

# Carlson Crafts a Model Sustainable Event for Sun Microsystems

**Crystal Winner:** Carlson Marketing Worldwide

**Client:** Sun Microsystems

**Program:** "SunRise 2008"



SunRise is Sun Microsystem's global award and recognition program, held every year to honor Sun's highest achievers, inspire continued high performance in the coming year and strengthen connections between the program participants and the company. For SunRise 2008, Sun partnered with Carlson Marketing to hold an event that achieved all those objectives and also fit with Sun's corporate social responsibility (CSR) mission. SunRise 2008 was to be rewarding, exciting and environmentally and socially friendly. Carlson rose to the challenge, creating an experience that was the very definition of a sustainable motivational event.

Carlson designed a three-day event that combined rewarding participants with sustainable goals, appealed to an international audience and remained true to the Sun brand. This careful balance was present in every element of the event, starting with the SunRise 2008 brand. It expressed the idea of uniting technology with nature, a concept integral to Sun's CSR goals, with images of volcanic lava and bamboo juxtaposed with circuit boards and electronic cables. Carlson carried the brand throughout the event, threading it into the website, mobile communications, print materials, staging, décor and gifts.

Carlson elevated the marrying of technology and nature far above a theme. It worked with the two venues (selected to minimize travel) and the destination management company to identify and capitalize on every opportunity for sustainability. The team discussed the goal of reducing Sun's carbon footprint at every step of the development and planning process. Sustainability kicked in even before participants arrived at the event in Honolulu, Hawaii. On the registration website,



attendees were given the option of purchasing carbon offsets from TerraPass to cover their travel emissions to SunRise. 22% of attendees voluntarily participated in the program.

Carlson devised a mobile communications strategy to reduce the event's reliance on print materials. Participants carried Nokia E71s and used them to read the program agenda, get directions to events and receive important text alerts. Combined with information shared on a hotel TV channel, the smartphone communication system allowed Carlson to reduce the amount of printed materials by 60% and on-site printed signage by 80% compared to past SunRise events. When printed materials were necessary, they were produced using natural, recycled, recyclable or reusable materials.

The SunRise team was able to identify additional sustainable solutions at every turn. Natural materials were incorporated into the program's events, food and beverage service and décor whenever possible. On the second day, the focus was on "natural" networking and teambuilding activities, such as yoga, tai chi, reflexology and water sports. The participants enjoyed a lunch of handcut greens and local produce, served by

local farmers who were able to answer questions about organic and sustainable farming practices. The culminating event was a dinner created

by 16 famous Hawaiian chefs, serving local and sustainable foods. During the overall program, every last detail was executed with the environmental impact of waste in mind. Cereal was served in bulk rather than in individual boxes, water stations were used instead of bottled water (a measure that diverted 10,800 bottles from landfills) and food was used as servingware and décor. After SunRise 2008 ended, many utilized materials were donated to local organizations. Furniture purchased for the beach day was given to a local YMCA, the 20 chalkboards that served as menus went to a local school and the greenery and florals went to the Lunaillo Home, a retirement home for Hawaiians.

The team's painstaking efforts delivered an event that was sustainable, rewarding and enjoyed by all, just as Sun desired. SunRise 2008 received an 8.48 out of 10 on Carlson's Customer Satisfaction Index and a 100% Net Promoter Score. 95% of participants surveyed rated the event as "excellent" or "good." In addition, Carlson delivered over USD \$60,000 in savings to Sun through measures that also reduced the company's carbon footprint. Through dedication and creativity, Carlson created an event that provides benchmarks for environmentally friendly practices in motivational experiences today. ●