

EVENT NAME:	DarwinLife & Home Expo 2011
DATE:	9-10 April 2011
TOTAL ATTENDANCE:	15,159 visitors over two days and 140 exhibitors
EVENT ORGANISER:	DarwinLife Magazine

BACKGROUND:

DarwinLife Magazine celebrates the Northern Territory's tropical way of life, with the aim to engage, inform and entertain local readership through a new exciting mix of quality lifestyle content.

This monthly publication targets a highly defined local audience of a balanced female/male readership in the key 25-55 age demographics that voices both a business and community message providing a strong marketing appeal for advertisers.

EVENT OBJECTIVE:

In November 2010, DarwinLife celebrated its first birthday. It was at this time, joint publishers, Leasel Avila and Lance Collyer launched the concept of the DarwinLife and Home Expo 2011 to their network of over 200 local businesses.

The idea was borne to not only add value to DarwinLife's local advertisers but to showcase products and services of businesses, owned and operated by locals, to the greater Darwin community in an event that the city had not seen before.

The concept was based on much more than a 'home show'. The aim was to attract companies relating to everything association with 'home, leisure and lifestyle' living in Darwin.

"With the Darwin Convention Center offering an all year round option, creating an indoor lifestyle exhibition was the best way to utilise the magnificent infrastructure of the venue and the surrounding Darwin Waterfront" stated DarwinLife's Leasel Avril.

Although Lance Collyer had previous experience with holding similar events in other regional destinations, it was unknown territory for Darwin-based businesses.

DarwinLife & Home Expo 2011 Event Organiser, Matt Cielens said it was vital that the inaugural show was a success.

"We were conservative in our estimates, and were overjoyed with the enthusiasm and support of our advertisers with more than 30% of the space signed up on the launch night and by February the event was almost sold out," stated Matt.

With more than 15,000 visitors attending the two-day event, viewing 140 different supplier offerings, DarwinLife certainly achieved their goal of raising the publication's profile and providing a forum to create new business opportunities for their advertisers.

EVENT FORMAT:

DarwinLife's vision was to create a welcoming, vibrant atmosphere that encouraged the local community to bring the whole family to the Darwin Convention Centre and the Waterfront Precinct for a fun-filled weekend of action packed activities.

The dates were planned during the April school holidays with a wide range of events scheduled every hour. 'Dora the Explorer'; Miss Tourism Australia, Holly-Anne Visser, fashion parades; multiple live demonstrations and regular giveaways were amongst entertainment incorporated to attract and entertain the crowds.

The demographics were definitely met with a wide variety of products on show such as interior and exterior home design beatification, furnishings, DIY renovations, gardens, patios, pools, tilers, builders to hair & beauty, real estate to the diversity of pontoon builders, boat and car dealers, leisure escapes and even advanced education institutes.

"It really was a glimpse of all things Darwin under one roof," said DarwinLife Event Organiser, Matt Cielens

The exhibitor feedback was overwhelming positive with more than 25% confirming their support to make the event an annual affair. Many companies, such as Kevin from Real Estate Elders have committed to doubling their space in 2012.

Having been involved in numerous expos across Australia, Sam from Now Renovations said the DarwinLife Expo was the best most professional expo he had ever attended, scored a total of 60 leads and actually signed up 6 jobs with much more in the pipeline.

"It was a wonderful way of meeting so many people who use our book and love us. It was just so exciting I'll be getting marketing crew to rebook 2012 for sure," stated Rhonda from Local Directories.

THE DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE EXPERIENCE:

With expertise in national exhibitions, DarwinLife's Event Organiser said he had worked with other convention and exhibition centres in Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast and the Darwin Convention Centre team are on par with anything he had have experienced before.

"The superb waterfront location of the Darwin Convention Centre worked perfectly for our event. Next year we will look at expanding the floor space into the auditorium and utilising the outdoor space with even more interactive entertainment" he said.

The professionalism of the whole team approach of the Darwin Convention Centre did not go unnoticed from the

planning and preparation through to the extensive build, operation and 'bump out' phases of the event.

"The General Manager, Malu Barrios and Event Manager, Andrea Wicking understand the nuances involved with working with exhibitors that are not used to strict guidelines," added Matt.

CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS:

DarwinLife Event Organiser, Matt Cielens said, "Initially people were saying Darwin was too small for such an ambitious event, so we started with low expectations and went through every last detail with a fine tooth comb to ensure the ultimate success of the inaugural event. This allowed us to gain the trust from our supporters and the local community and give us the scope to grow bigger and better every year after."

"Darwin is also widely known for its relaxed lifestyle, so it was DarwinLife's vision to assist all exhibitors to maximise the benefits of participating in the DarwinLife a& Home Expo. We spent a lot of time before and during the event with tips on how to attract more people to their stand and convert those opportunities into sales," stated Matt.

Extensive media campaigns were undertaken in the lead up to the event. During the weekend, live-crosses and interviews on the exhibitors stands assisted with attracting more interest throughout the show.

Sam from Renovations Now confirmed this by saying ".....the live radio crosses were a real bonus... as it really drove traffic to our stall and gave people a chance to see what the stalls were about and what specials were on offer."

Northern Territory Minister for Business and Employment, Rob Knight summed up the success of the event saying, "with the Territory's strong economy and record low unemployment it was no surprise to see exhibitors and families flock to the DarwinLife & Home Expo at the Darwin Convention Centre."

"I had the pleasure of opening the very first Expo where exhibitors from a range of industries hired booths. This was a great opportunity for Territory businesses to highlight their products and for Territorians to buy local and support local business and jobs. Events such as this show confidence in the Territory's strong economy. According to the Sensis Business Index quarterly reports, business confidence in the Territory has been amongst the highest in several years," Minister Knight added.

QUOTES:

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MEET DARWIN



CONVENTION CASE STUDY – DARWIN, AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY

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Matt Cielens, Event Organiser, DarwinLife & Home Expo 2011

"I have been involved in numerous expos in a lot of state and I have to say that the DarwinLife & Home Expo was the best and most professional expo we have attended. I scored a total of 60 leads and actually signed up 6 jobs so far with still heaps to go!"

Sam, Now Renovations

Download hi resolution images to support this media release http://www.darwinconvention.com.au/image_library.asp

For further information or comment, please contact:

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