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RECOGNITION PROGRAM

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President’s Pen

Crystals Allow Us to Learn from the Best

Learning what works from our peers is the true power behind SITE. The SITE Crystal Awards Recognition Program helps us to avoid recreating the wheel and allows us to showcase those programs that have provided meaningful results for our client organizations throughout the world.

This year I am thrilled to report that a record number of entries were received for the industry’s most prestigious recognition program and that seven programs met the high standards required to be considered among the best of the best. The 2004 SITE Crystal Awards winning programs highlight initiatives that helped build customer loyalty, increase client expenditures and reward outstanding performance. All of these challenges were met during less than perfect economic times and should serve as a shining example of the power that incentives can offer to a variety of clients in pursuit of their goals in spite of reduced budgets and other challenges.

Executives in this industry have seen the best and the worst over the past few years, but these awards give us a chance to stop for a moment and celebrate our unique industry. This program allows SITE to accomplish two different goals simultaneously. The Crystal Awards serve as an important reminder about the good that incentive programs can provide to our clients while also allowing us to revel in how the fun and creativity that our industry generates can translate into dynamic results.

I would like to thank William Vastine, Ph.D., Galactic, Ltd. and Eugene de Villiers, The Extra Mile Company, Ltd. for serving as Co-Chairs of the 2004 SITE Crystal Awards Committee. Also serving on the committee were: Nathan Brainard, The Eden Roc, A Renaissance Resort & Spa; Manuela Calchini-Smith, The Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh; Michael Goldsmith, Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority; Michele Hayes, Strategic Meetings and Incentives, LLC; and Patricia Lescoe, Mandarin Oriental – Washington, DC. This group’s vision and leadership provided guidance to help make this year’s program a success. Working in conjunction with the SITE Headquarters team, they helped improve the process and expand the number of entries as well as increase international participation.

I hope you enjoyed the Crystal Awards Luncheon at this year’s SITE International Conference. Bringing the awards back to conference provided our members with a dynamic learning experience that will expose them to new ideas and best practices. In fact, I hope you will be inspired by this year’s winning programs and make plans now to enter the 2005 SITE Crystal Awards Recognition Program.

Roger Tondeur
SITE President
Target Wakatipu Offers “5-Star” Results on a Budget

THE MOST CREATIVE USE OF AN INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO SOLVE A MARKETING PROBLEM – EXTERNAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

212F was presented with the challenge of creating a five-star incentive program for Drive, a classified section in Melbourne’s premier broadsheet newspaper, The Age, used by a range of automobile dealerships to advertise new and used cars. 212F needed to create a program specific to Drive, but that other classified sections could also utilize in the future if required.

The previous incentive program, designed by a competitor of 212F, was a luxury trip to the Italian Grand Prix with a budget of AUD3.5 million. 212F’s first challenge was to plan a trip that would live up to the expectation of the target audience, primarily owners and managers of automobile dealerships, but do so on a budget reduction of approximately 85 percent. They needed to deliver a solution that would still provide their client with growth, a competitive advantage, and a return on investment of 2:1 — all on a fraction of past budgets.

To overcome that challenge, 212F set individualized advertising spend targets for all program participants as part of the program structure. The targets were established at a level to ensure that program costs such as set up, management and communication were covered, which also improved the 2:1 return on investment goal.

The bigger challenge was to match and exceed the experience of participants in the previous program. 212F had one chance to gain the target audience’s involvement and did so by providing a far more creative, exciting and surprising program than ever before. 212F grabbed the participants’ imagination at the launch and maintained it throughout the program. The destination for the program, Target Wakatipu, was Queenstown, New Zealand, which is often referred to as the adventure capital of the world. 212F used that theme to enforce the idea the trip was exciting as well as luxury — if the previous reward was the Italian Grand Prix, then Target Wakatipu was going to be the ride of their life.

The program launch was especially important. It was the first opportunity to communicate to the target audience how exceptional the destination was and that they could not miss seeing Queenstown the “Drive Way.” 212F brought everyone together for the launch in a Queenstown-themed setting to create an air of anticipation for what was to come. For further enticement, guests were left with a lovely bottle of New Zealand wine.

