

An employer's asset, an employee's ultimate reward

Peak Performance | www.ppsmeetings.com

No Comments

In*cen*tive\, n. [L. incentivum.]

That which moves or influences the mind inciting determination or action.

“Group Travel Incentives... A total win-win!”

A powerful definition for a powerful result. Now add a life experience opportunity and you have the ultimate travel incentive reward. One of the greatest assets to any company's success is its people and a company's ability to nurture productivity by rewarding hard work and extraordinary efforts. However, most experts agree, money, although the most common, is not the best motivator as it doesn't last very long. Often when rewarded with cash bonuses or pay raises, the money is used to pay off debt or every day types of financial expenses, so the "reward" aspect is quickly over-shadowed and often not even felt. So what do employers need to do to effectively motivate employees from year to year?



Since our company specializes in designing and planning group travel incentive programs, client feedback is invaluable not only with respect to our services but to better understand what they are gaining from the use of their incentive programs. So with that in mind, I sat down with one of our clients who has been running a group incentive travel program for the past six years and posed questions to capture a few more nuggets of wisdom that we could bring to the next incentive program.

What do you want your incentive program to accomplish?

You name it, recognize employees, boost morale, pump up productivity, foster competitive spirit, and build employee loyalty in a way that is both different and memorable. The visible acknowledgement of one's accomplishments stimulates competitive spirit and camaraderie beyond our expectations. Group travel incentives not only address all these objectives but can also be used to improve company communication. But most importantly, we stay focused on the ongoing goal of rewarding our employees to ensure our continued success.

Why group travel incentive?

Our top executives have access to our individual sales team, to thank them for their past service and encourage them to "keep up the good work". We also found that our salespeople from across the country could share ideas and concerns. On one trip, we identified a concern that had not yet manifested itself in the sales reports; we were able to fix it *before* it was an issue.

Finally, the group aspect works, because our sales force returns from the trip and shares their experience with others in their own offices. Motivating others to make the trip next year and not miss out.



What are your employees saying to you about your group travel incentive program?

They enjoy that senior management takes the time to be with their employees, getting to know them, asking questions and just reinforcing their value to the organization. We found that destination travel encourages a continued dialogue and friendship with colleagues and upper management throughout the year.

In addition, the destinations and tour activities offered are those that they might never book for themselves. These are great life experiences, to see and do things that surpass their own personal budget or knowledge.

How do you keep your employees motivated after the program?

We launch next year's destination (either in North America or the Caribbean) while we are together at the current destination. People go home excited and motivated. After experiencing our incentive programs, the current winners want to be future winners. No one wants to be left back at the office after experiencing a trip for the first time! At our Gala Awards Ceremony, they have a great time, and are recognized in front of their peers and the executive staff, for their achievement. It's an event that everyone wants to be a part of, so our employees work long and hard to contribute to make the company as successful as possible, for us the travel incentive is a great success.

How do you budget for this event in the current economy?

We have had great success partnering with our vendors and clients to sponsor some of the events. The sponsors enjoy greater access to the sales team and everyone can enjoy a round of golf or a deep sea fishing trip! Your staff at Peak has been a great help in organizing the sponsor involvement. You were able to turn a great program into an amazing one by adding sponsored activities that we couldn't necessarily afford, but were a huge success with our employees.

Also, this past year, we had arranged our incentive program based on sales forecasts. Unfortunately, the forecasts were higher than actual; Peak Performance reduced our program costs by 25% just 60 days prior to the event and

helped secure more sponsorship! Our employees, were never the wiser, they had a wonderful time and are still talking about it.

Is there anything you might want to change or you think needs change to make sure the travel incentive is still producing a return on the investment?

Of course, costs are always a consideration. Our biggest concern is not being able to produce the same level of travel opportunity. Interestingly enough our own employees have come to us with ideas on travel incentives that they felt might be cost effective. The overwhelming feedback NOT to eliminate the travel incentive was evident so we just look to Peak Performance, our incentive travel planner to be creative. We won't give it up, it's been our greatest asset and our employers view it as their ultimate reward. It's a total win-win.

Bruce Rickert is President of Peak Performance Services, Inc., a tour, meeting and travel incentive destination management company that works with corporations in planning group and individual incentive programs to destinations throughout North America, Europe and the Caribbean.