

Getting the Gold



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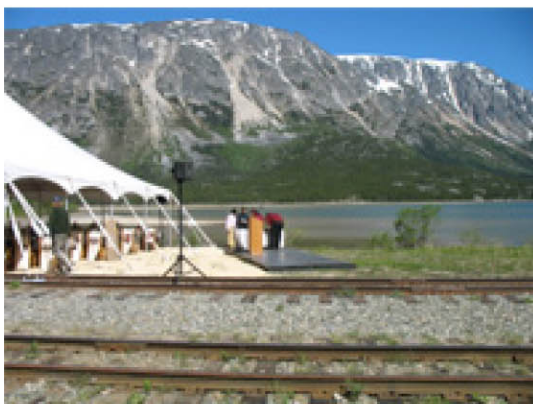
By Vincent Alonzo

Back in 1898, the Klondike Gold Rush put the city of Skagway on the map. The city was the jumping off point for prospectors heading up to Canada's Yukon Territory to seek their fortune. Of course the city languished somewhat when the rush ended, but it ultimately settled into what it is today, a shipping port not only for the

Yukon, but most of the towns in the northern--most point of southeast Alaska. And in recent years it's experienced another boom as a popular port of call for cruise ships.

That's what brought 125 top sales associates for the Bristol, TN-based King Pharmaceutical to Skagway, back in June. The group was on a seven-day Carnival Cruise that also took them to Whittier, Sitka, Juneau, and Ketchikan. But Skagway was the day the group got the gold--and they followed in the footsteps of the Klondike prospectors to get it. The narrow gauge railroad, created over 100 years ago to link Skagway with Bennett Station in the Yukon is still in operation.

The group boarded the vintage train--with each passenger car bearing the name of a drug the company has successfully brought to market--and took the 90-minute ride across the border into Canada for a **unique experiential awards presentation** that tied directly into the culture of the company. When the group arrived at Bennett Station, they were greeted with sign posts bearing each of their names. President and CEO of King Pharmaceutical addressed the group to thank them for their hard work and vision and unveil the company's new logo as a float plane circled the event with the new logo emblazoned on its side. Then the Honorable Larry Bagnell, MP of the Yukon in the Canadian Parliament addressed the group as did Kaa Shaake Hani, Chief of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the tribe that first inhabited the region. "It's those kinds of exclusive touches that turn an event into a once-in-a-lifetime experience," says Harith Wickrema, president of Harith Productions, the Willow Grove, PA-based event production company that created the event and entire incentive program. "Surely most of these attendees could afford a trip to the Yukon, but getting the leader of the First Nation and the highest ranking member of the Canadian government in the region to speak is something that no one person could do by themselves."



But the most priceless aspect of the event was the **location itself**. King Pharmaceutical is a young company that has only been in existence for 12 years. Many of its top sales people and research professionals are individuals who gave up successful and secure careers to form the company. "They had the courage to be pioneers just like the gold rush prospectors," says Wickrema. "So while it was challenging to bring all the material and personnel required to create an elegant, tented awards banquet in a remote wilderness location, the symbolic connection with the spirit of the prospectors ultimately resonated very deeply with both the attendees and the upper management of King Pharmaceutical."