Once they had the participants engaged, 212F continued with creative communication to keep interest high. On a monthly basis, participants would receive an electronic copy of their progress in a tracking graph, complete with Queenstown background and bars that looked like mountain peaks. The progress reports also allowed for motivational and informational messaging.

The team at 212F spent many hours brainstorming about the creativity they could implement to ensure that every element of Target Wakatipu was five-star. With limitations on business-class flights to and from New Zealand, they decided to charter a flight through Qantas in order to control all elements of the flight quality. In addition to a first-class menu, each guest received a spare seat next to them for the duration of the flight, an upscale welcome kit and a themed ski jacket to prepare them for the cold Queenstown weather. Everything was themed and branded with the Drive and Target Wakatipu logos, even the plane itself.

In keeping with 212F’s desire to outdo previous experiences for the participants, they decided to inject adrenaline upon arrival. After landing in Queenstown, guests were loaded into jet boats and whisked down Lake Wakatipu at breathtaking speeds. On the way, boats stopped at a clearing where a traditional Maori welcome was given to all guests before continuing on. When the boats docked, champagne and snacks were offered while guests completed their hotel check-in dockside.

Since the highest accommodation in Queenstown was four-star, 212F selected a hotel that was in keeping with the theme of Target Wakatipu. For five-star quality, 212F brought in additional staff and offered guests turn down service, CD/DVD players with personalized CDs, complimentary bottled water, extended bar hours and robes in all rooms. Rooms were also branded and customized with flowers, gifts and special toiletries.

The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. 212F overcame all challenges — the least of which was an 85 percent budget reduction — and created an incentive reward program that not only pleased the participants, but exceeded client expectations and provided Drive with a 3:1 return on investment.

Crystal Winner: Simon Hilton, 212F, Melbourne, Australia
Client: The Age
Program: Target Wakatipu

site
Ultimate Rewards Offers Incentives to Fit All Demographics

The Most Creative Use of an Incentive Program to Solve a Marketing Problem – External Marketing Campaign

Since the early 1970s, LexisNexis™ has been a leader in providing authoritative legal information to the entire legal community, including law schools, legal firms and the public courts. It strategically markets to law school students with the hope that, once they have graduated, the new attorneys will favor the research service they used most while in school. The LexisNexis Ultimate Rewards (LNUR) program was developed by MotivAction, LLC as a direct result of intense pressure from a top LexisNexis competitor’s reward program.

LNUR was created at the beginning of the 2002–2003 school year with varying degrees of success. The challenge MotivAction faced when planning the 2003–2004 program was to enhance and expand the program to keep it fresh and attractive to currently enrolled students, engage new students with the company brand, and stay ahead of the competition.

Students were invited to enroll in LNUR by onsite LexisNexis representatives who staffed information tables, held seminars, and posted program details on Web sites and in the law school buildings. Representatives also gathered data on each student during the program registration and used that to create an individualized profile for every participant. The profiles allowed LexisNexis to provide updates on products and services specific to that student’s interests. Creative communication was sent via electronic newsletters, strategically placed graphics on the LNUR Web site and a banner at the top of the LexisNexis Research System. The banner displayed current point and sweepstakes balances and provided links to the specific program Web site as well as a page about the student’s law school.

Once in the program, students could earn points through several different activities. From the start, the student earned 100 points just by registering. Points were rewarded for utilizing the LexisNexis research system, along with the opportunity to receive an “Instant Win” — either LNUR points, a sweepstakes entry, or a choice of a gift certificate. Additionally, “On the Spot” was a tool available to LexisNexis representatives so they could reward students at their discretion. Representatives could also hand out Ultimate Certificates, redeemable for LNUR points and/or sweepstakes entries. Students could also participate in online LexisNexis tutorials, product trials and quizzes, and Build Your Future training classes to earn points.

The award options offered by LNUR were expanded by establishing an association with Amazon.com™. Through LNUR's Ultimate SuperStore, students could redeem points earned with LNUR for millions of items. Instead of the few hundred award choices available during the reward program the previous year, students had their choice of the vast majority of products offered through Amazon.com. This created an astounding differentiation between the LexisNexis reward program and that offered by their competitor.

