



IMPACTFUL EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE EVENTS

(In other words, elevate your event to PEAK potential!)

We've learned a thing or two over the years about creating impactful, talked-about, once-in-a-lifetime incentive events. To condense all that into just a few pages, we'll share with you some best practices to help guide your planning conversations and event development.

The following are excerpts from a presentation by Danielle Thompson [Senior Manager, Events at T-Mobile] and Chuck Santoro [Founder, Chief Creative] at Proscenium, during a conversation at the recent [Experiential Marketing Summit](#) in Las Vegas. The relationship between the two of them spans nearly a decade and they can finish each other's sentences when it comes to T-Mobile event production.

First, a brief overview about the T-Mobile PEAK Achievement incentive event. Like the soaring crest of Mount Haleakalā, this program is the pinnacle of recognition at T-Mobile, and celebrates just a fraction of one percent of all T-Mobile employees from all lines of business within the company (That's about 250 employees out of nearly 80,000!).



Winners and their guests are treated to a highly curated, 5-day Maui adventure, anchored at the stunning oceanfront Wailea Beach Marriott resort. Throughout PEAK, attendees are treated to evening socials and mixers, Maui excursions, an exclusive luau, a CSR experience, an intimate Town Hall with the Senior Leadership Team, and a tiki-bar inspired Club Magenta nightclub. All of this is capped with a breathtaking awards night under the stars - with the Pacific Ocean as the backdrop - providing a spectacular environment for each winner to enjoy a moment in the spotlight.

Alongside our client partners on the T-Mobile Events Team and our logistics partner Augeo, our strategy in developing the overall creative design and production is to ensure T-Mobile always shows up in a spectacular, talked-about, and culturally sensitive way. When approaching the planning process, there are three key concepts that are important to consider. Of course, we're writing this through the lens of a T-Mobile event, but these ideas can be applied anywhere. And as a guiding principle, we're not just taking a group to Maui and letting them do their own thing. We're giving them an experience of a lifetime they simply could not have anywhere else, or with anyone else.

LEAD WITH BRAND & GROUND IT IN A SENSE OF PLACE

(MAGENTA... BUT MAKE IT MAUI)

T-Mobile is a highly visual brand; the color magenta is the company's definitive, iconic color that can be seen from just about anywhere. We must be strategic about how the brand shows up throughout the gorgeous property and throughout every touchpoint of the event, from the pre-event travel packet to the final surveys. As a general rule, we avoid "theming" our events...the main theme is T-Mobile, and how the company shows up in a respective location. It's also essential that the brand integrates seamlessly with the environment in an authentic and natural way, so as to let Maui truly work its own special brand of magic and natural beauty.

A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW WE APPROACH THIS:



- The stunning arrivals and registration area was adorned with foliage and florals within the brand color palette, and anchored by gorgeous carved-wood backing walls.
- At the first evening reception, winners and guests were welcomed with a Tahitian-style performance by a local performance troupe, and we incorporated some small but impactful pops of magenta into the costumes and headpieces.
- To integrate more seamlessly with the other guests staying on property, T-Mobile provided a Starbucks gift card as a thank you, and to also provide awareness of the care and lengths that T-Mobile goes to recognize their employees.



- Our sustainable painted-wood custom directional area signage - evocative of surfboards - was eye-catching and vibrant, but integrated into the property. We also worked with a local sand sculpture artist to create a central piece that featured a sea turtle and a Monkeypod tree, among other natural elements.
- And the awards night stage, representing the culmination of the whole event, was designed to provide a beautiful foreground - larger than life PEAK letters adorned with lush foliage - with the stunning ocean and surrounding islands as background.



CREATE CONNECTIONS TO LEADERS, TO EACH OTHER, & TO THE LOCATION



During the planning process, we also place a lot of importance on crafting meaningful ways to facilitate connections - among attendees, with the Senior Leadership Team, and with the island itself. After all, there is significant value when the T-Mobile's Nō Ka 'Oī (the best of the best) connect with each other.

Throughout the week, the company's winners and guests have many opportunities to connect and meet - through evening social mixers, daily breakfasts, fitness sessions, a designated T-Mobile branded pool area, trivia night, and even strategically-assigned seating at the awards dinner. By the end of the PEAK program, many have made new, lasting friendships and lifelong connections.



