



Good News 'n challenging times

Meetings are generators - the little motors that keep your business, community and economy growing.

Meetings and events drive business growth by fostering collaboration, idea-sharing and generation, and employee retention. Incentive programs have been shown to be two to three times more effective than cash at motivating employee performance. In a recent survey, Fortune 1000 Chief Marketing Officers said that meetings and events provide the highest return on investment of any marketing channel. A new study shows that 87 percent of Americans who have attended an out-of-town meeting or convention for work say it is important to running a strong business.

The Facts

Business travel creates 2.4 million jobs nationally. Meetings and events are directly responsible for 1 million jobs.

- The Department of Labor reported that nearly 200,000 travel-related jobs were lost in 2008, and predicts another 247,000 will be lost in 2009.
- Business travel accounts for \$39 billion in tax revenue at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Meetings and events are responsible for 15% of all travel-related spending.
- Business travel supports more than 200 hotel and convention centers across the country.
- According to the results of a Meetings and Conventions magazine study, 52 percent of respondents claim that the backlash against meetings has been extremely or moderately influential on their company's decisions to hold events.
- In a recent survey, 87 percent of Americans say that encouraging people to travel recreationally within the U.S. could improve the country's economic landscape.
- Each meeting and event traveler spends an average of \$1,000 per trip.
- According to a recent survey of Fortune 1,000 Chief Marketing Officers, meetings and events provide the highest return on investment of any marketing channel.

Learn the facts about the impact of business travel and events.
Employee Development

Good managers encourage the professional growth of employees, and employers must make sound investments in key staff in order to retain top talent and secure the bottom line. Far from being a perk reserved for executives, meeting and performance incentive travel provides valuable development and networking opportunities for employees at all levels.

- Non-cash incentives are 2 to 3 times more effective at motivating employee performance, and companies spend less on incentive travel than on cash compensation to achieve exceptional productivity from employees.
- Meetings and events are strategic tools that deepen employee relationships and contribute to the overall health of companies. A 5% increase in employee retention can generate a 25 to 85% increase in profitability.
- Companies with satisfied employees generate better overall returns in the stock market, with firms on the list of "100 Best Companies to Work For" generating up to five times as much return as their competitors.

Source:

www.ustravel.org

www.meetingsmeanbusiness.com

Got good news? Email us something good you've done, heard, or read about people triumphing through tough times. If we write about it. We'll donate an LN-4 hand in your name! Send to: learn@odysseyteams.com

Hot Tips for Teams and Leaders

Last month we described the benefits of having a team code. One such code is to limit or restrict the use of Zingers, Slams, or Barbs (ZSB's).

Quick Tip – When you speak, speak with purpose and be deliberate. One of our favorite quotes is “The shortest distance between two people is a straight answer”. Wrestle the urge to throw a zinger/slam/barb (ZSB). Trust and mood may diminish before your eyes (or behind your back) if ZSB's are a common team ingredient.

Building the Case – Have you ever said a ‘fun little’ ZSB to someone and as soon as it rolled off your tongue you could tell it wasn't going to land right and wished you could reel back in the comment?

Have you ever been the recipient of a ZSB and wondered ‘Did they really mean that this time?’ Or possibly you assessed them to be superficial, political, trying to hard, or other.

ZSB's may be fine if you have a long history with someone. For some, this is their communication comfort zone. Scenario: After a meeting where your business partner/friend helped make your point... instead of saying “I'm really glad you supported me in that meeting” maybe the remark is “Way to ride behind Tonto” This may be fine due to your history together (actually not very honest and clear in our view) but what about - Collateral Damage? Suppose a new teammate is privy to the conversation/remark. A few things may have happened from their view...

1. You've demonstrated to them how your team expresses gratitude.
2. You've given them permission to play by these unwritten rules.
3. They may raise defenses/walls and be less authentic or courageous next time, etc.
4. They may loose respect or trust in your leadership and communication style.

Note: They are most likely to share their view with others and thus diminish your identity with them as well.

Action/To Do - You go first on your team and model a day free from ZSB's. Create a “ZSB Free Zone” around you. You will inspire others to follow suit. They will want to interact with you more and be on your teams and projects. The mood, trust and results of a ZSB Free team/culture can be world-class.

Tipping Point™ of the month —

One of the greatest things in life is to be the cause of another persons smile.