Another edge LNUR gained over their competitor was due to a goal-based objective each student could strive to achieve. If they earned 2,000 or more points in a semester, the student was granted ELITE status. Those students received a special newsletter, saw their ELITE status indicated on the computer screen when logged into the system and had exclusive opportunities to earn LNUR bonuses not offered to non-ELITE members. By making ELITE status available, LexisNexis cemented the loyalty of high-volume users.

In addition to the Ultimate SuperStore offered through Amazon.com, MotivAction set up the Ultimate Rewards Sweepstakes. This promotional tool offered the Grand Prize winner the choice of a Lexus RX 330, US$50,000 in law school tuition or a US$50,000 trip for two around the world. Students could earn sweepstakes entries through program activities and one student from each school was selected at random to become a finalist — earning 10,000 LNUR points and an entry into the Grand Prize drawing.

By offering literally millions of awards options that had the potential to appeal to all demographics, MotivAction and LexisNexis greatly improved upon the pilot Ultimate Rewards program. The 2003–2004 program surpassed its goals with a final registration of 66,900 students, a 50 percent increase in graduating students with a preference for LexisNexis over its competitor and a larger share of students still in school.

Crystal Winner: Bill Bryson, MotivAction, LLC, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Client: LexisNexis
Program: LexisNexis Ultimate Rewards
Travel Dynamics Group, Inc. was given the task of designing an incentive program for WBNS-TV, a station in Columbus, Ohio, US, facing increased advertising competition from other stations in the market and other advertising outlets. WBNS-TV felt it was time to go beyond the typical party or sales call and create an incentive trip that would strengthen loyalty with their current customers and develop new business.

Invited to participate in the trip were WBNS-TV’s top 15 advertising customers and five potential new customers. The new customer targets had been identified as major advertising spenders with competitor stations. Completing the incentive group were five station executives. The relatively small number of guests gave the trip a more intimate, relaxed feel, allowing WBNS-TV executives to bond with the established and potential advertisers.

Advertiser participants were company general managers and owners, and therefore fairly sophisticated travelers. Travel Dynamics Group, Inc. needed to plan a trip attractive and intriguing enough to motivate advertisers to attend. The Canadian locations of Vancouver and Whistler were chosen for the range of activities and beautiful atmosphere. The contrast between sophisticated Vancouver and the quaint alpine village of Whistler also added to the appeal.

The first evening in Vancouver, after an exclusive flight in from Columbus on a private jet, guests boarded a luxury yacht just steps away from the hotel for a sunset cruise. The boat docked on Granville Island for dinner in a gourmet restaurant with fantastic views of the Vancouver skyline. The following day, participants enjoyed a trip to the top of Grouse Mountain, stopping for lunch at the Capilano Suspension Bridge overlooking a dramatic river gorge.

The day of optional activities in Vancouver included golf on an exclusive course, a shopping tour and a sailing regatta on Vancouver Harbor with lunch on an island in the bay. The sailing trip proved to be the most popular, with the boat captains regaling passengers with local folklore, keeping everyone entertained as guests had the opportunity to actually sail the boats themselves.

Travel Dynamics Group, Inc. wanted to include a day in Victoria before leading the group to Whistler, but the logistics presented a challenge. To overcome that, floatplanes were chartered for a dazzling 35-minute flight, as opposed to using ferries, which can take several hours. Classic double-decker buses took the guests to downtown Victoria, where a Queen Elizabeth look-alike surprised the group during afternoon tea at the Fairmont Empress.

The rest of the afternoon in Victoria offered a choice of activities designed for both the more active guests and those who wished to relax. The guests then returned to the dock to again board floatplanes for a breathtaking 45-minute flight along a mountain range, landing on the waters of Green Lake in Whistler.

A day of leisure in Whistler brought more encounters with nature. While some played golf on one of the challenging resort courses, others opted for the Ziprek Experience — an incredible journey on a series of cables and suspension bridges, exploring the hidden beauty of the forest valley between Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. After working up appetites, the group headed for a six-course dinner at the hottest gourmet restaurant in the village, the Bearfoot Bistro.

The final day was truly unique. Guests were taken by helicopter to circle a magnificent glacier so they could view the intense shades of blue in the deep crevasses before landing on the glacier for an afternoon of food, music and recreation. Another trip to the top of the world was planned for that evening, but in a completely different style. The group boarded ski gondolas at the base of Blackcomb Mountain for an 18-minute ride. At the mid-point, where the gondolas normally open to allow skiers on and off, waiters jumped into each gondola and gave each guest a glass of champagne and hors d’oeuvres. At the top of the mountain, the guests sat for dinner and cocktails in a traditional Inuit setting.