A major anchor of the PEAK experience is that winners can enjoy a rare opportunity to connect with leadership throughout the week. As an example, our winner town hall is a unique open forum for candid discussions and questions about the state of the company, and its future. Often, there's significant impact from this employee feedback on company actions. Winners come with thoughtful questions, and the leadership team truly listens. They trust that what the winners are bringing to the business can and will effect positive change.



Another impactful way that leaders interact with attendees is by joining them on island excursions (catamaran trips, golfing, horseback riding, to name a few) fostering casual, fun, and authentic interactions. In this capacity, the leaders are relaxed - some of whom were even with their families, too - and really get to know the employees and their own families on a deeper level.



And to connect with the island itself, attendees had the opportunity to help seed native plants. T-Mobile has a strong focus on giving back and uplifting its communities, and this year helped the island's recovery efforts after the devastating fires through **"Seeding the Future,"** a hands-on program to help accelerate of native plant growth and reforestation.



GO ABOVE & BEYOND FOR THOSE WHO GO ABOVE & BEYOND

We really do need to move beyond a ballroom to create unforgettable experiences to make the best of the best feel truly celebrated and honored. It's easy to create an event where you'd fly 250 winners to Maui and send them off on their way, but we want them to have a custom T-Mobile experience they could never just plan on their own. Nothing we did was cookie cutter, and every element of the adventure is unique for them. A few examples here:



Our winner name wall, a commemorative structure wrapped around the property's gorgeous Banyan tree, symbolizes the connectedness of winners through the roots of the tree. It's a striking fixture throughout the event that is adorned with even more foliage on the final night of awards.

One essential component of the event is the awards night, where each winner crosses the stage, enjoys a moment in the spotlight, and shakes hands with the CEO and the president of their respective lines of business. We even have our resident DJ and voiceover artist - the voice of T-Mobile, William Lifestyle - provide brief descriptions in real time of each winner's achievements.



The physical trophy presented to each winner at PEAK has also evolved over the years, and has been thoughtfully designed to commemorate both the impressive achievement and the beauty of the Hawaiian islands. Each gorgeous trophy is hand-carved from native Monkeypod wood, and sourced on island from a local vendor. Not only is this a more sustainable approach, each trophy's natural wood grain makes each piece unique, just like each winner.

On the theme of recognizing top talent within the company – and as a memorable finale to the awards night – we even featured winners of T-Mobile's annual talent search to perform on stage for their fellow employees. We place a lot of importance on this part of the show, and in the weeks leading up to PEAK bring in Broadway musical directors and choreographers to work with these talent contest winners to really amp up their performance. Often these talent contest winners have never even performed live on stage before, and we treat them like the rising stars they are. This year, we staged a powerhouse singer on a soulful rendition of "One Call Away," and a custom T-Mobile anthem, "Jabulani!" – meaning "Let's celebrate!" – as an homage to one performer's South African heritage. These standout employee talent performances also serve as a reminder to everyone in the audience of the wide spectrum of talent that exists within T-Mobile.



Needless to say, the PEAK experience on Maui is the trip of a lifetime for so many of these deserving winners. **And what trip would be complete without lots of special souvenirs and gifts!** Even before winners arrive on island, they receive a curated gift box filled to the brim with items to make their travel a little more comfortable. And throughout the event, winners and guests have a daily opportunity to stroll through a custom gifting suite, overflowing with commemorative apparel, sustainable and local on-island crafts, beach towels, sandals, and so much more. All they have to do is show up and shop...it's all just waiting for them.



The PEAK winners would not be where they are without the support from their loved ones, and T-Mobile knows that and celebrates it. Much effort is also placed to ensure the guests feel valued and recognized, including the kids! The Magenta Kids program makes sure they feel the aloha too, with special programming, events, and personalized gifts just for the little ones. Oh, and we even created little onesies for the newborns!



The T-Mobile PEAK Achievement program continues to evolve and adapt each year, as we keep pace with changes within the business, new technologies, and ever-evolving audience preferences and tastes. However, we still consider every planning decision through one lens: How can we craft an experience for attendees that only T-Mobile can provide?

We hope that the examples we've provided are helpful in guiding your conversations when developing impactful employee incentive events. And please reach out to us to see how we can help continue the discussion.

Mahalo!

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