

2004's Best Marketers

THIS YEAR'S AWARD WINNERS FOCUSED ON GROWTH, CONVERSION AND FREQUENCY.

With the bluegrass tunes of the Double Diamond Trio band in their ears and a plate full of gourmet chicken and rice in their bellies, representatives from 12 ski areas happily accepted their awards at the 2003/04 Sales and Marketing Awards luncheon at NSAA's convention in Savannah, Ga.

Greg Murtha, Sugar Bowl Resort's director of sales and marketing, presented the awards which included a framed plaque and \$1,000 cash. The cash prize was new this year. The money came courtesy of Pepsi Cola, who has sponsored the event for 12 years running. The prize money will be used for future sales and marketing efforts.

The Sales and Marketing awards are presented annually to ski resorts across the country for their successful marketing programs that help grow the sports of skiing and snowboarding. This year's awards were presented in three categories: Best program to grow the sport to new participants; Best program to increase frequency of core participants; and Best program to convert new participants to core participants. And the 2004 winners were...

Best Program To Grow The Sport To New Participants

Mountain High Resort, Calif. (500,000 or more visits) The Winter Education Skier/Snowboarder Training (WEST) program prepares guests for an actual trip to the resort with presentations covering safety etiquette, proper clothing and accessories and navigational tips for the area itself. The WEST program reached 45,000 students from over 60 organizations. By mid-season, the resort reported an 18 percent increase in school group bookings.

Hunter Mountain, N.Y. (250,000–500,000 visits) After a careful look at its first-timer experience, the resort invested \$7 million in a new learning facility and an additional \$3 million on other physical assets including



The Double Diamond Trio Band

They don't really do this in bluegrass...

terrain re-grades, lift re-design and improved efficiency in processing guests. Internally, the resort's core culture and organizational structure was refocused toward the beginner from a learning perspective. Results showed that over 95 percent of new riders and skiers had their expectations met and 99.4 percent said that they would return to Hunter Mountain.

Perfect North Slopes, Ind. (100,000–250,000 visits) After hearing the catchy phrase 'Learn to Turn' in a panel discussion at last year's NSAA Convention, Perfect North Slopes developed a program for new skiers and riders to purchase a Learn to Turn ticket for \$5 with the purchase of a lift ticket and rental. The Learn To Turn tickets awarded guests with a lesson and a ski area debit card worth \$10. The program showed an increase of 47 percent in new skiers and riders and 64 percent of the debit cards were redeemed.

Apple Mountain, Mich. (0–100,000 visits) The School Days at Apple Mountain program is targeted toward elementary, junior and senior high school students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to take part in outdoor winter sports. With 40 schools participating, students pay \$12 for a lift ticket, ski rentals and an introductory lesson. The resort has brought an estimated 3,780 students to the slopes.



Front Row left to right: PNSAA's Scott Kaden accepted the award on behalf of Schweitzer Mountain; and David Perry of Aspen Skiing Co. Row 2: Mike Nelson, Apple Mountain; John McColly, Mountain High Resort; Colorado Ski Country USA's Sara Esall accepted for SolVista; Dan Egan, Tenney Mountain; and Tom Meyers, Wachusett Mountain Row 3: Chip Perfect, Perfect North Slopes; Rob Linde, Eldora; Doug Wales, Bridger Bowl; Rob Megnin, Hunter Mountain; Chris Dudding, Ski Roundtop; Anne Weimer, Liberty Mountain Resort; and Chris Black, Whitetail Mountain Resort.

Best Program To Increase Frequency of Core Participants

Aspen/Snowmass Colo. (500,000–or more visits) The Power of Four, a multimedia marketing project in book and DVD format, was designed to communicate to guests the feeling that they will get when visiting Aspen/Snowmass. The campaign also explores the spirit and character that make the area unique. The Power of Four was distributed by several facets and viewed by millions of viewers on local television stations, United Airlines and US Airways in-flight services, and the Resorts Sports Network.

Wachusett Mountain Ski Area, Mass. (250,000–500,000 visits) Wachusett developed a simple economical alternative to the Century Season Pass to allow for additional frequency of the core participants that did not purchase a season pass for the 2003-04 season. The Three-Peat Card provides three days of skiing for less than the retail price of two weekend days. Wachusett sold a total of 570 Three-Peat cards and generated approximately \$50,000 in sales.