Darla Henry, GSK

What's a 'Tipping Point'? At the close of every Odyssey program we invite participants to author an original quote that captures the main lesson, insight or inspiration from the session. Each participants Tipping Point is then entered into our system and then each business day following their program one of their Tipping Points is randomly selected and emailed to everyone on their team who participated in the event. Odyssey developed this process after a discussion with Malcolm Gladwell, author of “The Tipping Point”. The Tipping Points help keep the shelf-life of the experience fresh and serve to ‘tip’ people into better performance. The slight inspiration that may make a BIG difference. The Tipping Point of the month is selected from over 30,000 quotes in our database from past participants.

Word of mouth gives a hand!

Pass this newsletter on. If your colleague books a program with us we'll donate three LN-4 Helping Hands to landmine victims in your name.



Featured Client



Boston Scientific Corporation, Inc.

Who they are: Boston Scientific is a worldwide developer, manufacturer and marketer of medical devices whose products are used in a broad range of interventional medical specialties. With more than 25,000 employees worldwide, the company offers more than 13,000 products to clinicians in over 45 countries. Boston Scientific works every day to build the knowledge, processes and infrastructure it needs to identify opportunities, address new disease areas and support clinicians in advancing the practice of health care around the world..

Why they contacted us: First-ever Global Human Resources Summit.
Audience – +200 Human Resources Global Team
Theme – Power of Partnership (internal and external)
Goals - Come together/alignment, strengthen bridges and increase culture of shared learning
Bonus Objective – Create an emotional anchor that supports theme & goals.

What we did together: Life Cycles, Boston, MA, on April 28, 2009.

After setting the context with an experiential key-note and discovery conversations, the global team worked together diligently to build 36 brand new bikes. They did not know at the time these bikes would be going to 36 underprivileged youth from some of the toughest areas of Boston; or that they would come face to face with their “customers”/partners.

We, the Odyssey team, were impressed with how they worked with such passion and focus. Individuals sharing resources, teams collaborating on ideas—a refreshing change from the typical “get ‘er done” approach.

When the youth made their surprise entrance, rather than total surprise, there seemed to be an overwhelming sense of gratitude, as if everyone in the room instantly realized the extent to which their actions had just impacted a life and a community.

Watching them interact with the children with such care and consideration was refreshing. The meeting theme, Power of Partnership, was brought to life and it is clear that even in these economic times, the employees of Boston Scientific are continuing to bring the same attention to quality to their partners worldwide.

More about Boston Scientific:

Making More Possible. Boston Scientific’s mission is to improve the quality of patient care and the productivity of health care delivery through the development and advocacy of less-invasive medical devices and procedures.

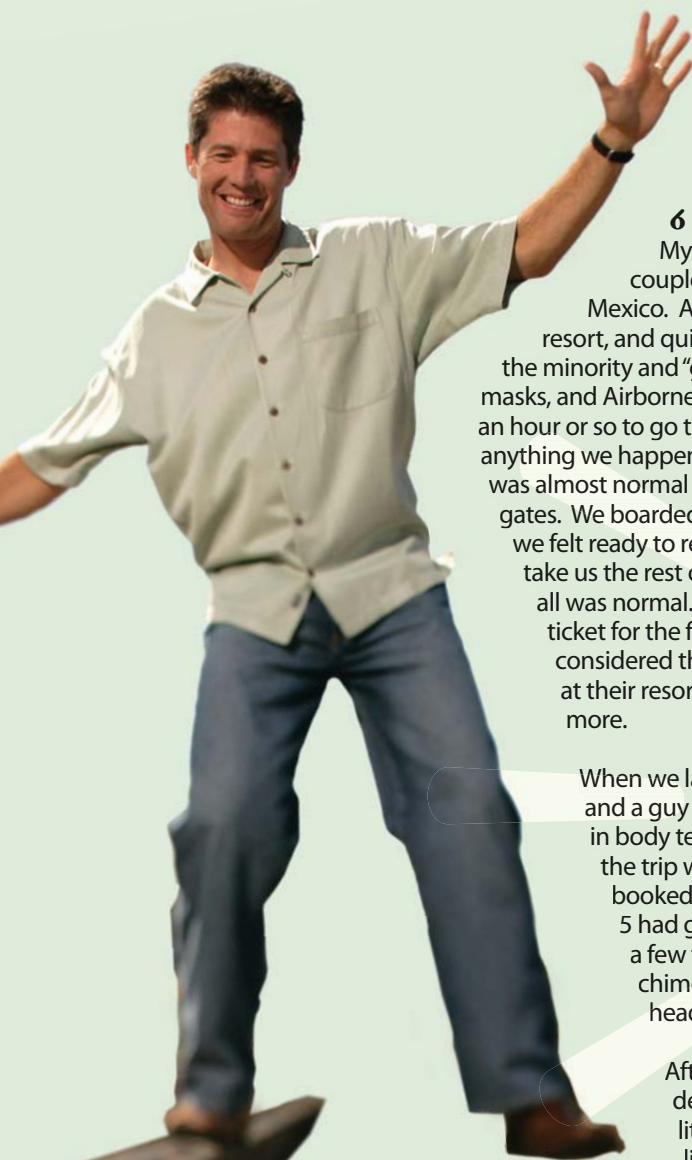
- The world’s largest medical device company dedicated to less-invasive medicine
- More than 25,000 employees
- 26 manufacturing, distribution & technology centers
- Delivering more than 13,000 products in over 45 countries
- Investing nearly \$6 billion in new technologies over the past five years
- Enrolling tens of thousands of patients in pre- and post-approval clinical studies
- Contributing +\$25 million annually to research, education and local communities.

