

Hvar, Hvar away

As part of their global incentive program, the top sales people of F-Secure were taken to Croatia, to the jet set island of Hvar. The four-day trip gave them the chance to acquaint themselves with management and colleagues, as well as to fully experience the authentic environment, a UNESCO world heritage site.

DAY 1

All roads lead to Hvar

When the best sales people and marketing experts of F-Secure land with their hosts at the Split airport, the fierce spring storm that earlier tossed about the Adriatic Sea is just a memory. Participants have covered a long distance, arriving from various parts of Europe and Asia, even as far as Silicon Valley.

Split's Promenade is in full swing. All terraces are open, palm trees reaching for the sky. However, the storm left some heavy winds, stopping all catamaran traffic between Split and Hvar. An incentive travel specialist **Timo Heinaro** from Fincentive, responsible for travel arrangements, knows exactly the right strings to pull: there is a fast catamaran waiting for the group, ready to take them to their destination.

Upon arrival in Hvar the town greets the group with some amazing colours of sunset glancing its golden light onto the historic buildings and the fortress standing guard on the mountain top. It is still quiet at this time of the year, but the streets and squares will be busy with tourists in summer. Among them, world's top celebrities such as **Paris Hilton** and **Prince Harry** have been sighted several times.

Today, the place is filled with the best in their field. At the scenic view bar of Hotel Adriana, the elite sales people of F-Secure will be introduced to an adventure of a lifetime, beginning tomorrow. Tonight, it is time to recover from the strain of the journey, get to know colleagues, and enjoy the delicious treats provided by a local fish restaurant.





The group of thirty people enjoy their incentive travel award in Hvar, coloured with turquoise waters and red tile roofs

DAY 2

Turquoise waters

Friday morning breaks sunny greeting the delegates gathered for a sales meeting. In the harbour, a catamaran awaits the well-prepared travellers, all wearing sunglasses given as a welcome gift, and as instructed, everyone has packed swimming suits, sunscreen, decent shoes, and wind-breakers.

The moorings are released and a relaxed cruise along the picturesque Pakleni Archipelago is ready to start. The tiny villages and vigorous vineyards climbing along the hills make spots on the hilly shoreline. There is a net stretching over the bow of the catamaran, on top of which the colleagues lie having refreshments, while admiring the fabulous scenery. Conversation topics jump from assignments received in the morning to the upcoming program. According to the program, we should be sailing, but the sails are out of order due to the storm, and therefore the engines take us forward. Three smaller sailboats have, however, been organised to take all willing to have a chance to test real sailing.



At the sources of local food

The island of Sveti Klement is reached at lunchtime. In the beach village Palmižana, there is time to dip in the sea before the lunch, which will be served at Restaurant Toto's. Yet Tom Gaffney from the UK is the only brave one to meet the challenge and try the sea, cooled by the storm. - Most refreshing, he grins while seated in the table.

The plates are filled by salads, vegetables, and freshly caught fish. The local olive oil is a perfect accompaniment to the white bread, and even the wine is practically from next door.

After the desserts, it is time for the sport section of the day. The group is heading to a path amidst rosemary bushes, leading to the opposite side of the tiny island.

While they are on their way, some reveal this is already their second sports performance that day. Early bird **Anna-Mari Himanen**, who packed her running shoes, has been speeding along the narrow lanes of Hvar Old Town with her colleague **Ian Whiteside**.

- The best part of the trip is definitely finding out common non-work-related issues we have with colleagues, says Ms. Himanen

A third-generation inn, called Tonč, is located at the destination. The group is greeted not only by the Croatian-Danish hosts, but also by blooming orange blossoms and sardines on the table; local moonshine, *rakija*, is readily poured into shot glasses.

A tour of the grounds of the inn take the group to a chapel, an olive grove, and artichoke plantations. At some point, the discussion is diverted to the weather, which is cooler than normal. There are 350 sunny days in the Hvar region annually. At this time of the year, the temperatures would usually be equal to Finnish summer days, but due to the spring storm mixing up everything, the temperature is barely 15 degrees. **Perina**, the hostess of the Inn, dislikes the cool weather, but the coldness seems unimportant to the guests: the British are happy for it not being rainy, the Indians praise the fresh air, and for the Finns, who would be trudging in slush in Finland, any weather is better than that at home. The Finns are equally interested in the local wintertime weather. After hearing the high winter temperatures, someone shoots out: *in Finland, we call that summer!*

Rewards and sparring

It is time to say goodbye to our friendly hosts, and also to Don the Dog, who followed the group faithfully around the island. A catamaran takes the sales experts back to Hvar, where **Petri Räsänen** and **Teppo Kilpeläinen** enter the hotel



Identifying and collecting wild local herbs



Samu Konttinen,
Managing Director
F-Secure tastes *rakija*



bar for a pint of local beer.

