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Flying High: Creating Spectacular Events That Surpass All Expectations

If there's one surefire way to take an event from the so-so to the sensational, it's to dazzle guests with the unexpected.

Just ask Kristi Blotkamp, HR associate for Pulte Homes in Bloomfield, MI. She saw the "wow factor" in action at an awards dinner during her company's national president's meeting at The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, FL.

"All of our participants were in awe," she said. "The decorations were just spectacular."

A Dreamy Event

Pulte hired ME Productions of Pembroke Park, FL, to stage the event. They employed a low-lying fog to create a surreal, dreamy ambiance for the affair.

Blotkamp explained, "When we plan an event like this, we just want to take the attendee's breath away. We walked in and they had huge candelabras with flowers pouring out ... more flowers than most of the attendees have probably ever seen before. The attendees even commented that the flowers were 'better than what we had at our wedding!' The fog they created gave the event a wonderful, dream effect. It was beautiful."

Building Your Own Beach

NCR Corporation in Dayton, OH, recently brought more than 2,000 attendees to the Miami, FL, area for its annual conference. According to ME Productions vice president Lisa Jebb, the party really started when the sun went down. "On the evening of day seven, the Great Hall of the Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa in nearby Hollywood was transformed into a

But those weren't the only surprises NCR had in store. According to Barbara Swinger, manager of global meetings and events for NCR, the musical entertainment was provided by The Beach Boys, a fact that they kept secret from their attendees until the night of the event. She said, "In a matter of seconds they realized it, and the word spread quickly. They were all out on the dance floor. We provided plenty of seating, but people never sat down!"



Light Of The Party

For the next night of the NCR event, the Great Hall was totally transformed once again. According to Jebb, "It was decorated in an ultra-modern theme. Transparent columns equipped with color changers and rectangular prisms were dispersed throughout the ballroom, reflecting white and ice blue light everywhere. Custom curved white plexi-bars decked the room, providing a unique, 'space age' atmosphere. Clear acrylic tables equipped with dramatic lighting effects lit each table with gently rotating colors of light, creating a rolling light show throughout the room. The sculpturally clean-lined tables were dressed in spandex stretch linen that visually enhanced the effect by creating with each table a dazzling, contemporary structure. To complete the modern appeal, each table was outfitted with a customized ice sculpture centerpiece etched with the company logo."

Swinger explained, "Once we saw it, we were determined to work it into our budget. We knew it was going to be spectacular. When our chairman entered the room he said, 'This is elegant.' It was incredible. I don't know how we're going to top this next year."

Racing Against Time

Miller comments that reduced planning time is one the biggest challenges that is facing her