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ISSUE 15.4

MAGAZINE

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HR FOR NON-PROFITS

ISSN 0219-6883



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Price inc. GST \$9.95

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Engagement and fun rolled into one

Imagine being locked in a room with colleagues, and desperately trying to get out.

Sounds like a traumatic experience?

Believe it or not, it's actually part of a unique corporate teambuilding activity.

"'Lockdown' started off as a reality first-person adventure game, simulating online room escape games," says Jonathan Ye, Director of Lockdown.sg

"In our games, the players are brought into a real life scenario and locked in the themed room. They must be observant and use their critical thinking skills in order to solve the challenges and riddles to escape from the room."

Or for organisations looking for something less daunting and stressful, how about indulging in some cooking classes?

"Cookyn Inc runs interactive and energetic cooking team-building programmes," explains Amanda Phan, Director of Sales and Marketing, Cookyn Inc.

Do away with conventional team building activities and start planning for something bolder and more expansive. **HRM** reveals some of the creative teambuilding events that allows employees to gain valuable skills, besides simply having fun

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"We use cooking as a fun and interactive tool to foster closer relationships and to help our clients build stronger bonds within their teams."

If you think that these team building activities are not the norm, or that they are usually shunned by firms, think again.

Organisations such as 3M, HP and Shell have all had their staff trying to find ways to escape from rooms.

Want to paint the town red?

For those who fancy an activity that will make you sweat, "paintball is a sport unlike any other", says Jane Koh, Managing Director of the Red Dynasty Paintball Park.

"In the sport of paintball, the adrenaline rush that engulfs you when our instructors start the battle and when paintballs are whizzing by you while you try to get you and your buddy to a bunker alive is unforgettable.

"The camaraderie and trust built in a battle is unique and bonds people."

In addition, Koh says working as a team to counter the moves of opponents in a battle, and then beating them to secure a win brings an overwhelming boost of team confidence.

Red Dynasty Paintball Park, being the biggest and most popular paintball park in Singapore, is also able to cater up to 500 people in a single location.

"Taking scenarios from blockbuster movies and well-designed game plays, there are endless possibilities and, not

to mention the reliable, up-to-date, clean equipment and facilities with well-trained instructors,” explains Koh.

The draws of unique team-building

According to Ye, Lockdown.sg has held large scale escape games in which over 200 employees participate in the adrenaline-charged activity. The content of the game can even be customised to incorporate educational or company related information.

“One such game conducted was the ‘Who Killed You’ CSI game that was held at NTUC Club last Halloween, in which over 1,000 players attended,” says Ye.

“Lockdown is also able to allow companies to enjoy the retail escape games, followed by a chill out session and creative workshops at Coffeemin Time Café.”

“For companies who prefer an outdoor or unique experience, ThinkOut Events is also able to conduct different workshops and teambuilding activities such as ‘Medieval War’.”

Coffeemin Time Cafe and ThinkOut Events are sister companies of Lockdown.sg.

Ye elaborates that the sister companies work hand in hand with Lockdown.sg to stand out from the competition.

He says Coffeemin Time Cafe is the first of its kind in Singapore and provides a perfect venue for all kinds of events.

ThinkOut Events, on the other hand, is a European company that has been acquired by Lockdown.sg and specialises

in offsite and customised team building events and activities, gaining experience from its international exposure.

“Together, Lockdown Group is able to cater to both indoor and outdoor teambuilding activities, and is able to customise and design activities that have never been done before in Singapore,” he adds.

From Ye’s perspective, the Lockdown Group is all about providing the best team experience.

“We take great care in designing the games to make everyone work together as a team by requiring a combination of different skill sets to solve the puzzles,” he says.

“Everyone in the team has to communicate constantly, enabling them to learn from each other and embrace the diversity in the team.”

Ye explains that the organisation is in the midst of creating the world’s first replayable escape room.

“Costing over US\$50,000, this unique game can allow team members to strengthen their bonds when faced with a difficult task, and gives employers a chance to understand their employees as well,” he adds.

Ye says the company currently has three outlets, located at Clarke Quay and Suntec City, and boasting seven different themed game rooms.

“Lockdown will also be opening franchises in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur by

the third quarter of this year,” he adds.

Koh, from Red Dynasty Paintball Park, says it provides a unique and adrenaline-rushing fun paintball activity for teambuilding events and experiential learning.

“Over the years, we have assisted over 10,000 companies create an unforgettable experience for their staff and families through paintball teambuilding,” she explains.

“Paintball is a sport played by many around the world, from all professions and lifestyles.”

She says it is a sport where women and men compete equally, and which is not dominated by the younger nor the faster.

“Like a game of chess, being able to think quickly and decisively is what makes or breaks the game. Teamwork and determination, not merely strength, speed or agility, are the keys to success in the sport.”

Red Dynasty Paintball Park has four branches in Singapore with the largest branch located at The Cage Sports Park at Turf City in Bukit Timah. The other three branches are located in Yishun, Sembawang and Jurong, providing a total of seven different battle fields with different obstacles and layouts.