On the final day of the trip, the group departed by private jet for the return flight to Columbus. They took with them gifts given throughout the trip, such as an insulated jacket, photograph of themselves on the glacier, a boxed sampling of Canadian maple syrups, Canadian ice wine and other local items. In the 90 days following the incentive trip, WBNS-TV experienced an unprecedented 38 percent increase in advertising dollars spent by the current customers that participated in the trip. Of the five potential advertisers, four made buys within the same time frame. In addition to a once in a lifetime opportunity, the trip had proved to be an overwhelming success for WBNS-TV.

Crystal Winner: Kim Hester, Travel Dynamics Group, La Jolla, California, USA
Client: WBNS-TV, Columbus, Ohio, USA
Program: WBNS-TV Customer Incentive Trip
Elar Canada, a broker incentive trip developed by PGI for their client, Elar Partners, was based on the theme, “Dreams and Discovery.” Taking place in three different Canadian destinations, Victoria, Vancouver and Whistler, the trip provided its guests with a unique, first-hand experience of the history, culture, food and environment of British Columbia.

PGI was chosen to provide full production and destination management. With several events planned, they assembled a large production team. Each event was assigned a team with its own production manager. Program scheduling required simultaneous preparation and set-up of events — on more than one occasion, one event would be in rehearsal while another was being installed while even another was actually occurring.

A specific goal of the client was to have transportation be as exciting and creative as the events themselves. PGI designated a transportation manager to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for the program. Several unique modes of transferring guests from venue to venue were a parade of bagpipers leading the way from the Empress Hotel to the Royal BC Museum, double decker buses, a squadron of floatplanes, a flotilla of motor yachts and a fleet of voyageur canoes.

When they arrived at each location, guests were offered a distinctive perspective of British Columbia’s people and history. The first event was located at the Royal British Columbia Museum, which houses a series of galleries and exhibits. A breakfast introducing the proud heritage of Victoria was topped off by a visit from a Queen Elizabeth II look-alike, who even bestowed an honorary knighthood on the host of the program.

A special highlight of the trip was a surprise to the guests and took place in Hatley’s Castle. Told they were attending a rehearsal of an official government ceremony, they were actually participating in a musical murder mystery. All 120 guests were costumed, also a surprise as the guests did not know they would be wearing costumes until the day before.

The voyageur canoes took guests to Crippen Park on Bowen Island, which was recreated as a First Nations fishing village. A celebration of traditional native song and dance completed the theme. PGI consulted Chief Leonard George, a member of the Burrard Inlet First Nations Tribe, who stated that the recreation had made him proud.

Rounding out the list of events were a turn-of-the-century logging show and party at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, with the final evening focused on the pristine wilderness of British Columbia. In a rain forest in the shadow of coastal mountains, a transparent tent was erected and filled with custom décor. The effect created a magical experience to conclude the trip.

PGI showed an especially strong aptitude for overcoming the challenges presented to them during planning. The first challenge took place in the form of a renovation site at the arrival area of Hatley’s Castle. Instead of masking the area, PGI decided to integrate it into the experience, telling guests they were invited to the induction of a recently excavated historical document.

Another challenge was that Crippen Park on Bowen Island is a high-use public park on an island with limited resources. PGI appealed to the local council and neighborhood for special permission to use the park and exceed curfew. After gaining approval, the team invited the mayor and island police to that event, who offered congratulations to PGI for exceeding their expectations.

The most creative solution was provided for the challenge of the only reception venue at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver — the hotel’s pool. The solution was a creative program with a synchronized swim team at the forefront. The performance was accompanied by a jazz trio set up on a stage platform over the Jacuzzi, ensuring each guest a front row seat.

The true testament to the success of this program was the sustained energy and excitement among the guests. The organization and planning that went into each event was vital to the accomplishment of goals, and everyone came away with a strong sense of satisfaction. Along with the client and guests, PGI shared in the journey of Elar Canada, dreaming big and discovering new experiences.