Featured product/service of the month -

Do-it-yourself Life Cycles. – The Life Cycles program is in your hands. One of our primary clients asked us an important question about five years ago. “Can we have our own internal facilitators lead the Life Cycles program and your staff do the rest?” After a few long meetings and three or four rounds of facilitation manuals later, we are proud to announce that over 14,000 employees of that company have now experienced the power of the Life Cycles process at a fraction of the cost. With the insights and experience of their internal trainers and the Odyssey Teams Inc. logistics staff handling the rest, the program has been one of our best-kept secrets and the highest rated training program they have ever offered to their employees.

For a number of reasons this has been a viable option for many of our clients. Although we have never openly marketed this arrangement, it has worked for them and might be a good fit for you in these crazy times. Let our logistics team handle all the details; from selecting the children recipients, ordering the bikes, locating the bike technicians, organizing transportation for the kids and bikes back to the youth agency, to being onsite for the actual event. Leverage the years of experience and countless relationships of our logistics team to your benefit. They will do what they do best and if you have dynamic internal facilitators who can lead the program, they can run the show. Of course, Odyssey Teams Inc. experienced lead facilitators are as close as the phone to help design the program to be a slam-dunk on your first attempt.

After 18 years of traveling the world delivering our unique brand of training and refining our methodology with companies of all kinds and sizes we are proud of the level of talent our facilitation team brings to the table. At the same time, we recognize that the cost of bringing that level of talent is not always in the budget and the demand for this program still exists. Times have changed and the stakes are even higher than ever to inspire and refocus your teams. Many companies have had to make hard staffing choices and need to tap into the exceptional talent pool that is still at the table. If you are interested in exploring this “do it yourself” option, contact one of our lead facilitators and let us help you look like a hero at a time when heroic efforts are required.



What was Lain thinking?

Every month you'll find a pondering from one of us here on the Odyssey Teams, team.

6 Days on vacation in Mexico.

My wife and I departed at 3:30 am on May 3rd to pick up the other couple that was braving the swine flue and heading for Puerto Vallarta Mexico. After a few days of consulting our friends, reading countless web sites, calling the resort, and quizzing a number of medical professionals, we determined that we would be in the minority and "go for it"! We purchased the mandatory hand sanitizers, rubber gloves, breathing masks, and Airborne tablets. With no idea what to expect, we arrived at the Sacramento airport with an hour or so to go through the standard procedures and extra time to wash our hands and wipe down anything we happened to touch on our way in the terminal. In Sacramento, the terminal environment was almost normal with an unusually light amount of travelers filtering through security and waiting at gates. We boarded our flight and after sanitizing our seats and the entire area with disinfecting wipes, we felt ready to relax. After the quick hop over to SFO we then caught the next flight that would take us the rest of the way. A few people were wearing breathing masks in the terminal, but overall all was normal. We had only 31 passengers boarding out of a possible 160 that had purchased a ticket for the flight. Only 31 brave souls that had either not purchased the travel insurance, or considered the epidemic an opportunity for some extra room on the flight, low occupancy rates at their resort, or the best customer service on any Mexico vacation ever. It was all of that and more.

