

# Dittman Crafts a Phenomenal, Sustainable Experience

**Crystal Winner:** Dittman Incentive Marketing, New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA

**Client:** Confidential

**Program:** The Leadership Club

**DITTMAN  
INCENTIVE  
MARKETING**

A large U.S. bank came to Dittman Incentive Marketing with a need for an unparalleled travel experience for its top performers. The bank recognizes its top achieving financial advisors with an annual trip. While providing a first-class experience for this sophisticated group is no small feat in itself, the client also asked Dittman to help it fulfill its corporate mission of being the premier “green” bank.

The client is highly committed to its environmental mission. It had been recognized by several organizations, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, for its sustainability efforts. It also recently launched an initiative to raise awareness of environmental issues among employees and customers. Thus, Dittman’s challenge was to develop an extraordinary reward event that would meet its audience’s high expectations, while also staying true to the client’s commitment to being green.

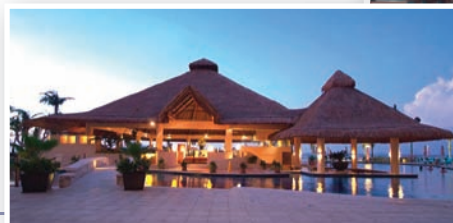
The client’s specific sustainability goals were to promote protection of the environment, foster appreciation of social responsibility and encourage respect and preservation of local culture. When conceptualizing and executing the trip, Dittman kept these goals at the forefront, inventing creative ways to incorporate sustainability without sacrificing any of the luxury feel. The first challenge was employing sustainable practices in Cancun, Mexico. The hotel and other destination partners had never executed a green event, so Dittman first educated the team in sustainable principles. The lead travel manager traveled to Cancun months in advance to train chefs, managers, maids, banquet staff, and even the destination management company in environmentally responsible practices.

Dittman approached every detail of the trip with sustainability in mind. To provide organic menus in Mexico, where food is not certified organic, Dittman worked with local farms to source native

products that were grown using sustainable practices. Dittman also ensured that none of that food would be wasted. After every meal, the staff personally approved and packaged leftover food; moved it across the city with donated coolers, ice and transportation; and donated the food to a local charity, Ciudad de la Alegria. The guests had additional opportunities to support this organization, which provides assistance to less fortunate citizens in the Cancun area. During a teambuilding exercise, the attendees built bicycles for the charity. Tradeshow giveaways were also donated to Ciudad de la Alegria, and guests were given the option of donating the cost of their entertainment activities to the group as well.

Other sustainable practices included printing all materials on recycled paper; empowering the guests to enact their own water conservation program, as one did not exist at the hotel; using framed menus instead of individually printed ones to reduce the number of menus needed from 500 to 80; and channeling all communications through an eco-friendly, robust website. Time and time again, Dittman proved that upscale, motivational events could coexist with sustainability. It selected activities that were both engaging and environmentally friendly, including sailing and snorkeling the Great Mayan Reef (and donating a reef tax for each individual), zip-lining in Selvatica Eco-Park and golf at a course that uses best management practices.

The two evening events stayed true to the client’s commitment by using themes driven by local cultures. On one evening, the guests visited an authentic, working Mexican hacienda.



They participated in carnival games, watched a traditional equestrian show and were treated to traditional music and food, enabling them to better understand and appreciate the Mexican culture and community. Mexican culture also played a large role in the final reception dinner. The gala was held in the hotel foyer and ballroom, decorated in jungle décor with a large-scale model of Chichen Itza, a Mayan temple. Throughout the dinner, Mayan musicians played traditional music and local entertainers reenacted ceremonial dances. A shaman also opened the dinner for the guests with a blessing. The strong elements of Mexican culture lent the event a deeper meaning, heightening the overall experience.

Dittman was able to strike the perfect balance between a luxurious, once-in-a-lifetime travel incentive and real sustainability. It successfully employed sustainable practices in virtually every aspect of the travel program—and the guests were wowed. The financial advisor attendees rated the program as one of the best they had ever experienced. Dittman delivered on the client’s wish for a spectacular and sustainable experience. ●