

# Achievement Awards Group

## Getting Performance Results From A Value Chain Of Group Incentive Travel Services

There are incentive travel agents, incentive travel planners and then there's Achievement Awards Group, a Cape Town-based incentive and performance improvement company offering a complete value chain of group incentive travel services. With an in-house IATA-accredited travel agency that has won no fewer than 3 regional SITE Crystal Awards, the company's offering is unique in the South African incentive travel market.

Carla Napoli, Director of the Group Incentive Travel division, puts group incentive travel into perspective:

"Of course we want to create an extraordinary travel experience for the winners," she explains, "but that happens at the end of a holistic process that defines goals, drives motivation and produces measurable performance results. We're part of a team of performance improvement experts."

The company's full-service offering is backed by a sophisticated administrative and operational infrastructure that supports the research and analysis, financial modelling, implementation, project management and reporting components of each incentive program.

It's an offering that clearly works for Achievement Awards Group's long-standing base of domestic and multi-national blue-chip clients in the finance, banking, automotive, oil, retail, healthcare and communication sectors. In fact, since its establishment in 1980, the company has designed, implemented and managed over 800 incentive programs that have touched the lives of over one million people in the South African workforce.

### The group incentive travel value chain

While recognizing travel as a top-drawer incentive, Achievement Awards Group Sales Director and Certified Performance Technologist Jean-Claude Latter reinforces the focus on performance results. "No matter how desirable the destination, a travel incentive has to be structured on the same principles as any other incentive to produce measurable and lasting results for clients," he says. The company designs travel incentives according to the same best-practice guidelines as their very successful merchandise-based incentive programs.

### Define goals, targets and measures

"Before our travel team even begins researching destinations, we work with clients to define their goals and set performance targets," explains

Latter. Following the basic rules of best practice, targets are designed to be SMART; that is, simple, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-framed.

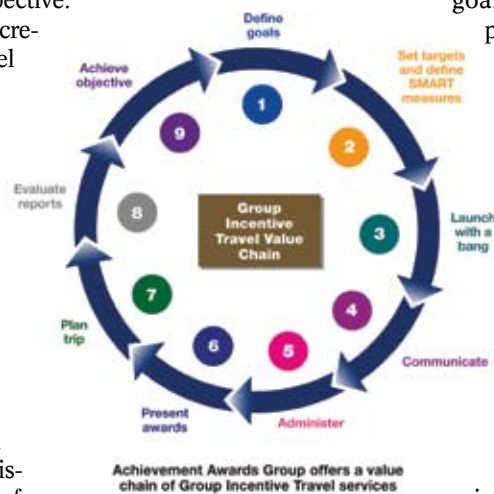
### Launch with a bang and communicate regularly

With goals, targets and measures in place, the excitement starts with the program launch. "A powerful launch event is important to the success of a program," explains Latter.

"It not only sets out the program goals in a fun way, it gets participants interested, excited and motivated to achieve them."

The message here is that first impressions count in the overall success of a program.

Regular communication via post, email, telephone or text message, goes a long way toward keeping participant interest high, reinforcing goals and generating excitement in the low points of a program lifecycle.



### Recognise achievement

Recognising incentive winners in some formal way is another important link in the incentive travel value chain. According to Latter, this gesture is as much a part of the incentive award as the trip itself. "Let people bask in the glow of success," he advises. "Send a congratulatory letter, followed by a few program-themed gifts. A formal presentation ceremony offers the added value of peer recognition." For big programs with many winners, an awards event also helps bond the group and builds anticipation. If there is a few months lag between the award and the actual trip, these gestures offer winners tangible recognition of their achievements.

### Closing the value chain

With performance goals met and the destination selected, Napoli and her highly experienced team of group incentive travel planners get down to the serious business of creating the travel experience of a lifetime. "Details are everything," Napoli explains, "from the accuracy of the paperwork to the creativity of the in-room gifts, we work to exceptionally high standards." Would you expect anything less from a team of performance improvement experts?

Meanwhile, back at the office, Latter and his account team close the value chain with a management report on performance results. ▲