge was turned into an asset by choosing a bamboo theme that created two different culturally-neutral atmospheres at the same party.

On-site logistics presented substantial hurdles for the team. The loading dock was a quarter-mile from the beach, and the Atlantis did not allow trucks to drive the route. Therefore, any equipment or décor installed had to be carried by hand or transported via golf cart along a path that threaded directly through the Atlantis’ heavily crowded outdoor recreation area.

In addition, to keep labor costs down, the décor, lighting, and audio system were installed once and left in place on the beach for three weeks; however, the hotel demanded that no lighting or production equipment be evident during that time since the West Beach was used daily by Atlantis guests. The challenge was to make sure everything the team installed would be sturdy, safe, and almost invisible, yet able to beat the Bahamian elements. Fourth Wall Events centered the event around the theme of bamboo. Bamboo is a natural element that would look attractive in daylight, would stand up to wind, sun, and rain and would not cause safety or aesthetic issues for the Atlantis.

On the night of the party, as guests entered, they were greeted by wait staff offering signature cocktails. The attendees then made a beeline to the gift hut, choosing from among a wide selection of light-up, blinking and flashing toys and costume apparel, including: sunglasses, necklaces, bracelets, hand-held fans and rings. Guests could visit two hair-braiding stations to have their hair adorned in the traditional Bahamian style. Dinner was served from buffets offering a wealth of traditional island fare, including lobster cooked over an open fire, blackened conch, grilled shrimp kabobs and an array of sumptuous desserts.

In daylight, the natural color and texture of the bamboo was a perfect match for the gorgeous beach setting. Then, as the sun set, the bamboo was lit in rich amber tones, creating a romantic feel. Once the sun was fully set, a fireworks barge silently moved into place in front of the beach, carefully positioned by split-second timing to be invisible to guests. Marking the transition from day to night, a limbo dance performance on the stage concluded with a dancer back-walking beneath a flaming pole held six inches above the floor. A dynamic tribal obeah dance performance followed, finishing at full dark. Just as the drumbeat of the dancers faded, fireworks lit up the night sky and reflected bursts of light onto the bamboo walls and the ocean below.

The grand finale of the fireworks display marked the transition from beach to nightclub. A celebrity disc jockey took the stage and guests kicked off their shoes and flocked to the sand “dance floor.” The bamboo walls turned into a high-tech surface that changed color to the beat of the music, surrounding guests with wild colors. The entire beach became a blinking tapestry, thanks to the light-up jewelry toys worn by guests. Attendees formed Congo lines, danced on the stage, and partied to the night’s end.

All of these elements combined to result in an event that IBM employees from all over the world experienced as unique and unforgettable.
With a record number of over 300 participants, Dubai was host to the fifth European SITE Networking & Education Program (ESNEP) during the spring of 2006. The purpose of this annual program is to provide networking and educational opportunities, while also introducing an emerging incentive destination to the participants.

ESNEP Dubai proved to be a spectacular three-day event, offering its participants a first-hand view of all Dubai has to offer as an incentive destination. Focusing on the theme “Where History Becomes the Future,” the educational sessions began with an outstanding keynote presentation from Chris Smith on globalization, cultural differences and resulting business implications. The educational topics were offered to participants through plenary, panels and breakout sessions, providing insightful information on topics such as future trends of the market with young leaders, in-depth and quick-fire case studies, personal development, external media, communications and a session on growing your business.

In addition to the educational sessions, a special panel called “Dubai Showcase,” was comprised of expert panelist on Dubai who shared with the audience the history and current state of the city, as well as the future of the destination as a whole. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the region or request insightful information that would help attendees deliver future incentive travel to Dubai.

When planning the conference, the ESNEP planning committee made sure to incorporate the range of experiences Dubai as a destination could offer. Every effort was made to showcase the rolling dunes of Dubai, the evolving and rapid growth of the city and the award winning architecture that exists in this young city.

