

Regional Meeting Summary: Omaha, Nebraska, November 17, 2004

Carlson Hospitality Worldwide hosted the 3rd annual Midwest regional meeting on Wednesday, November 17, 2004.

IARE President, Dan Hoelsing, Director of Reservation Services and Customer Service for Carlson Hospitality Worldwide presided over the meeting. IARE Regional Meeting chair, David Townsend with staff member Suzann Vlaanderen, also from Carlson, hosted.

All of the hotel reservation centers in Omaha, Nebraska participated including Marriott, Hyatt, Omni and Carlson. In addition, representatives from Drury Inns of Cape Girardeau, Missouri and AAA Nebraska also attended. The meeting was sponsored by and lunch was provided by eTalk, represented by Julie Postma.

Dan gave an overview of the benefits of IARE and shared pictures and memories from the annual convention.

David and Suzann facilitated a best practices sharing session entitled "Benchmarking with IARE" and each participating center contributed. Topics covered included: Performance Coaching, Sales Rep Monitoring, Customer Satisfaction, Fun and Entertaining Training and Self Service.

Notes from 11/17/04 Regional Meeting:

Forum Topics:

- Performance Coaching*
- Sales Rep Monitoring*
- Customer Satisfaction*
- Fun and Entertaining Training*
- QA Teams
- Ideas on Monitoring with out a system
- Self Service*
- Assessment for Training
- Call Center Matrix

*Topics touched on in detail

Each company contributed what they did at their centers according to the topic

Performance Coaching:

Carlson Hospitality Worldwide: Barging, side by sides, QA's, individual goal setting for the reps based on side by sides, QA's and barging

Drury Hotels: "Shoulder Surf" (side by side some are taped recorded).

Mystery Shopper- former team member out side of the building conducts these shops they make about 100 calls a month and they are not recorded.

Hyatt: EIC program that conducts calls to make sure standards are in place, they have a scoring system in which the reps receive points (minimum of 1500 pts) on a call and the point system is also built into their incentive program. They also have a "Witness System" in place as well as a program called "Adding Extras", which bonus the reps points.

Rob Clabbers from Hyatt International uses a system called QTI (Quality Track International) to track quality assurance he also mentioned that there are some different standards for domestic hotels verses international hotels.

Sales Rep Monitoring:

Carlson Hospitality: Dan Hoelsing mentioned the issue of training vs. behavioral to keep that in mind that it is not always a training issue with some.

Hyatt: Recognizing customer comments or compliments about their sales representatives. They use a lot of balloons to recognize their employees. Hyatt specifically uses Mylar balloons because they last longer. The sales rep receives the balloon along with a card from their supervisor and the comment that the guest made about them. There also is a plaque that notes how many customer compliments that individual received and their picture is also taken.

Marriott also uses balloons when a sales agent has been recognized for superior service during their monitoring. They have programs in place such as perfect Shops, Customer Comments and Top Converters. Once a month Marriott has a recognition ceremony in which more balloons are distributed. Sales reps that have exceeded the number of “Salutes” to be hung up are then given a binder to keep their awards and certificates in to display at their desk.

Carlson: Reps are awarded Gold Points which is their guest loyalty program for various achievements as well as the Bravo Program. This program recognizes people for many things and also is used for a thank you program. Again with Bravos, Gold Points are distributed to the sales agent.

Motivating Base Staff:

Carlson: Carlson uses food to motivate their employees as well as giveaways such as trips, money, electronics, scooters, bikes, DVD players etc. They gave a way a chance to win an IARE trip for the supervisors. This is a great opportunity for a free trip and to gain some experience and personal growth. Carlson’s Resource Planning department (scheduling) uses programs like spin the wheel to receive various things such as days off with pay, reps can win prizes with answering trivia questions correctly and they have “Top Success” people who exceed expectations.

Hyatt: Hyatt has a program called HYStars which are points given and the rep can accumulate the points to receive free night certificates for hotel rooms.

Fun and Entertaining Training:

Hyatt: Hyatt encourages their supervisors and managers to meet all new hire class to show the new people that they are there for support and are willing to help them in anyway. They also host pizza parties at the end of all new hire classes. At the international hotels and resorts desk they host “Resort Month” which usually has a theme involved the office is then decorated to convey the theme. The example used was along the lines of a cruise ship theme, the reps were passengers on the ship and they were given passes to enter the ship, all sups and managers were dressed like employees of the cruise ship. Their experience was a learning and fun voyage for all. They also have “Spa” days where they promote their spa destinations and locations with having day at the spa right there in the center and a giveaway to a spa.

Carlson: Carlson conducts “FUN DAYS”, specific to certain hotels who will sponsor the fun day. Recently a resort hotel that revolved around golf hired a golf pro to come to the center and show reps different golfing techniques and volunteered many gold tips. Carlson also has Reach Receptions monthly for top performer where food, awards and information is presented. For review techniques they use Game Show Pro to review in new hire class as well as handing out tickets, poker (deck of cards) to encourage participations while in training. This seems to motivate employees and keeps them engaged. Radisson Seven Seas Cruises used a “Survivor” theme as a team building activity and implemented a program called “Take a co-worker with you on a cruise”, so

for those who were meeting beyond expectations could select a co-worker to go on RSSC cruise with them.

Omni: Omni rewarded their employees by bringing in a chef to cook for the employees and to learn about specific countries: "Taste of Chile".

Marriott: They have hotel visits that conduct presentations for the sales agents and hotel fairs that involve hotel pictures, power points and giveaways. This give the hotel to show off their properties and gives the sales agents a chance to ask the hotels questions.

Self Service:

Omni: Web Sites, Web Chat, live voice reservations vs. online reservation making.

QA Teams:

Hyatt: Teams are gathered based on need. 1000 calls are conducted on the regular lines and are divided among the supervisors. Change drivers month to month and they also conduct guest satisfaction calls out.

Customer Satisfaction:

AAA conducts a 5 page paper survey that the customer fills out on the travel agent.

Omni: randomly sends out e-mail surveys to the guest after completion of their stay.

RSSC: distributes onboard survey to the passengers

Carlson: once a year has a C. Wenger survey conducted on their guests.

e-talk: Direct Agent Surveying: this is where the agent actually asks how they did after conducting business with a customer.