Staff who transferred to F-Secure through a corporate acquisition have been successful in their first sales competition.

- I think it's great that the company highlights and gives recognition to the best sales people. All companies live for their sales, so appropriate rewarding of sales people brings more business to the company, ponders Mr. Räsänen.

Ms. Kilpeläinen couldn't agree more.

- A trip like this really makes us stronger together.

It is so important to meet with colleagues who have achieved results in sales, and spar with them. Management needs to know where the staff wants the business to go, and how its services should be developed.

Many great experiences have already occurred by halfway of the trip, but expectations are still high.

- New people, great food, having fun and sun, the two men sum up, and start getting ready for dinner.

Next morning, rumours tell some members of the group have been sparring quite late in the nightlife of Hvar.

Tip!

Handle special diet requests discreetly: give photos of people with special diets to the restaurant. Then it is easier to deliver the correct dishes to people without any hassle.

An incentive program will motivate and engage

SAMU KONTTINEN, Managing Director of F-Secure, started the President's Club sales competition about seven years ago, when he was the Head of Global Sales and Marketing of F-Secure. -There is nothing special in a sales competition as such, but it promotes the performance-centred culture that is so important to us. If you really want to raise the bar, there must be a reward as well, says Mr. Konttinen.

Five previous trips have taken the top sales people from a desert safari in Dubai to Icelandic geysers, and from New York to Levi in Finnish Lapland, and to the Swiss Alps. Now, for the first time, the trip was organised by professionals

Ms. **Marja Vironen**, Executive Assistant, had participated in all travel arrangements from day one.

- I arranged the first trip just by myself. Then I became wiser and contacted a travel agency. Making travel arrangements was interesting, but took a lot of my time, and didn't exclude my normal duties, tells Ms. Vironen.

This year, the operative responsibilities were handed over to Fincotive, specialised in incentive travel. The difference from previous years has been significant, and there is no return to the former.

- A competition doesn't feel like a competition, if a competitor doesn't know whether or not she or he is at the top or the bottom of the list. By our own resources, we failed in the competition communications, which is significant when aiming at better performances. Led by professionals, the competitors have been informed regularly at different stages of the competition, and hype was built by interim prizes.

A REWARD TRIP offers the chance to meet foreign colleagues, but also to talk to the company management. Originating in Finland, F-Secure is a laid-back company, but in countries with higher hierarchy, the management has their status in front of the staff. Additionally, as Mr. Konttinen began as Managing Director less than a year ago, many participants have not yet met him.

- Meeting the managing director sure has its own importance, but personally, I like to meet people and get first-hand feedback directly from them. There's seldom time for such a thing in normal life, says Mr. Konttinen. According to Mr. Konttinen, it is hard to estimate the effect of the incentive program on sales results; it could go one way or the other.

- The program clearly has an effect on the commitment of our best sales people. Each company is dependent on their staff. If an incentive program is a good tool to make them happier, then it is a good investment. With the help of the program we'll show the staff how we value them, their tough performances, and the sacrifices they have had to make for them.

Remember!

Invest in frequent pep-up communication. Failing in doing so is the most common reason for incentive programs to fall behind objectives

DAY 3

Sightseeing with a difference

Saturday pampers the incentive-travellers with warmth. People are in their T-shirts when the GPS town-orienteeering is ready to start in the lanes of Hvar.

The game-like sightseeing is meant to replace the obligatory sightseeing with gamification. Instead of passively listening to a guide, the smaller groups will get to know the town, guided by tablets and occasional passers-by.

Christian Hedinger from Germany, his French colleague **Cédric Germain**, and the Helsinki-based Executive Assistant **Marja Vironen** are following a virtual arrow for the first point.

Ding-ding-ding goes the tablet, and the group seeks for some shadow to allow members to read the first task. It's time to get to know one of the most well-known inventions. Based on the task instructions, it is clear it is the tie, but what could it be in Croatian? The group bursts in to a nearby clothing store to ask for advice. *Kravata*, is the answer. Mr. Germain enters the word on the tablet, gathering points. The group thanks the shopkeeper and moves to the next point.

