

Q&A: Laura Robles of Fiesta Americana Grand Meetings Mexico Talks Innovation



We spoke with Laura Robles, CMP, director of sales for groups at Fiesta Americana Grand Coral Beach, about how they are driving innovation. Here's what she had to say.

Prevue: How are groups using technology to gain a hyperlocal grasp of the resort?

Robles: At our resort, digital projection mapping has been a growing trend and we are very proud to be one of the first hotels to offer it for events. Our in-house technology team does an incredible job with it. They are efficient, creative and work within the budget of every client. The technology in our state-of-the-art ballroom makes executing digital mapping easy, and so it is often requested by our clients.

In what ways is your destination (hotel/resort) cultivating sustainability? How can groups connect with this vibe?

Remaining a CSR resort is one of our goals. Here are some of the initiatives we have set in place:

Water Conservation and Recycling: Each guest room includes a note card asking guests to conserve water and energy by placing only the towels that they wish to be washed in the bathtub.

Energy Conservation: The resort has begun to replace all light bulbs to energy saving versions. Currently, we have changed 30 percent of the 11,000 light bulbs in the hotel, which translates to 40 percent in energy savings. We have put in automatic lighting systems where appropriate in guest corridors. The resort's hot water tanks (20,000 liters) have been changed to "ECOTERM" equipment which heats only the water that is being utilized at the moment. We also implemented the use of a new ecologic coolant in cold water tanks.

Waste Management: The kitchen areas follow waste separation rules, in terms of organic vs. non-organic materials. The garbage deposit has been redesigned with different cubicles in order to classify wastes. Wastes are stored in cool chambers. The local garbage service comes three times a week to pick this up what we call "dangerous goods" as part of a residual deposit program. The resort classifies waste into the following four categories: plastic, aluminum, paper and organic waste.

Community Outreach Programs: We make frequent donations to a local organization called "La Ciudad de la Alegria," which serves the elderly, battered women, abandoned children and HIV positive individuals. The charitable efforts of the company's Posadas Foundation, supports children up to 16 years old with health, educational and other special needs. Posadas Foundation, along with APAC, initiated a support program for children with cerebral palsy, which covers their school tuition and a year of rehabilitation. Through a guest outreach program, those staying at Posadas hotels are able to donate \$2.00 to the cause at checkout.

Are there any cutting edge, out-of-the-box group experiences that planners should consider?

At our hotel, guests rarely hear "no" as an answer. We try to accommodate our guests' needs and wishes as much as possible. For example, in the past we have converted 55 suites into one-on-one offices at the guests' request. We also turn our Gem Spa, one of the best in Latin America, into a nightclub, complete with a lounge, music and great spirits!