For example, Camp Challenge at Sembawang has a mock helicopter in the battlefield to simulate a hostage rescue of a hostage scenario, and the Fairway Club at Jurong provides a 100-metre stretch of combat zone allowing players to strategise for an all-out ambush, says Koh.

In addition, Red Dynasty Paintball Park is also constantly reinventing itself by coming up with innovative team building activities not only for the employees, but for their family members as well.

“Feeling engaged and inclusive grows on people, and it is infectious,” elaborates Koh.

“When employees feel like they are a part of the company’s big plan, it will become natural for them to put the company as a priority. The aims of our teambuilding programmes are always to build and to grow positivity amid learning in a different environment out of one’s comfort zone.”

Cookyn Inc’s unique offer

- **Customisation** - Cookyn Inc has a dedicated client servicing team that works with its clients to customise programmes that will fit different corporate objectives and bring out the best in their teams.
- **Relevance to the workplace** - Coming from the corporate world itself, Cookyn Inc understands that a cooking teambuilding event is more than just a cooking class. Its programmes use cooking in the kitchen to mirror the work place and its challenges, revealing how the team can overcome challenges together.
- **Food quality** - Cookyn Inc is part of a larger group of food and beverage companies that also owns GRUB Bistro and FIX café, so it only offers the best quality ingredients and creative fun recipes.
- **Fun energetic crew** - Cookyn Inc’s crew are handpicked and trained to work with clients to deliver the best cooking experiences. They are professional yet know how to make sure everyone has a roaring good time.

Koh says Red Dynasty Paintball Park is also introducing new activities – bubble soccer and foam-based dart guns – at its park at Bukit Timah.

For Cookyn Inc, Phan says it firsts take the time to understand what the client is looking to achieve in the session before crafting a programme for them based on those objectives.

“We have done everything from one hour to full day programmes; indoor to outdoor cooking; local or international cuisines; and small groups of three people to as many as 250 people all cooking together,” she explains.

“If you can dream it, we can help to make it happen.”

Through its years of running cooking teambuilding events, Cookyn Inc is able to recognise what works well in a corporate setting.

Phan says clients rely on the team’s experience to help them design programmes that are fun and innovative, yet work well.

“We are also constantly looking to outdo ourselves in terms of programme innovation and integrating fresh and new ideas into our events,” adds Phan.

“We never stop moving ahead and looking back, the programmes we run now have evolved quite a bit since we started out years ago.”

Customised concepts

Ye says organisers often want niche teambuilding events to impress their colleagues or guests from overseas.

“By designing a uniquely Lockdown experience, the word of mouth referrals will spread as compared to the usual activities that have been around for the past decade,” he says.

“Lockdown is able to cater to these requests by building events that complement each other, such that organisations do not have to liaise with different vendors for the entire teambuilding experience.”

Koh says the Red Dynasty Paintball Park customises its packages to each client’s requirements and, on top of paintball activities provides a one-stop



Participants having fun during a cooking session at Cookyn Inc

corporate option service. It can cover additional items such as goodie bags, souvenirs, catering, lunchboxes, t-shirts and transport. “We have organised teambuilding events for companies of different sizes from six to over 500 persons, and for different durations from one hour to a full day,” she says.

Furthermore, Koh adds Red Dynasty Paintball Park understands that the needs of each company are different along with each company’s limitations.

“With the diverse background of the employees and different requirements by the management, we want to make this activity a good fit into the company’s schedule so that our teambuilding complements the company’s requirements,” she says.

“Paintball teambuilding is an event that employees love to talk about and look forward to joining. We bring people out of their comfort zones and create opportunities for people to bond outside of work.”

Likewise, Phan concurs says that just as no two individuals are the same, each of Cookyn Inc’s clients has a varying team profile and demographics.

She says the objectives of two clients can also be entirely different.

“Hence, to adequately meet clients’ team-building objectives, we need to design and customise our programmes to suit their needs,” she says.

“Whether it’s a team’s first visit

to Cookyn Inc or a group of seasoned participants, we want to make it a rewarding time for all.”

Budgeting accordingly

Companies who do not boast a bottomless pit of cash, but are still hoping to engage in a unique teambuilding activity should not be put off.

Koh explains Red Dynasty Paintball Park caters to a wide budget range with a variety of paintball packages available. It also offers customised packages for companies.

“We will definitely help to facilitate all aspects of the event, be it transportation to the venue or catering of food for the participants,” she says.

Meanwhile, Phan explains Cookyn Inc’s client servicing team works closely with its clients to offer the best value within the budgets that they have.

“We work hard to offer the best programmes on different budgets without compromising the quality of the experience,” she elaborates.

“As a result of this, we are happy to have many clients that work with us on a long-term basis, doing a range of programmes based on budgets that might differ from department to department.”

While maintaining that “costs are and will always be an important factor”, Ye says Lockdown.sg tackles this aspect by insourcing all the necessary ingredients for a successful event internally.