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Three Ways to Make Your Next Corporate Event Stand Out

Experienced conference and event planner at Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club shares tips from spicing up your event to building out a theme

DURHAM, N.C., Oct. 16, 2018 – It's easy to paint the picture of a conventional, formal, corporate event: attendees sit for long periods of time listening to a designated speaker, counting down the minutes and endlessly refilling their coffee cups to pass the time. The format places tradition over innovation, unknowingly sacrificing the opportunity to implement new developments that spark creativity and productivity. It's a common theme leading to a common issue: the use of existing event outlines and best practices are efficient, but sometimes less effective for meeting the event's overall objectives.

So, how can planners change it up to truly wow attendees? Diane Tighe, director of catering & conference services at Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club and JB Duke Hotel on the campus of Duke University, recommends focusing on programs that get everyone involved, engaged and into a different mindset. Below, she details three ways to enhance the attendee experience and leave everyone talking for years to come. With more than 16 years of experience at the property, Diane is a Certified Professional Catering Executive (CPCE) and active member of NACE since 2001.

1. **Spice up your event with physical or mental activities.** From goat yoga to 5K runs, getting people up and moving can revitalize energy levels and reset everyone's productivity. Especially after a long period of sitting still, consider scheduling a breakout session that includes movement like a mini golf tournament or artistic workshop like do-it-yourself painting that will also allow people to draw inspiration from new stimulus. The average person's attention is typically only eight seconds, according to a study by Microsoft, so giving their minds a break might just be the motivational element your corporate event is missing and a fun way to refocus attention.
2. **Incorporate teambuilding and collaborative exercises.** Oftentimes, corporate getaways aim to build stronger teamwork and a collaborative foundation. Consider surprising attendees with a breakout session that fuels lighthearted competition! For example, an organization that recently hosted an event at Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club surprised attendees with a strawberry shortcake decorating competition, pairing them into random groups and using a panel of judges to determine the winner. The element of surprise encouraged participants to be quick on their feet and strategic about time management, all while enjoying spending time with colleagues and working together to accomplish a shared goal.
3. **Keep event presentations short and sweet.** While exercises and activities are important to keep in mind, it's also important to think about how the actual speakers are communicating with attendees to keep them engaged and informed. During seminars, there is typically a lot of information conveyed in a short period. To keep presentations both interesting and informative, consider mirroring the TED Talk format, focusing on storytelling to engage audiences and capping talks at 18 minutes, which is long enough to be serious and short enough to hold people's attention. With this approach, your audience will focus on the contents of a speech while remembering key takeaways with ease.



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“Corporate events often have an ambitious roster of high level goals for the day or weekend, but may lack necessary, smaller strategies that can really go a long way,” said Diane Tighe, director of catering & conference services at Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club and JB Duke Hotel. “At Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club and JB Duke Hotel, we are here to bridge that gap and help planners come up with lectures, programming and unique elements to keep attendees engaged while still accomplishing organizational goals. We enjoy removing any burdens from the planning process and focus on inserting fun and engaging ideas specific to our client, whether more traditional or contemporary, for the ultimate event experience.”

For more information about venues and packages at [Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club](#) or [JB Duke Hotel](#), contact us at 919.313.9618 or 919.660.6400.

About JB Duke Hotel

The JB Duke Hotel is a AAA Four Diamond contemporary hotel located on the campus of Duke University, conveniently near both athletic and academic facilities, as well as only 20 minutes from Raleigh-Durham International Airport and 10 minutes from Research Triangle Park. It features 198 guestrooms and 25,000 square feet of meeting and event space and is home to a full-service restaurant and two bars.

The hotel is owned by Duke University and is managed by JBD Hospitality, LLC of Durham, North Carolina, which has operated progeny property Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club for decades. For more information or reservations call (919) 660-6400 or (844) 490-7100, or visit jbdukehotel.com. Follow JB Duke Hotel on Facebook at facebook.com/jbdukehotel, Twitter at twitter.com/jbdukehotel, or Instagram at instagram.com/jbdukehotel.

About The Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club

The Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club is located on the campus of Duke University, only 20 minutes from Raleigh-Durham International Airport and 10 minutes from Research Triangle Park. The Washington Duke Inn is the original AAA Four Diamond hotel in Durham, North Carolina. Nestled on 300 acres filled with tall pines and hardwoods, the Inn is known for its beautiful facility and grounds, 271 elegantly appointed guest rooms and suites, marvelous cuisine in the Fairview Dining Room — winner of the AAA Four Diamond Award and Wine Spectator Award of Excellence — the Bull Durham Bar, the Robert Trent Jones-designed 18-hole championship Duke University golf course, and its convenience to local points of interest. It is set apart from other area hotels and conference centers by unparalleled service, a gracious staff, luxurious interiors and attention to detail. The Inn is owned by Duke University and is managed by WDI Hospitality, LLC of Durham, North Carolina. For more information or reservations call (919) 490-0999 or (800) 443-3853, or by visiting washingtondukeinn.com, Facebook at facebook.com/WashingtonDukeInn, Twitter at twitter.com/WashingtonDuke and Instagram at instagram.com/WashingtonDukeInn.

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