When the participants weren’t expanding their knowledge base during educational sessions, a variety of networking activities were also planned for the group. On a warm Thursday afternoon, 60 Jeeps pulled up to the Jumeirah Beach Hotel and transported 350 participants to the desert for a three-hour desert adventure! The Jeeps plummeted over sand dunes as the view of the desert caught the passengers in awe. At sundown, the Jeeps came to a halt to allow the trekkers the chance to experience the sunset on the desert with a glass of champagne. Traditional Middle Eastern dress was provided for the men and women to wear for the evening. With Middle Eastern meals, belly dancers, camel rides and smoking from the hookah pipe under the stars, a true Arabian Night Adventure was in place.

The next day provided just as much fun with an afternoon cruise showcasing the Dubai skyline and the building of Palm Island. An evening beach party in front of the Jumeirah Beach Hotel closed the conference, and with enthusiasm from all turned into an all-night party with the Burj al Arab in the background.

More important than the conference itself, was the opportunity for worldwide SITE delegates to interact. Delegates from over thirty countries and nationalities were represented at the conference, making this one of the most diverse ESNEPs thus far. By allowing the attendees to be exposed to the destination, they were able to recognize Dubai as a very westernized and commercial destination with English as the universal language, making it easy for participants to communicate and interact with one another.

An indicator of the success of ESNEP Dubai, was the enthusiasm and energy amongst the worldwide guests. The gracious hosts from Dubai have set the precedence for the destination, as well as ESNEP that offered sound incentive and travel education both in a meeting room and on a sand dune. The goal was met. *
SITE CRYSTAL AWARDS: PREVIOUS WINNERS

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American Limousine
Amorde Incentive Marketing
Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel
Australian Incentive Travel Company
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Briggs Red Carpet Associates
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California Leisure Consultants
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Castle Tours
Celebrity Cruises
CiEvents
Condor Travel
Creative Incentives (USA)
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Delaney Marketing Consultants
Desert Caravans
Destination Resources
Dittman Incentive Marketing
Don Jagoda Associates
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Eshet Incentives & Conferences
Experiences Unlimited
Extraordinary Events
Famous Event Group
Famous Events & Destinations
Fletcher & Associates
French Government Tourist Office
Gallagher/Wold, Inc.
Global Incentives
Granaada & Partner
Grant Associates
Green Route Zimbabwe
Group Travel Coordinators (GTC)
Harith Productions
Hong Kong Convention & Incentive Travel Bureau
Hong Kong Tourist Association
House of Seagram
Incentive Consultants
Incentive House Brasil
Incentive Marketing, Inc.
Incentive Travel LLC
Incentive Travelers Cheque Int'l.
InterContinental Hotels
Irish Tourist Board
Janice's Creative Thinking
Landmark Travel South Pacific
Las Vegas CVB
Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group
Marcom Motivational Incentives
Maritz Canada
Maritz Travel Co.
Marketing Innovators International, Inc.
Marketing/Tours, Inc.
Marriott International Meets Plus, Inc.
MotivAction, LLC
Netherlands Board of Tourism Network, Inc.
Northwest Orient Airlines
Norwegian Caribbean Lines
Osborne Incentive Company
Pacific Rim Incentives, Ltd.
Pacific World Destination
Pan Pacific/Atlantic World
Party Planners West
Pattie Roscoe & Associates
PGI
Phoenix & Valley of the Sun Convention & Visitors Bureau
Premier Incentives
PSS/World Medical, Inc.
Ray Bloch Productions.
Roscoe/Cottrell, Inc./Business Incentives
Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce
Shaklee Corporation
Sheraton Corp.
Singapore Tourist Promotion Board
Sun Microsystems
Sunbelt Motivation & Travel, Inc.
Sunquest Incentive Travel
Supertravel Ltd./Graham Marketing Group/Business Incentives
Sydney Convention & Visitors Bureau
The Blind Maker, Austin TX
The Breakers
The Extra Mile Company, Ltd.
The Incentive Consultants
The Journeymasters
The Light Group, Inc.
The Meeting Architects
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Tirol Incentive Service
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Tony Graham & Associates
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Travel Awards Ltd.
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