

LIFOCUS

Running the numbers

For 11 years, the Workplace Challenge has provided a unique branding opportunity for Marcum

By **BERNADETTE STARZEE**

This year's Marcum Workplace Challenge gave the accountants at Marcum a few numbers to smile about. Some 9,100 runners and walkers from a record 223 Long Island companies and organizations participated in the 3.5-mile race at Jones Beach.

The annual event, which Marcum became title sponsor of in 2006, attracts some of Long Island's most prominent companies. PSEG-Long Island fielded this year's largest team, with 535 participants, while PC Richard & Co. was the runner-up. In addition to PSEG, Bethpage Federal Credit Union, The Ergonomic Group, Empire National Bank and Telephonics served as major sponsors of the July event. What's more, the Workplace Challenge raised tens of thousands of dollars for four Long Island charities.

Not surprisingly, the top male and female finishers were part of a team fielded by the specialty retailer Run-



(From left) **FRANK MAESTRE** and **JENNIFER MCLOGAN** of **WCBS-TV** joined **MINDY DAVIDSON** of the Greater Long Island Running Club and **CAROLYN MAZZENGA** at the Marcum Workplace Challenge.

ner's Edge. Alex Arshan led all men with a time of 18:05 while Betsy Eickelberg was the first woman to cross the

finish line with a time of 20:12. Marcum employee Victoria Robitaille was the second woman finisher with a time

of 20:36 – representing the first time a Marcum team member has placed among the top winners – while Ben Tuttle of Brookhaven National Laboratory crossed in 18:24 to secure second place among the men. The top wheelchair finisher was Greg Durso of Empire National Bank, with a time of 19:34. There's also a category for high-level corporate executives called "Top Dogs." This year's men's and women's titles went to Tim Lozier of ETQ Management Consultants, at 23:20, and Diana Tapper of Aon, at 29:20, respectively.

But Marcum itself is perhaps the biggest winner.

"We took over the Workplace Challenge because it was a fantastic branding opportunity for us – a way to really get our name out into the business community since it's attended by over 200 companies on Long Island," said Carolyn Mazzenga, partner in charge of Marcum's Melville office and national leader of the accounting firm's family wealth services practice.

It's difficult to quantify the effects of a branding campaign.

"I think the way we've been able to determine the success is, when we're out in the business community, people will say to us, 'Oh, you run that race; we have a great time at that race,'" Maz-

'IT'S LONG ISLAND'S LARGEST COMPANY PICNIC – A LOT OF COMPANIES USE THIS AS THEIR COMPANY PICNIC, AND SO DO WE.'

zenga said. "That's how we know the branding is working."

Besides the branding opportunity, the Workplace Challenge is an opportunity for Marcum's employees to bond with each other and network with others in the business community.

"It's Long Island's largest company picnic – a lot of companies use this as their company picnic, and so do we," Mazzenga said. "It's a great way to build camaraderie." Marcum, like many companies at the event, has a hospitality tent with food and beverages for its employ-

ees, friends and family members.

"We often network with clients before the race, and we tell clients if they are unable to field a team that they can join our team," Mazzenga added.

Marcum partners on the event with the Greater Long Island Running Club, which handles logistics while Marcum handles the marketing and communications.

"We do a lot with social media – we're on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter – and advertise in print publications," Mazzenga said.

WCBS-TV featured the Workplace Challenge on air the weekend before the event, and Jennifer McLogan, a WCBS reporter covering Long Island, served as the event's host.

"We also ask our beneficiaries to promote the Workplace Challenge within their own organizations and communities," Mazzenga said.

This year's four beneficiaries are Long Island Cares-The Harry Chapin Food Bank, Long Island Children's Museum, Children's Medical Fund of New York and Nassau County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The final fundraising tally for this year is yet to be determined, but the event has raised nearly \$600,000 to date for Long Island charities.

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Photo by Bob Gigliano

CAROLYN MAZZENGA: In addition to the branding opportunity it affords, the Workplace Challenge provides a chance for Marcum's employees to bond.