



Meetings and Conference Case Study, 2016

How an Inspiring Setting Increases the Success of a Business Retreat



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Executive summary

Problem: In-the-Know Crowd

Find a desirable, inspiring and accessible location for a business retreat for a nationwide company specializing in the sustainable meetings industry.

Solution: Check, check & check

Oregon's Tillamook Coast met the requirements of transportation, locale, activities, food and accommodations – as well as opportunities to fulfill their mission of community involvement.

Results: We're coming back!

For the first time in MeetGreen's 22-year history they have voted to return to the same location on the Tillamook Coast next year.

Overview: Meetings trends

It is imperative that key executives get out of the office for a strategic planning session. The setting needs to be away from the distractions of the office where participants are able to unwind and think clearly. A natural setting provides the opportunity to clear the mind and get creative energy flowing. Yet it should be easy to travel to a major airport. Those planning the meeting or retreat will want to have the benefit of services and venues readily available to make planning efficient and enjoyable.

Today's influential executives are looking for genuine, authentic experiences. Cookie-cutter experiences are out and nature-based experiences are in. This is especially true of your company has a mission, values and expectation to be the real thing.

All of these made Oregon's Tillamook Coast the perfect spot for our corporate retreat. Fifteen MeetGreen employees from eight states and two countries converged in Netarts Bay, Oregon, last month for a weeklong program to re-energize, connect, strategize and celebrate.

Known for planning sustainable, healthy events, we want to share our experience and knowledge to assist others visiting this community. Here's how we made it stress-free from start to finish.



Solution: Meeting all the requirements

Transportation - Located under two hours from a major international airport, Tillamook County is a relaxed drive down one of the most beautiful coastal mountain valleys that you will ever encounter. We set up carpooling so that people from different departments within the company would have chance to know each other better during the ride and added a drive-by scavenger hunt along the way. Transportation was also available from The Wave bus company, departing from Portland's Union Station.

Meeting Facilities - While a variety of meeting facilities are available, we choose to hold our strategy sessions at a lovely home overlooking Netarts Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Meetings were held both indoors and outdoors during the week depending the nature of the work. Creative brainstorming flourished while sitting in Adirondack chairs in the sun.

Catering - Local, sustainable food is imperative for this organization's meals and the Oregon Coast makes this effortless as well. Thanks to April Larsen, The Bleu Eyed Baker, who catered all the meals, we feasted on wild salmon and shrimp, berries, eggs, farmer's market vegetables, cheeses, homemade breads and desserts, produced or caught within the county. Wines, beers and sodas were also sourced from within a 100 mile radius.

Accommodations - Hotels are available, but for our money we elected to rent homes in nearby Happy Camp and Oceanside. Each employee had their own bedroom, a common area, and a deck to drink their early morning coffee. When the tides were right, the accommodations were a short beach walk to the meeting venue. One call to Monica at Shore Thing Beach Rentals, set up all the arrangements.

Recreational and Teambuilding Opportunities - A fairly active group, we chose to tour the area while pedaling with the Oregon Coast Railriders. This two hour, 11-mile journey offered bay views, bald eagles, deer, and local flora and the seriously fun narration of our guides. We even stopped for a picnic lunch at the turnaround complete with veggie wraps and homemade blueberry cookies.

There were also opportunities for paddle boarding and kayaking on Netarts Bay, hiking at Cape Lookout, whale watching from Cape Meares, and plenty of beach combing. Kayak Tillamook offers private tours of Netarts Bay including the sand dollar beds for those more experienced. We are planning on crabbing, clamming and fishing for our next visit.

Community Service Projects - During our annual retreats we also give back to the community where we meet. This year in addition to a Beach Clean Up afternoon we also donated over 60 lbs. of high protein foods to the Tillamook Food Bank. In the past, we have volunteered or donated to the Habitat for Humanity and Women's Resource Center. There is a long list of deserving organizations and we are happy to do our part.



Results: Same time next year

At the end of a productive week, our group left the Tillamook Coast energized, enthusiastic and ready to shape our future together as an organization. For the first time in our organization's 22-year history they have voted to return to the same location again next year.

This genuine, authentic experience wouldn't have been possible without the accessible location, natural setting, sustainable food, and outdoor activities readily available with a minimum of preparation. Best of all, as a meeting and event planner by trade, I can sincerely say this retreat was a breeze to plan. My thanks to Visit Tillamook Coast for the referrals and warm welcome to the community.