



MountainLeap CaseStudy

CIT Aerospace jets to the piste

CIT Aerospace is part of CIT Group Inc, a global commercial and consumer finance company. They've discovered that Mountain Leap's focus on European-based ski events is a real bonus when entertaining their worldwide client base.

Client Profile

As a Fortune 500 company and member of the S&P 500, CIT provides financial solutions for more than 80 percent of the Fortune 1000.

The Aerospace Division provides leasing and innovative financing options to a broad spectrum of the global aerospace value chain. They work with many of the world's most respected airlines and aircraft manufacturers. Throughout CIT, there is an emphasis on the importance of building strong and lasting relationships with clients and partners.

Given that CIT Aerospace's client list reads like a who's who in the world's most prestigious businesses and airlines, providing the right level of sophistication and quality in client entertaining is a paramount concern.

The Objective

CIT started organising ski events five years ago and the initial aim was just to spend some time with important clients and for the sales teams to build relationships. There were just twenty people on the first trip, including spouses, and CIT were out to impress.

"Our first objective was to cement our reputation within the industry and with our clients. Since then, the event has grown and we now take more than twice the original number of people," says Patrice Deza-Castillo, Assistant Vice President for Brand Marketing at CIT Aerospace.

Why Mountain Leap?

It was a stroke of luck that CIT stumbled upon Mountain Leap.

"We'd been working with one of their competitors for our first two events, but on a few occasions we felt there was not enough attention to detail or enough staff to deal with issues that arose," says Patrice. **"They were a larger company than Mountain Leap and I think this led to them lacking some of the skills and specialty that we've grown to love about Mountain Leap. We know that they will provide the right level of staffing to offer the personal service our group expects."**

Patrice sent in a quick enquiry through the Mountain Leap website and was amazed at the response. **"Rather than waiting around and having to chase them up, Mountain Leap contacted me within half an hour and we were planning an event there and then as they listened to our requirements. They instantly came back with suggestions and ideas for where we could go and what activities we could arrange. I was very impressed."**

Patrice found dealing with Mountain Leap made her job easier. **"To have a company be so proactive was great. I have so many events to organise throughout our company that to be walked through this one was a great relief. I don't ski, so things have to be explained fully to me — especially as our President, Jeff Knittel, who's a keen skier, likes to test my knowledge on the details of the events and locations as much as is humanly possible!"**



The Event

CIT Aerospace has now held two significant and successful events with Mountain Leap. Winter 2004-5, they took their guests to Courchevel 1850 where they stayed at the Hotel Bellecote.

Their latest and, so far, biggest event with Mountain Leap was held in winter 2005-6. This saw them visit Val d'Isère, staying at Les Barmes de l'Ours. This exquisite hotel sits at the foot of the famous downhill run "Bellevarde", just 100m from Val's major lift system. The luxurious rooms are decorated in four unique styles - Loft, Chalet, Nordic and Lodge. Most rooms are equipped with balconies or terraces, with double rooms and suites overlooking the piste or village, whilst twin rooms have a forest view.

The hotel's sumptuous bar and comfortable lounge with roaring open fireplace were much appreciated by the CIT party. Offering an exclusive and classic Alpine feel but with a distinct modern twist, it is a perfect setting for enabling a company like CIT to entertain up to 50 guests at one time in the restaurant, whilst also allowing for smaller groups to sit together and converse more privately if they wish.

With 49 rooms and 26 suites and an onsite hire shop capable of servicing all of CIT's guests, Les Barmes de l'Ours provides a stress-free atmosphere in a top location.

Founding Partner of Mountain Leap, Adam Honey, believes partnership is the key to success. ***"Les Barmes de l'Ours has exactly the right kind of ambience for our clients. The staff have always provided great service and worked well with our event managers. Val d'Isère is a tremendous resort with an excellent ski area, but there can be a hefty transfer time from Lyon or Geneva Airport. It is essential for us that, once we get to resort, we know that we can trust the hotel and the hire shops to be ready and waiting for our group. It is our aim to take every little bit of stress out of a ski event for our clients. Ensuring we only use committed partners like the Barmes de l'Ours makes our job a little easier, meaning we can spend more time offering the extra little touches so important to our clients."***

The Benefits

According to Patrice, the annual ski event is one of the most influential fixtures on their calendar. ***"Holding an event such as this really gives us the opportunity to get to know our clients better. A number of our competitors and contemporaries hold ski events in the US, but we wanted to set ourselves apart. We have a lot of clients in Europe and in the East, so it makes sense for us to hold an event in the Alps. It adds***

something extra for our American clients to come to Europe and it means we can coincide with the Geneva Forum conventions in March, where many of our clients and partners have a presence.

The feedback we've received from our clients has been excellent. We're now planning to work with Mountain Leap to monitor the increased business we get as a direct result of holding these events."

But what if some of the attendees don't ski? An event has to be attractive to lots of different types of guest.

Patrice, again, ***"I love going on the ski events with Mountain Leap. Even though I don't ski, there is always something else made available for us to do. Just being in the beautiful surroundings and having everything done for you can give you a huge lift.***

I will now call on Mountain Leap every time we run a ski event because I feel absolutely calm and relaxed, knowing I can leave the organisation to them. They are on first name terms now with our people, their spouses and even some of our clients. In fact, the wife of one of our sales guys is an event planner and she was blown away by Mountain Leap's attention to detail - ensuring every base was covered."

Adam Honey found Patrice and the whole team at CIT a pleasure to work with. ***"CIT understand the benefits that can be achieved by building strong personal relationships with their US and European clients in this way and allow us the freedom to do what we do best, helping them achieve their objectives."***

Unfortunately, two of our guys were getting a little competitive on the slopes. One had an accident that resulted in a broken foot. We all assumed that he would have to miss out on the visit we had planned to a great restaurant that evening, as it required a tricky traverse across ice and snow. The Mountain Leap staff wouldn't hear of it and managed to convince a local pisteur to give him a lift to the restaurant in his piste-basher. It's that kind of attention and care that people don't forget.

About Mountain Leap Events

Mountain Leap Events specialises in providing bespoke ski events and conferences to some of the most respected names in the corporate world. From simple client entertaining and ski weekends, to motivation and teambuilding events, managed incentive schemes and VIP hideaways, events can be designed for any number of delegates. With offices in the UK and deep in the Alps, they deliver a seamless product to match any brief and will happily jet you off to some of their favourite resorts throughout France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Scandinavia.

If you would like to know more, please contact Chris St John at: chris.stjohn@mountainleap.com, call +44 (0) 7968 482110 or visit www.mountainleap.com