Crystal Winner: Kirsten Strand & Richard K. Lowy, PGI, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Client: ELAR Partners
Program: Elar Canada

site
Rat Pack Themed Palm Springs & Las Vegas Get Away Provides “Ring-A-Ding-Ding” Results

MOST OUTSTANDING INCENTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAM – 5 NIGHTS OR MORE, OVER 200 PARTICIPANTS

Viacom Television appointed Incentive Travel, LLC the task of planning a reward program designed to motivate CBS and UPN advertisers to meet aggressive advertising revenue goals. Originally, Russia had been selected as the destination, but the war in Iraq caused Viacom executives to ask Incentive Travel to design a domestic program.

Participants had already been introduced to the program planned around Russia, so Incentive Travel, LLC needed to develop an event so intriguing and remarkable that the advertisers would know it was an experience not to be missed. They decided on Palm Springs, California, with a 24-hour Fly-Away to Las Vegas, Nevada. The participants were to be taken back to the days of the Rat Pack and dry martinis through themed events.

Advertisers were given several promotional items on the Palm Springs and Las Vegas trip, and a customized Viacom Web site was constructed to register participants once they had qualified. Guests could then use the site to enter their preferences, travel arrangements and personal information.

The La Quinta Resort & Club was chosen for the accommodations. A welcome reception the first night included a celebrity cook-off with well-known Palm Springs chefs serving their specialties and sharing recipes with the guests. Incentive Travel, LLC secured the celebrity chefs by booking dining experiences for the group around their restaurants that week.

Another highlight of the program was a nostalgic visit back to the days of the Rat Pack at Jack Benny’s estate. Vintage cars were rented to complete the atmosphere and celebrity impersonators were brought in from Hollywood. Attending the party were Marilyn Monroe, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Frank Sinatra and Jack Benny himself. Dean, Sammy and Frank took the opportunity to perform a little retro song and dance.

During their days at the resort, guests had a choice of spa packages, golf, horseback riding, shopping, desert jeep rides, bicycle express tours or tennis. For their convenience, guests remained checked into their rooms at La Quinta in Palm Springs while private chartered planes whisked them off for a Fly-Away to Las Vegas.

For that trip, guests were provided with specialized luggage for the overnight stay, as well as gambling money. Because CBS was a sponsor of the Celine Dion show in Las Vegas, Incentive Travel, LLC was able to secure VIP seating, plus a personal greeting from Ms. Dion during the show. After a night at the Bellagio Hotel, guests were returned to Palm Springs.

On the final night of the program, participants attended a themed gala — a night in the Roaring '20s. They were provided with costumes for the event, black tie tails and top hats for the men, and customized gowns for the women. The selection of the gowns was exciting as the women were given their choice of vintage designs purchased in Hong Kong, Thailand, New York and Los Angeles. The gala was topped off by a professional New York show with excerpts from the musical Chicago.

During the execution of events, Incentive Travel encountered several challenges, mainly in the form of the weather. Planners had not anticipated that Palm Springs would experience the hottest recorded temperatures in history during Viacom’s reward program, affecting golfing programs and a hot air balloon event. The heat and lack of rain also contributed to California wildfires, which started the day before the group’s departure and forced all airports in the region (Palm Springs, Ontario, Los Angeles and San Diego) to close for a day. Incentive Travel, LLC had transferred guests to the appropriate airports after confirming earlier in the day that they were open, only to find cancelled flights once they arrived. Guests were then transferred back to La Quinta and re-checked into the resort for another night’s stay.

Even with those challenges, the Palm Springs and Las Vegas trip was one of the highest rated events for Viacom. Estimates placed advertising revenues up by 12 percent, which Viacom attributed directly to the reward program. Due to the world economic and political situation, other stations had cancelled their incentive programs. By not canceling and instead adjusting the trip to a domestic destination, Viacom gained advertising dollars that may have gone to their competitors. Incentive Travel, LLC accomplished their client’s goals, impressed program participants and proved that it is creativity and innovation that make a program memorable.