Bridger Bowl Ski Area, Mont. (100,000–250,000 visits) The dominant role of websites in the industry led Bridger Bowl to purchase daily video movies on its website, www.bridgerbowl.com. The Daily Snow Video has become one of the top visited pages on the website with more than 64,000 visits during the months of December and January alone. With the use of digital cameras Bridger Bowl is able to capture dynamic action photos depicting daily conditions for consumers to view via the website.

Tenney Mountain Ski Area, N.H. (0–100,000 visits) Tenney Mountain attracted avid skiers and snowboarders in early October with “a little patch of winter paradise.” The Tenney Mountain Glacier, made possible by Infinite Crystals Snowmaking (ICS) from SnowMagic Entertainment, was approximately 400 feet long and 35 feet wide and featured jumps, rails and room for traditional turns on the snow. Word-of-mouth marketing reached all ability

and interest levels expanding Tenney’s advertising capabilities beyond its resources.

Best Program To Convert New Participants to Core Participants

Liberty Mountain Resort, Ski Roundtop and Whitetail Mountain, Pa. (500,000– or more visits) Three resorts, regional retailers, snow sports equipment manufacturers and the local snow sports community partnered for the Night Club card. The card is a night season pass offered at an attractive price and made available to groups of 15 or more. Valid at Liberty Mountain Resort, Ski Roundtop and Whitetail Mountain Resort, the card must be purchased in a group but can be used individually. For an additional \$20, participants may add the Advantage Card option to their Night Club card, offering a 40-percent savings on all lift, lesson and rental products for any daytime visit. Last season, the three resorts saw a combined cardholder increase of 95 percent and total night visits increased by 108 percent.

Eldora Mountain Resort, Colo. (250,000–500,000 visits) To remain competitive in the Colorado market, Eldora is always developing new products that appeal to its primary target audience of “families with children of skiing/riding age.” This year, Eldora partnered with Christy Sports for the Gear and Grow pass, an Eldora’s child’s season pass and a season-long rental package. The Gear and Grow pass sold for \$159 and increased children’s season pass sales by 75 percent, resulting in an increase of adult season passes and family season passes.

Schweitzer Mountain Resort, Idaho. (100,000–250,000 visits) For the 2003-04 season Schweitzer Mountain Resort introduced the Schweitzer Freeride Team and the Development Team, both targeted to offer teens a sense of belonging in their experience at the resort. The Freeride Team is comprised of eight members who serve as ambassadors to the mountain and excellent role models to other teens, teaching kids safety and etiquette. The members of the team attended freeride

events regionally and assisted in preparation and execution of on-mountain events. As the new team grew and the other teens showed interest, The Development Team was established to coach kids that would like to be future Freeride Team members. The new program has recruited 30 members and hopes to reach 100 members next season.

SolVista, Colo. (0–100,000 visits) SolVista’s Get on the Snow program offered first-time skiers and snowboarders an opportunity to learn at an affordable price. The program included two days of lift tickets, two full-day five hour lessons and two days of rentals. Participants who completed both days of lessons received a season pass valid for the remainder of the season for only \$99. Get on the Snow was available to both children and adults. SolVista saw an 85 percent growth in this program and out of 650 participants, 500 completed both lessons and collected their season pass. SolVista reports that many guests expressed their intention to continue the sport.



Once again TransWorld Snowboarding magazine presented its Best Parks awards at the NSAA National Convention. Here TransWorld Director of Sales Development Mike Jaquet awards Park City Mountain Resort Marketing Director Julie Hopkins the award for Best Terrain Park of the Year. Other winners included Mammoth Mountain, Calif., for Best Halfpipe and Whistler, B.C., won the award for Overall Best Terrain for Snowboarding.

The NSAA thanks the 36 resorts that sent entries, and to the judges: Anke Corbin of Mountain Sports Media, Andrew Heltzel of Livewire International, Mac McMenemy of Omni Promotional, Michael Jaquet of TransWorld Media and Dave Rosenberger of Quiksilver. ■