When we landed we were greeted with the expected masked and gloved staff at the airport and a guy with an electronic thermometer he held to our neck to see if we had an increase in body temp. I'm not sure what would happen if we did. We breezed through customs and the trip was off to an almost typical beginning, only without the other 80% of travelers who booked vacations for the same time period. The resort was almost empty. Out of 80 rooms, 5 had guests in them and the pool and beach were sprinkled with only an occasional local, a few tourists and the entire beach trinket sales force. Jewelry, blankets, dresses, wind chimes, and anything else they could carry and pedal was available with the nod of your head.

After 6 days of all we could eat and drink, personal service from the entire staff, and a deeper than usual connection with almost all of the beach vendors, we departed our little oasis and headed back to California with a sense of beating the system. We felt like heroes after single handedly stimulating the economy of one section of beach and a small resort. We knew all the other guests and compared stories of how we

each decided to make the trip in the face of all the media warnings. We all felt thankful we had decided to come and motivated to tell the world that Mexico is safe and needs our tourism income.

What does this have to do with our business? Everything! We have a similar virus that has taken hold of our business world and our personal lives. We have been paralyzed with distrust, greed, fear, and negativity spreading like wildfire. It is its own kind of pandemic. We have been hearing the media warning for years of recession and most of us have decided to be in the 80% that are not going to risk it. Many of us live in the same houses, drive the same cars and do the same job we have done for years. Yet we have been convinced that we need to stay home and protect ourselves from an invisible foe that will take all we have worked to acquire. I say it is time to "go for it!" We need to believe that we will be healthy again and things will recover. We need to spread a message of hope and purpose the same way the swine flue has been spreading, person to person, one on one. The global economy needs more people to believe that we can turn this around and to begin taking action to make that vision a reality. Confidence can spread just like fear, only it is harder to sustain. It will take effort from all of us. We must believe that out of the recession comes the opportunity for new possibilities. We had the trip of a lifetime as a result of the swine flue scare and I encourage you to broaden your view of the business pandemic to include the unique opportunity it has created. Now get going!



Hands in Action – Bikes on the Road

Bikes on the road: **10,896**

through Odyssey Teams' [Life Cycles](#) programs since October 2000

Hands in action: **1035**

through Odyssey Teams' [Helping Hands](#) programs since November 2007

Help us meet our goal of **20,000** Bikes and **10,000** hands by 2010!

Recipient story of the month:

My name is Luke Courtemanche and I am the School Age Childcare Director for the Greater Boston YMCA Central Branch. I oversee six after-school sites throughout Boston, MA. The programs we run are made up generally low to no-income families. They have various backgrounds. Many live in neighborhoods of your worst nightmares. There are many cases of abuse and children in state custody due to extenuating circumstances. My goal at the YMCA is to give these 400+ children a safe and fun place to go that will help them not only with academics but with everyday support from the caring counselors of our programs. The staff is here to make bonds with these children who often have no one else.

At the Odyssey Teams Life Cycles event on April 28th, 36 of our kids got brand new bicycles, helmets and locks. When the children arrived at the event they were blown away by the location. They had never been in such a fancy hotel. The extent of their knowledge of hotels comes from the motels in which some of them live. They felt like they did not belong. With the help of our staff and the Odyssey Teams youth coordinators, they felt like celebrities.

There was one child in particular that comes to mind. His name is Jose and he is nine years old. He has never had a bike. When he was told that it was going to be his to keep he looked puzzled. Lesley Silvia, his after school director went to his side to make sure he was OK. With his broken English he told her that he did not believe it was his. Jose has never had anything given to him like this before. He had been let down his whole life and came to the understanding that he would always have a grim outlook on life and other people because no one has been there for him. When the bike arrived at the school that same night he was there waiting patiently. His eyes lit up like fireworks. He ran to the truck to get his bike.....PUT HIS HELMET ON and rode into the sunset to his home to show off his new bike. Jose, who would miss school a lot is now coming to school more frequently and he says it is because he can ride his bike to school. Was it the YMCA that changed his outlook? Odyssey Teams? Boston Scientific who was the participating organization of the program or was it a collaboration of caring adults who recognized that these kids need help? Whatever it was thank you so much (Odyssey Teams and Boston Scientific) for everything you do. You may think it is April or May where you are but it was Christmas for these kids in Boston and they will never forget it.

