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Meeting and Event Facilities

Employees Hunting Treasure Tunes Up Corporate Teamwork

By David Goldstein

In the meeting industry, properties like the Endicott House and companies like Teambonding are called either vendors or suppliers. We are the ones who are competing for the business managed by the meeting and special events planners. We hope to be the answer as to where the meeting is being held, and what to do when the attendees get there.

It is a very competitive industry and as such, requires creativity in a down economy. As in all industries, partnerships emerge to create new and different offerings. This is the story of one of those partnerships.

Surrounded by 25 acres of magnificent gardens and grounds, Endicott House is a 1934 mansion built in the style of a French manor. With a history enriched in old-world grandeur and enhanced by contemporary refinements, Endicott House offers a unique site for a meeting or executive education. It is a world apart, yet only 30 minutes from Boston.

Teambonding is a team-building company that believes that play is a powerful learning tool. Team-building games and training have been played for centuries. The game of chess is a training game created in the 4th century for teaching strategy to military and political leaders. Today, Teambonding offers all kinds of games designed to make better workers, thinkers and team players. All of them involve play and learning.

Play is an excellent tool for convincing the skeptics of the value of teamwork. Many workers are so competitive, or so inexperienced with working on a team, that they doubt the benefits of team work. This makes for hesitation in sharing information and responsibilities. Fun team exercises afford



The MIT Endicott House in Dedham, built in 1934 in the French manor style, can accommodate two to 120 guests for meetings in both traditional and contemporary settings.

these skeptics the opportunity to observe first-hand how two, or more, heads are better than one. They see and how sharing information and responsibilities can bring amazing results.

This group play also affords participants an opportunity to discover the value of diversity. The more diverse a group, and the broader its knowledge base, the more successful it tends to be at solving problems or achieving goals.

How Teambonding and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Endicott House in Dedham got together is a mystery, literally. For the past four years many corporate groups who have chosen to have their programs at the MIT Endicott House brought in a team-building murder mystery. Ideal for the mansion, the murder mysteries were very successful, as a seated event in the dining room or as a room-to-room mystery utilizing the vintage gun room and the

formal parlor. Over the past year, Teambonding's public side, called Mystery Cafe, has offered monthly mystery dinners.

In Position

Teambonding's popular programs also include scavenger and treasure hunts. It seemed a natural way to utilize the grounds and gardens of the MIT Endicott House as a site for these type of events. The real question was which one. Although any of the treasure hunts would work, based on the affiliation of the Endicott with MIT, the Global Positioning System Treasure Hunt was chosen as the first hunt for the property.

The GPS enables people to pinpoint specific geographic locations accurately – anywhere in the world – using a GPS receiver. Once a person has hidden a treasure or “geocache,” and recorded the location, an

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other player can locate the geocache using their GPS receiver.

The GPS Treasure Hunt involves one or more teams who go on a high-tech treasure hunt throughout the 25 acres of gardens and grounds of the property. Each team is given GPS units that are pre-programmed with vital coordinates of the goals. Utilizing the GPS units and team skills, each team collaborates to find the caches, which often take the form of hidden boxes or team challenges.

Each cache can vary from the simple to the complex. For each challenge, the team must design a plan, execute it and reach the final goal without a pre-designated leader. Then each team must work together to solve the next clue, ultimately leading to the final surprise cache. The GPS Treasure Hunt is accessible to anyone who can move,

thus eliminating the challenges with other, more physical team-building events.

With the aid of an expert facilitator, this becomes an amazing opportunity to observe team behavior and to discover what your team needs most to function at the next level.

The GPS Treasure Hunts are perfect for building the valuable team skills that every organization needs in this day and age. At the same time, those who participate can take full advantage of the sport's excitement in combining adventure with technology. Teambonding can custom design each event specifically tailored to your team-building needs. Treasure Hunts can be customized to challenge every physical and mental level, from the undemanding to the extreme.

Most importantly, all teams develop stronger connections with each other, im-

prove communication skills, learn specific methods to fine-tune performance in the office, and most of all, work more efficiently, thereby, saving time and money in the workplace.

Teambonding has other offerings that clients can use to bond their teams at the Endicott House. Indoor team-building games include: Spy School, The Company of Killers, and Play the Blues Harmonica workshop. Outdoor activities include: Company Olympics, and an orienteering event.

The alliance between the MIT Endicott House and Teambonding has afforded each entity the opportunity to develop new accounts collectively, with a creative twist. ■

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