There they learn that besides the tie, the Croatians have invented something else. **Ivan**



Cédric Germain, Christian Hedinger and Marja Vironen are solving tricky challenges during the GPS-aided GoTeam treasure hunt

Vučetić, born in Hvar and emigrating at an early age to Argentina, was the first to create a systematic way of recognising fingerprints and using them in crime investigation.

These tasks take the groups along the Hvar Promenade and down tiny lanes. They learn of some famous people who visited Hvar, and when the first communal theatre in Europe opened, located on the edge of the dock. Additionally, there are a couple of tough mathematical exercises, a task of singing a serenade to a beautiful lady, and another of taking a photo with a donkey and the group. While a living donkey was nowhere available, there was a postcard of a donkey to do the trick.

Hvar

- An Adriatic island off the Croatian coast with **11,000** inhabitants, Hvar, the biggest town, has about **4,000** inhabitants.
- The town wall of Hvar was built more than 700 years ago. The oldest communal theatre in Europe exists in Hvar, opened in 1612. Located on the island, Stari Grad Plain is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- Hvar is a well-known summer destination, attracting the rich and famous.
- The easiest way to reach Hvar from Finland is to take a direct flight from Helsinki to Split (flight time 3 hours) and continue with a catamaran.

tzhvar.hr

Tip!

Do not underestimate the skills of the group. To be meaningful, the team building activities need to be challenging enough



Buzz you Beetle to the mountains

When all the tasks have been solved, the incentive-travellers wander to a parking lot behind the bus station. They will find several bright-coloured Volkswagen Beetles ready to take them on a mountain safari.

German Petra Gerling hops into a pink beetle, which for her is a nostalgic trip to her childhood. Her car is one of many in a row, with several participants ready to take photos with the new cameras they won during the competition. The scenery needs to be preserved on cameras.

The beetles head up the mountain and the fortress, where a rugged landscape over the town and the archipelago in front of it form a fabulous view. The trip continues on winding hilly roads to a local distillery, where a light snack is served - and rakija, of course. Each will get their own bottled delicacy, seasoned by local herbs.

After a nice lunch at the olive groves, it is time to start hard physical labour. These fertile grounds have been outlined and embanked for centuries by low stone fences. At the next pit stop, yellow working gloves and red billhooks will be handed over to the group. Building a fence has traditionally been men's work, with women taking care of weeding. This is how we handle it this time as well, with the help of an expert.

Luckily the day is not just about working, as the group gets interrupted by a passer-by in a straw hat and checkered shirt. Naturally, he is offering a drink to the visitors from afar – nothing else but a rakija bottle!

There's a lot of talking, despite the lack of a common language. Enough with talking, suddenly the old man takes out his accordion. Ljubav, that is a word someone recognizes, remotely sounding Russian. The man sings Croatian love songs, and it sounds like his beloved was called Angela.

Accompanied by the happy accordion-player, the group returns to their cars.

- Talk about luck! And perfect timing, carrying both a bottle and an accordion! people on the back seat of the Beetle are astonished.

The organisers rub their hands happily. The planned surprise had clearly hit the target.

Dinner in an abandoned village

As the evening folds duskier, we get ready for the farewell dinner in a secret destination. From the familiar parking lot, 4WD vehicles take the top sales people to the middle of the remains of a desolated mountain village. The moon-lighted square will be filled with grand choir singing. Here, all sales masters will get their awards. Some of them get this recognition for the second or third time already.

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Mr. **Yong Meng** Hong from Singapore admires the award, and tells it will be placed in the best place in his office. He says the trip exceeded his expectations, even if most of his luggage has been unaccounted for.

- It is so rewarding to meet with colleagues and discuss other than work-related topics, says Mr Yong.

The dinner tables have been set already, but first a video is presented. Feelings from this morning are projected on the screen: the managing director Samu Konttinen woke in the early dawn and went to the sea with some local fishermen. Neptune was generous – otherwise we wouldn't eat tonight.

Mr Heinaro tells briefly about the village history and local planting of lavender and chrysanthemums.

- Fifty years ago, the people in this village got tired of living up here and decided to get a sea view. This village has been deserted ever since. Let's count how many ghosts do we see! At that instant, the light of the project goes off. It might be best to leave the Square to the ghosts and move to the delicious dinner table.

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DAY 4

The emperor's old quarters

Having coffee together for the last time wakes the participants up to reality.

- I was looking at the travel program last night, and I realised how much we have been able to see in just a couple of days. The schedule has been really tight, but it didn't seem so, say the coffee drinkers.