Luke Courtemanche
SACC Program Administrator
YMCA of Greater Boston

Testimonial

Gina Miller, MA, PHR,
Senior Developer,
High Potential Executive
Development, Wal Mart
received this review from a
participant of the Helping Hands
event she organized:

Kudos for "hitting the ball out of the park" yesterday! I greatly appreciate being offered this golden opportunity to attend the WU Breakthrough Leaders Program yesterday at the Double Tree. It is in true collaborative fashion that Realty University was welcomed into this great event. I am excited to allow our High Potential Associates the opportunity to interact with each other to bring greater cross functional training to the entire corporation. The Odyssey crew were highly professional and I have been raving about it since my return yesterday! It is truly one of the BEST interactive and highly applicable events I have ever attended. Your hard work, expert coordination and servant leadership made the entire event and each participant feel like they could be "safe" to contribute and have excellent take-aways. Congrats and feel proud for a job well done! You get Realty University's "Make it Happen" Award! :)

Sheila Hunt, MA
Learning Development Consultant- Leadership
Realty University, Wal Mart

Odyssey Youth

This month's featured youth event...

About 2 weeks ago when I was packing up my things to go home for the day, I got a phone call that made my week. One of our participants from a local high school program called to let me know that she had reached the goal she set at our ropes course three months prior- she had quit smoking.

Often times ropes courses are seen as an event for thrill seekers and wild risk takers, rather than a legitimate training tool for the growth and development of individuals. At Odyssey Teams, we pride ourselves on creating programs that are both relevant and valuable for each participant. And it's always exciting when a participant can connect the experience they had on a course to an event that is happening in their life. In this particular case, 'Jane' made that connection.

It started with her struggling to take the last step on one of the events, the Pole. It's a 35ft tree that participants climb and balance upon; the final steps are done by holding on to nothing but the courage and confidence that your balance and focus is enough.

I could see 'Jane's' inner monologue of doubt manifesting in her body language -head shaking-no, shoulders tense, teeth gritting and tears streaming down her face; she was ready to give up. Then something in her shifted; I don't know if it was from the coaching of her peers

or a sudden realization that she could do it, but something changed and she took that final step. As inspirational as that was, the true inspiration came afterwards in the conversation that ensued.

What Jane had finally realized was that when things got tough or stressful in her life, she just gave up and she was about to do it all over again. Smoking became the bi-product of that resignation. She said that on that pole, she was right back in her everyday life...

"There I was again, stressed out and ready to give up, but no comforting cigarette to ease the tension. I decided I might as well go for it, either way I had to 'fall' off the event, and I decided I might as well fall going for it. But then I didn't fall! I did it!"

She made a decision in front of all her peers that day that she would quit smoking. Of course, those kinds of decisions take a lot more work than a bold declaration, which is why when I got the call 3 months after the program (roughly 2 weeks ago); I couldn't have been prouder.

That powerful connection she made that day resulted in a lasting change. Although working hard at school and climbing a pole are completely different in nature, the principles of commitment and resolve are exactly the same.

For more information on Odyssey youth programs, contact Anne-Claire Benoit at 530.342.1650 or email at anneclaire@odysseyteams.com or visit our old website - we're in the process of converting it over to our new site. http://odysseyteambuilding.com/ropes_course/youth/

Blending Social Media with Odyssey's Message

As the meetings and convention industry continues to embrace and endorse social media, Odyssey Teams realized that it's about time we started to utilize these tools to help inspire participants on a daily basis, long after we've parted ways and the sessions have ended. The recent surge in Twitter and Facebook got us thinking - "How can we use these social media sites to motivate people and deliver worthy news to our past session participants and clients without spamming them and just becoming another message in their inbox?"

We decided to create both a Facebook and a Twitter account where we post weekly "tipping points", such as news, photos and videos from recent sessions. We hope you'll find these weekly postings informative, inspiring and that they add something to your daily life. We also encourage you to join in the conversations within these groups and chime in anytime with your thoughts, feelings and observations.



http://twitter.com/Odyssey_Teams



<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=54633408167&ref=ts>

Another part of our foray into the social media world involves more appearances on internet radio shows and podcasts. Bill John was recently interviewed by Planet Good Radio on how businesses are mixing corporate social responsibility and team building to create programs that do more than impact the bottom line, they connect employees with their careers and employers on a more meaningful level. The interview is available at:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/PlanetGood/2009/05/08/Mixing-CSR-and-team-building>