

## A surprise, indeed...

On a site inspection last year, a Fortune-100 VP of Marketing meticulously combed-through the details for her company's upcoming sales incentive event — hospitality desk location confirmed—*check*; attrition fees calculated—*check*; ballroom space works for the gala—*check*. When it came to the food tasting, she sampled carefully and was truly impressed with the quality and presentation of the menu items. Questions were asked and decisions made. Feeling confident, she flew home, returned to the office and continued to put together an exciting event.

What she would learn six months later, however, standing in a grand ballroom, is that one detail escaped her during that site inspection...



*The Royal Cocoa Swirl...this really happened.*

There, during that final night gala in that beautifully decorated space at that magnificent Caribbean resort, she stood frozen and watched in slow motion as 400 "Royal Cocoa Swirls" fanned out across the ballroom. In that blurry moment, she remembered she had tasted some chocolate desserts, but had never actually *seen* the one she selected during that site inspection.

Wide eyes and giggles whirled across the room. Cell-phone-camera flashes twinkled as the company's CEO approached her, expressionless, dessert dish in-hand. In a blink, he burst into laughter and the two laughed-until-they-cried together about this absurd, *doodie-of-a* dessert.

Today, this makes for yet another funny event-planning story. In this case, it was a small surprise in an otherwise very successful global event. But, it is a cautionary reminder that the devil is, no doubt, in the details.

Planning and executing a corporate event is a lot like producing a movie. There are a million moving parts, but one detail is paramount — a thorough site inspection. Scouting a location and painstakingly inspecting a property can be the difference between a blockbuster and a flop.

From keeping your client particulars in mind to negotiating the myriad specs to staying focused on your larger vision, covering everything can be a daunting task. Remember, there are terrific inspection checklists online and here are just a few more ways that you can add value to your next site inspection, compliments of Acendas.

- Find out the names of other organizations that may be in-house during the dates of your program. Many clients have a competitor list that the property must agree not to book during any overlapping dates.
- Really check the acoustics between function space walls to ensure that a corresponding event doesn't disturb your group.
- If your group allows buy-ins for children, find out more maximum room occupancies and connecting rooms.
- If the chef piques your interest, describing a custom, off-menu dessert, be sure to see it *before* you book it!

Wishing you safe, surprise-free travels! For expertise in your corner, contact us — Acendas is at your service.