

RACING: Richard Petty Driving Experience Adds Video Recording to Cars

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Los Angeles Business Journal Staff

September 24, 2007

Enlightened executives are revving up business meetings by shifting them to California Speedway in Fontana for the Richard Petty Driving Experience. After all, there's nothing quite like a couple of laps at 150 miles per hour to clear a department head's corporate cobwebs and spark a creative session in the track's adjoining conference suites.

The track is one of 25 nationwide raceways that operate the Richard Petty Driving Experience. Locally, it conducts drive and ride along programs for approximately 50 days a year at the California Speedway with corporate customers accounting for 60 percent of the participants and individuals accounting for the balance. Most corporate customers – who can put the pedal to the metal for about \$400 – tend to come from the Los Angeles area, but others come from Riverside County, San Bernardino County and even Las Vegas to ride on the only track in Southern California that hosts NASCAR races.

With last week's addition of video recording technology to the cars, participants will be able to relive the experience over and over with a DVD recording. The option of buying a DVD (\$89-109) supplements the framed still photos (\$17-\$109 depending on the size) that are available to participants.

"To date we have not seen a decline in the photography side of our operation and have been pleasantly surprised on how customers really see the two as complementary to each other," said Chris McKee, director of promotions for North Carolina-based Richard Petty Driving Experience. "The photo is something that people display in their office while the video is more personal."

The cars used by participants were retrofitted with cameras that digitally record drivers as they circle the track. The most challenging part was finding a vendor who could supply the company with video equipment that could withstand the wear and tear.

"We have been looking at the feature for several years," said McKee. The company finally partnered with Virginia-based Trivinci Systems and uses its product called "Race Keeper" to record the video. After each day's events are completed, the video is downloaded and processed. A DVD is mailed out within a few working days.