Crystal Winner: Penny Wing, Incentive Travel, LLC, San Diego, California, USA
Client: Viacom Television
Program: Palm Springs & Las Vegas
Costa Rica Trip Shows the Power of Incentives in a Down Economy

Outstanding Incentive Travel Program – 5 Nights or More, Over 200 Participants

Nortel Networks implemented its Circle of Excellence (COE) program, now entering its 19th year, as an incentive plan open to sales employees. For the most recent program, Maritz Canada Inc. designed a trip to Costa Rica for the top 10 percent of sales overachievers and a few sales employees chosen by executive nomination. Though Nortel Networks had been experiencing perhaps its most difficult economic period, the company decided to retain its reward program with a reduced budget. Maritz delivered a trip that lived up to the excellence of programs before, balancing a group of approximately 500 participants.

Because the group was so large, the decision was made to split the trip into two waves, with one day overlapping to include an awards gala. The destination hotel, The Marriott San Jose, was chosen for its ability to accommodate several hundred guests at once. For the gala, which included all participants, Maritz maximized the ballroom space with creative decorating and table placement to create the effect of a much larger room.

At the awards gala, program participants are normally presented with recognition for their achievements. Maritz had sourced all of the awards and shipped them to Costa Rica for access during the gala evening. Unfortunately, they encountered an unexpected and extreme duty imposed on the awards gifts. After consultation with Nortel executives, Maritz decided to reship the awards to Canada, where they were then distributed to the winners’ homes, saving Nortel more than US$20,000. None of the program participants were disappointed at not receiving their awards at the gala and were actually relieved to not have to carry them through customs on their return trip.

Other than the gala, guests had several exciting events planned for them. Costa Rica posed a departure from the traditional COE destinations of sun and surf program participants had come to expect. Maritz wanted to entice participants’ imaginations and did so with activities planned around the exotic location’s culture, history, and amazing wildlife. The trip played upon Costa Rica’s eco-consciousness with ecological tours led by experienced tour guides, reinforcing to the to more than three hours, to deliver guests to and from events. To break up travel time, Maritz scheduled cultural and scenic activities along the way, such as traditional Costa Rican breakfasts, village market stops and lunches at cliff-side resorts.

The program also included a totally new element to the planned events. Participants were given the option to spend a day volunteering for projects at the SOS Children’s Village, a foster home in San Jose. They collaborated with the youth and staff to build furniture, plant flowers, install a fountain, clean, paint and generally improve the facilities. Participants also helped furnish a lab with computer equipment donated by Nortel Networks. The experience was posed as an opportunity to give back to the country guests were receiving so much from. Twenty percent of program participants took part in the volunteer activity, rating it very highly and requesting that similar events be included in future incentive programs.

In the previous year’s COE program, nine percent of the sales population at Nortel Networks achieved COE status. Due to the economic downturn, Nortel executives anticipated achiever results at the same level or even lower. For the Costa Rica program, 11 percent of the sales population earned the COE status — proving that the COE trip planned by Maritz provided an effective incentive role. In addition, the choice of Costa Rica as the destination turned out to be a valuable networking opportunity, since Costa Rica is located in the region of Nortel Networks’ Caribbean and Latin American sales organization. That region proudly played host to the rest of the organization.

Crystal Winner: Morag Donald, Maritz Canada Inc, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
Client: Nortel Networks
Program: Nortel Networks Circle of Excellence 2003

site
The Credit Goes to the Cuisine: Edible Masterpiece Lets Guests “Eat with Their Eyes”

Outstanding Catered Event at an Incentive Program

Harith Productions and the Ritz Carlton, Naples, FL, US were given the task of designing a one-of-a-kind catered event for the 2002 Chairman’s Club winners from VIASYS Healthcare Inc. While striving to meet their goals of a unique, experiential presentation, they also wanted to create a visually stunning experience that would brand The Ritz Carlton and give the five-star hotel a theme with a long shelf life.

The theme was designed around the diverse natural beauty and mystery surrounding the Florida Everglades. The majority of guests at the event had never been to this area of Florida, which turned the dinner into a learning experience. The plan was to take the guests on an epicurean journey of edible art featuring the unique natural resources of the Everglades — An Evening of Everglades Excellence.

One of the main challenges Harith Productions faced was sparking the interest and gaining the attention of a luxury resort without a major budget. By securing the event attendance of editors from Food Art, Successful Meetings, Incentive Corporate Meetings & Incentives, Medical Meetings, and Event Solutions magazines, Harith Productions was able to motivate the chef and catering department to treat the food presentation as an opportunity to showcase their creativity. This resulted in the highest level of performance.

