

High-end resorts lure corporate clients with more than free breakfast

By Nadja Brandt, Bloomberg News

Spa resorts such as Vermont's Stowe Mountain Lodge and the Broadmoor in Colorado are using wall climbing, carpentry classes and yoga to lure corporate clients accustomed to little more than free breakfast as a hotel perk.

Stowe Mountain has boosted its corporate group bookings with such programs as the "Naked Table Project," in which participants learn to build furniture from scratch. At the Miraval Arizona Resort & Spa in Tucson, guests can use meeting breaks to walk a tightrope or jump from a 25-foot pole, an activity known as the "Quantum Leap."

Luxury hotels, hurt more than their cheaper competitors by last year's U.S. recession, are working to reverse a drop in demand from business travelers. Spa resorts, upscale properties with a focus on health treatments and other recreational activities, are among those that have had the toughest time booking corporations, which became thriftier during the slump.

"These have been challenging times, but during these last two years, our programs have helped to attract corporate groups," said Morgan Fukumoto, a spokeswoman for Stowe Mountain in Stowe, Vt. "They look for more team-building activities and to get a great value for their money."

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