After breakfast, the catamaran will take the group to Split, where they can spend a couple of hours before the first flights head home. There is a local guide, who is about to tell stories, instead of reporting dates and years. **Dino Ivanovic** has it covered. He tours the group in the narrow lanes of the Old Town and the Palace area, built by the Roman Emperor Diocletian around the year 300. The guide tells an unforgettable story of how human excretions salvaged a huge amount of historical treasures in the Palace from destruction back in the old days.

After a light lunch, it is time to say farewell. Some people leave for the airport, while the luckier ones still have some time to walk around the town.

Mr Yong Meng Hong, who lost his luggage, has received great news: the luggage has been found and is waiting for him at the hotel. Maybe losing luggage was the price to be paid to allow staying here one more day, before the flight back home

THIS IS HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

- The F-Secure President's Club incentive program was launched a year earlier, with a message-in-a-bottle, suiting the sailing theme of the trip. The conspicuous shipment was delivered by post and opened with 100% certainty. That was of utmost importance, and is critical in any incentive program: the launch needs to reach the whole target group
- A website was opened for the competition to monitor the competition and give attractive pieces of information and photos of the adventures of the upcoming trip.
- *Keep it in the sight, keep it in the mind* with frequent, on-going communication
- During the competition, the participants were contacted monthly and encouraged with interim prizes, supporting the theme of the trip. The best participants were given cameras, waterproof binoculars, wrist computers, and sailing bags.
- The winners were announced by email at the end of January. At the same time, there was a preview of the next incentive travel to Scotland.
- Before the trip, a WhatsApp group was formed to lift the travel spirits. Photos taken in the trip were easy to share in the group.

Tip!

Invest in professional photographers. When they document the trip, the participants can focus on the essential: networking, having fun, and enjoying new experiences

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- A global cyber security company, developing and selling data security products and services to both consumers and corporate customer.
- Headquartered in Ruoholahti, Helsinki
- Operates in 25 countries and 5 continents
- Turnover €160 million (2016)
- Quoted in the Helsinki Stock Exchange since 1999.
- Rewards the best sales and marketing experts by annual incentive trips in the President's Club Sales Competition

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Content first, towards genuine experiences

TIMO Heinaro from Fincitive is a professional organiser of sales competitions, incentive programs, and team-building activities. Mr Heinaro wanted to offer F-Secure's incentive travellers genuine, authentic local experiences in the fabulous Adriatic scenery, something not commonly available even for money.

- Our purpose was to offer them an unforgettable trip, yet also to win a SITE Crystal Award. It is given annually to the world's best incentive travel implementations, tells Heinaro, who already has won the award once.

- Personally, I had no need to win it again, but the competition has proven to be a great way to motivate local partners.

With that award, our local partners would become the first Crystal Award winners on this corner of the world.

Heinaro has been a judge in the Awards as well, and he believes the content is where the emphasis should be.

- I have seen many cases where I have to ask myself *where's the beef?* Anyone can burn money in the finest hotels and posh restaurants, but the basic content, unexpectedness, and authenticity have been

mediocre.

The unofficial slogan in the incentive travel industry is the only limit is your imagination.

- In practice, the limits are set by the budget, but the professionalism is weighed in the smart and imaginary use of the resources available. This is where Fincitive and F-Secure mastered this trip perfectly, of course with the important help of skillful local partners.

HEINARO laughs that his job is filled with amazing experiences; yet crisis management, problem solving, and coping in unexpected situations also belong to it. All of these were on his agenda even on this trip.

- I flew to Croatia a couple of days prior to the group. Luckily, I got to Hvar on the last catamaran before the storm broke out. Time was not wasted as back-up arrangement were taken in use.

An organiser can't control the weather conditions, yet with careful anticipation and risk minimising, a lot can be avoided.

- Hvar was selected as our destination due to the fact that the probability of having sunny weather there at that particular time was higher than in many other locations, explains Mr Heinaro

Even rain can be an asset, though.

- Next year, the top sales people of F-Secure will travel to Scotland for an off-road adventure. As it most likely will rain then, we chose an activity that is more fun the more mud and sludge there is.

Even if the catamarans stayed ashore and sails were broken, any hassle behind the scenes cannot be visible to the guests.

- The most relevant thing is how to make corrective moves, says Mr Heinaro

- In those cases, help comes from local partners. You should be careful when choosing them. And when the cooperation goes smoothly, you should hang on to it.

Even if there were no sudden surprises, you shouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security, reminds Mr Heinaro

- That is the point where something could go wrong. If aiming to succeed in all arrangements, the organiser must be on his toes at all times

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