The theme was extended to include the wait staff as well. The banquet team provided synchronized service at each table throughout the evening and rehearsed thoroughly with the producer beforehand. They were also given specially designed costumes to wear during the tightly scripted service, defining a new standard in actual food presentation.

The culinary process began with in-depth research of the Florida Everglades. Understanding and utilizing items indigenous to Southern Florida was an integral part of the event. The theme was presented to guests at the beginning of the meal in the form of a butterfly-shaped menu placed at each setting. Each course was written in a descriptive manner and as each plate was presented the story continued to unfold.

The first course provided a visual impact right from the start, setting the tone for the evening. The waiters produced a custom-made wooden circle with a series of shelves to hold the culinary delights. The circle stood on its side 16 inches in height and four inches in depth, so the food was at the eye level of guests. Each of the four levels had a different preparation of seafood from the Everglades, with one shelf lit to lend a glowing sensation to the vessel.

In order to avoid the traditional salad that is normally the forgotten course on the menu, the second course was a tangle of organic greens placed on a small silver cake stand — producing a level of elegance and again elevating the food product closer to the guests. Heart of palms stuffed with truffle mousse accompanied the greens.

For the intermezzo, chefs incorporated some of the flavors and plants from the Everglades, featuring a papaya mint sorbet with hibiscus granite and candied grapefruit confit. The combination was presented on colored ice to create the effect of the food resting on water.

The fourth course was presented on a 13-inch oversized glass plate in order to pick up different angles of the room décor and accent the rich flavor of the ingredients. The guests were treated to delicate slices of beef and a rich foie gras medallion, paired with a poached lobster tail, rock shrimp and a bouquet of baby vegetables.

For the dessert, a theme of butterflies created a living illusion on the plate. Different types and sizes of butterflies were portrayed at different levels and angles. A lavender and honey parfait with a crispy key lime shortbread and pineapple curd provided a delicious finale to a truly exceptional culinary experience.

The feedback from the guests and client confirmed the extraordinary nature of the event. By creating a visually stunning edible masterpiece, Harith Productions and The Ritz Carlton set a new benchmark in experiential food presentation — encouraging guests to “eat with their eyes.”

Client: VIASYS Healthcare Inc. Program: An Evening of Everglades Excellence

site
CHAPTER CHALLENGE

This year SITE launched an incentive program within the world-class Crystal Awards. All 28 SITE Chapters were presented with the Chapter Challenge for Crystals program where the chapter with the most entries would receive the following:

- US$400 to be issued to support Chapter expenses or upcoming meeting
- One (1) complimentary registration for winning Chapter President (or his/her designate) to the SITE International Conference 2004 in Merida
- Reserved seat at the head table at the SITE Crystal Awards Ceremony held in conjunction with the SITE International Conference 2004
- Press release highlighting the Chapter’s involvement in the Chapter Challenge for Crystals program.

SITE is pleased to recognize the SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER as the inaugural winner of the Chapter Challenge for Crystals. Congratulations!

SPONSORS

Crystal Awards Sponsors

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Creative Memories

Kosta Boda

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. This year’s entry and judging process was completely electronic to help level the 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 May 2003 and 31 May 2004 were eligible. Entries were evaluated by an independent panel of judges in the areas of return on investment, creativity, and mechanics.

JUDGES EVALUATING ENTRIES WERE:

Richard Aaron  
President, Biz Bash

Vince Alonzo  
Editor-in-Chief, Successful Meetings

Jeanne Casson  
Executive Editor, Incentive

Andy Cohen  
Editor-in-Chief, Incentive

Tyler Davidson  
Editorial Director, Meetings Media

Lisa Grimaldi  
Incentives Editor, Meetings & Conventions

Bill LaViolette  
Editor-in-Chief, Incentives & Meetings International

Matt Nicholls  
Director of Content, Meetings & Incentive Travel (Canada)

Janine Nunes  
Editor, Sales and Marketing Strategies & News

Barbara Scofield  
Editor-in-Chief, Corporate Meetings & Incentives

Laura Shepherd  
Independent Consultant

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The judging panel for the 2004 SITE Crystal Awards was composed of individuals well-versed in the field of incentive/motivational travel.
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