

International Intern Orientation

OBJECTIVE: Introduce international interns to the company, corporate culture, staff, and other interns.

LOCATION: Tarrytown House Estate & Conference Center, Tarrytown, NY

STRATEGY

Inspire a relatively young sales force with a wow experience and provide the tools they need to continue the fast growth the company has undergone in the past few years.

BACKGROUND

Management consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton could have brought their MBA candidate interns to their offices for a few days of training, but the company wanted more than just information dissemination from its training sessions.

“The interns are MBA candidates who come from all over the world,” says Amy Bergs, MBA recruiting manager and one of the planners for two four-day orientations this past summer. “One of the big goals was to get them together so they could spend time with each other and learn about the company.”

Since the majority of attendees came from the East Coast of the United States and Europe, an off-site location in the general New York area works best for the groups, says Bixby Elliott, another MBA recruiting manager and planner of the meetings. Tarrytown House is an especially good fit for their groups, says Elliott, because “unlike other conference centers, where you’re inside all day long, the layout of this property allows us all to go outside and get a beautiful refreshing break between activities.” On 26 acres overlooking the Hudson River, 19th-century mansions mingle with contemporary conference facilities and a variety of recreational amenities, such as a fitness club, indoor and outdoor pools, and tennis courts.

PROGRAM

Since attendees were from all over the globe, the event planners selected “the Amazing Race” as the theme of the teambuilding exercises. “Teams competed in different activities throughout the four days, with the winners scoring ‘miles’ to tie into the theme,” says Elliott. Acquiring miles started right from the beginning, when they were awarded to the first group to decide on its name and then continued with exercises that ranged from building paper houses to an “American-Idol” style karaoke lounge set up by Tarrytown House. Attendees received miles for such achievements as the best duet and the most creative number. “A lot of the exercises are fun and goofy,” says Bergs. “The attendees get silly, but along the way they learn to work with each other and develop



▲ Tarrytown House can tie your group’s food functions into an overall meeting theme.

skills in problem-solving.”

In between teambuilding and training, even some meals took on the theme, such as a Mexican fiesta that Bergs notes Tarrytown House helped them tie into the overriding international concept with a specialty menu and decorations outside on the lawn. The big teambuilding activities took place on the final day, and, for these, Booz Allen called in a professional— Roy Charette, founder of Millbury, Massachusetts-based Training Path (formerly Team Development Institute). Charette worked with Bergs and Elliott to determine the goals of the teambuilding exercises, which were multifold, including communication skills, development training, sharing best practices, managing the unexpected, and more.

Then he worked with Tarrytown House to find the best setups to conduct activities with each group, specifically designed to meet those goals, such as “On Target,” where groups perform multiple small tasks to achieve miles. “At first they think they’re competing with each other,” says Charette, “but eventually they learn that if they share information and collaborate, everyone does better”.

RESULT

Through hands-on teambuilding, attendees came to understand the power of consensus building, fostering a sense of community, rotation of leadership, and the skills that Booz Allen deems essential to a successful internship experience.

For more information about how Tarrytown House Estate & Conference Center can set the scene for teambuilding and training events, contact Steve Sackman, regional director of sales and marketing for Destination Hotels & Resorts, at (914) 591-3113 or sackman@destinationhotels.com or check out www.tarrytownhouse-estate.com.