

Case study 7: BP Retail circus for schoolchildren



BP Retail

"I had to call them to make sure they were not pulling my leg; the concept was fantastic but to organise such an event in five weeks seemed preposterous! The whole event was a resounding success and there is no doubt that it was all due to the innovation, organisation and support of the Unique Solutions team. They provided an outstanding and unique solution to a difficult and testing challenge," says BP Retail's HR Manager, Peter Underwood.

With the arrival of a new UK National Operations Manager, **BP Oil's** retail business underwent significant changes. Required to get his team of one hundred managers and support staff motivated to tackle the challenges ahead, BP approached Unique Solutions to plan and deliver a three-day business planning and team development programme.

Five weeks later the Operations Division at BP took part in a teambuilding event like no other when they put on a full-scale circus for 400+ children. When delegates discovered at the start of the three-day event the enormous challenge that lay ahead, they were amazed - but committed from the very start. "One of the design criteria was that every individual would be able to make a material contribution to the end result. A large show meets this as there are as many crucial backstage and front-of-house roles as there are performing roles," explains Unique Solutions Event Manager Dave Savage. "We knew it would work because we knew the client group well through other work we had done with them. We knew they were adventurous and could rise to a challenge."

The wealth of undiscovered talent was amazing: trapeze artists, acrobats, stilt walkers, clowns, musicians, production and wardrobe assistants were soon being trained by experts. The actual performance was fantastic – every performing group was outstanding and brought rounds of cheering and applause from the children.

Training for and performing in the circus proved to be an excellent vehicle for teambuilding, generating constant close co-operation and communication coupled with sky-high levels of enthusiasm and motivation throughout the three days. Thanks in no small part to their experiences in the big top, the managers and support staff of the Operations Division were able to embrace organisational changes and hit the ground running; meeting and exceeding the expectations of the new National Operations Manager.

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