

MCI Energizes and Unites with a Moroccan Meeting

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Client: NUMICO

Program: Generation “S”



The Numico annual General Managers Meeting unites the top 240 leaders of the specialized nutrition company to motivate the organization from the highest level. The meeting was the brainchild of Jan Bennink, CEO, and was an essential element in his strategy to rebuild Numico after a few years of financial trouble. The meeting is a once-a-year opportunity for him and the executive board to get all the Numico leaders behind the plans for the upcoming year and to strengthen energy and commitment across the organization. In 2007, Numico turned to MCI to help pull off this key moment in the managerial year.

Numico set very high expectations for the event. It gave MCI a mission: the meeting must not only match the quality of previous meetings but surpass it. The 2007 General Managers Meeting was of high strategic importance, as the 2006 meeting had been cancelled at the last minute, causing a loss of momentum and raising questions. The 2007 meeting needed to be highly inspirational and energizing, reaffirming the company's vision and objectives and challenging the attendees to high levels of success. MCI was also challenged to integrate the managers that had never attended a General Managers Meeting—a full 50% of attendees, due to rapid expansion—and to showcase Numico's corporate citizenship program, Supporting Lives, which benefits SOS Children's Villages.

The theme for the four-day event was Generation S, a theme MCI carried across the entire event. “Generation” represented the Numico community of people, whose members share an identity as innovators, leaders and drivers. “S” stood for the key messages that needed to be shared with the generation: simplicity, sustainable growth, size, speed, smart and soul. After Numico and MCI selected Morocco as the destination, MCI interpreted the theme through a Moroccan lens and created an event concept centered on

the Berbers, the native inhabitants of Northern Africa. The Berbers and their lifestyle related directly to the Generation S theme. The Berbers are free thinkers with high reactivity, represent a strong community, and carry their traditions and values through generations. Each of the four days of the meeting also had a theme to further emphasize core messages: World, Create Simplicity, Of Life and 4-Ward, respectively.

The meeting welcomed managers with a spectacular opening. The meeting room was transformed into a Moussem of Tan-Tan, a traditional annual gathering of Berbers. The attendees were asked to wear typical Moroccan outfits, both to eliminate cultural or hierarchical differences and to amplify the theme's effect. On stage, 40 Touregs (a Berber ethnic group) reenacted a Moussem, and the Executive Board made a grand entrance on camels, to the great excitement of the entire group.

MCI infused the Moroccan spirit into the following days of the meeting as well. On the second day, the meeting followed an “Open Space” format, again in a typical Moroccan setting. The participants created the agenda themselves, empowering the attendees and allowing them to address complex and sometimes controversial subjects with comfort. The emphasis of the third day was Numico's values. The afternoon was devoted to the Supporting Lives program. The managers broke into teams and competed to design a playground, with the winning design to be constructed for the orphans at the local SOS Children's Village. A chorus of children from the village visited the managers as they worked on their designs, singing Moroccan hymns to thank them for the playground.

The final day was the climax of the event. Before attending their final meetings, the guests were asked, much to their surprise, to check out. No

one knew what the night's entertainment would hold, but expectations were high, as on previous nights the attendees had enjoyed dinner at a palace in Marrakech and a meal among merchants, fire spitters and belly dancers. In the closing meetings, the managers were challenged to lead their teams and pass along the vision and strategy with the same energy and passion as at the meeting. To reinforce this goal, MCI crafted a dazzling final event. The guests were taken from the hotel to a deserted mountain locale to spend an awe-inspiring night underneath the stars. The Numico managers and executives stayed in a deluxe outdoor “hotel” of double tents, fully equipped with hotel beds, showers and toilets. The group enjoyed dinner and a video wrap-up of the meeting, followed by fireworks and dancing under the stars. They danced until sunrise, when they were escorted from the dance floor straight to the airport.

MCI succeeded in creating an experience that overshadowed all the meetings of years past. It created an environment where Numico could come together, get inspired and re-embrace the company mission and vision. The delegates were so motivated and enthusiastic at the event, and given such high praise, that the CEO decided that it was not necessary to send out an evaluation form. A few weeks after the General Managers Meeting, Numico was sold to another company. However, the vision and strategies established at the meeting survived past the event, as did the increased support for Supporting Lives. Previously supported by only 10% of the local offices, the vast majority of offices now participate in the program. The revitalized motivation and confidence gained at the meeting live on, even under the umbrella of a new organization. ●