

World Corporate Games a smashing success in debut

By John Bagley
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For all businessmen who recently participated in the World Corporate Games, its time to get back to the files, not the field.

For now, the games have come and gone. However, after this year's success and international interest, the games look as though they're here to stay.

For the past two weeks, businessmen have competed in athletic competition consisting of 893 separate events.

These athletes have been representing their company (not their country) in athletic competition similar to the Olympic games.

According to World Corporate Games founder and president, Maureen Johnston, the inaugural event turned out better than expected.

"We have had nothing but positive feedback," Johnston said. "The athletes, organizers, sponsors and everyone involved were happy to be a part of the event, and plan to increase their participation for next year."

Next year? Wasn't this supposed to be like the Olympics?

According to Johnston, the events were to be scheduled every other year. However, due to the outstanding reception and turnout at this year's events, Johnston plans to schedule the games next year at another Bay Area city. More likely than not, the city will be San Jose or Oakland.

Johnston also plans to hold the competition a little earlier in the year, so that the athletes will have a warmer atmosphere in which to compete.

The games were divided into eight divisions, based on the number of representatives in each company.

For example, Division 8 was for the larger companies with 200 or more representative athletes. On the other hand, Division 1 had between one and five participating athletes.

The two-week competition, which began October 22 and concluded November 5, had the following final-division-winning company results:

Division 1 — Arena Iodex (Mexico).

Division 2 — Apple Computer.

Division 3 — Sun Microsystems.

Division 4 — Franklin Group of Funds.

Division 5 — San Francisco Federal Savings. San Francisco Federal Savings won more individual medals (183) than any other participating company.

Division 6 — Shaklee Corporation.

Division 7 — Chevron.

Division 8 — Hewlett Packard. Hewlett Packard won its division and also won the Grand Award, given to the company having the greatest number of participants (446).

The variety of international participation and large corporate in-

volvement in the Games' first year definitely gives Johnston something to smile about.

"To get this thing off the ground was truly remarkable. We had a budget of just barely over \$1 million," Johnston said. "It is amazing what you can do if you compensate. If we were to advertise heavy, it would have cost us a fortune."

Because of these funding problems, the games were not brought to the public's attention.

However, the games received plenty of acknowledgement among the foreign press.

"We had over 100 French athletes participating in the Games," Johnston said. "We had representative athletes from all over Europe. We also had many Japanese and Australian athletes here," Johnston said.

"The Australian Broadcasting Company did a few television interviews on their native athletes," Johnston explained. "The French newspapers were over here also."

Johnston told a story of a Japanese businessman who flew back to work in Japan after his event. Two days later, he arrived back in San Francisco so he could participate in the closing ceremonies, which took place at Justin Herman Plaza.

"I am thrilled with the way the games went," Johnston said. "The athletes were tickled pink to be involved in this competition. We can do nothing but grow. Next year, I look to have an even bigger celebration."

