

Opposites attract in innovative campaign

Developers Diversified Realty owns and manages more than 500 centers. Historically, its specialty is open-air, community and lifestyle properties, but acquisitions in the last decade increased the company's portfolio of regional malls.

In 2004, DDR merged eight centers into a single "specialty center group." These centers were challenged to work together as a cohesive whole for the first time. DDR wanted the group to produce a shared national advertising campaign to improve each center's visibility while creating consistency company-wide, a big change from the center-by-center marketing efforts DDR properties formerly took. The result was "The Perfect Blend."

Implementation

The eight management teams spent much of 2005 developing a cost-effective marketing program to maximize shrinking budgets while improving effectiveness.

Advertising required a consistent look and tone, copy, photography and more. But it also had to work in eight cities, for varying demographic and psychographic profiles, and for upscale lifestyle centers, those with big-box anchors and malls with mid-range tenants. DDR changed its marketing-director job description to shift focus away from managing local advertising and toward improving center productivity.

The group searched together for a single ad agency and campaign, avoiding a "top-down" feeling that centers were losing all authority. They shared the cost of the chosen campaign, striking a fixed-rate deal with the selected agency that allowed more than 500 ads, direct-mail pieces and collateral items from October 2005 to May 2006. These items cost an average of \$450, well below what the centers previously paid individually while improving quality. The ads made strong use of color, stock images (to keep photography costs low) and a powerful design element, an ampersand. They featured clever headlines with a variety of fashion- and trend-oriented merchandise, keeping them "market-neutral." A guidebook of headlines, photos and copy changes allowed each center a bit of customization. All eight centers were using the ads by October 2005.

The Perfect Blend

Developers Diversified Realty
Beachwood, Ohio

Expenses: \$184,080 for a nine-month period (total, shared by eight centers; cost per center was \$23,010)

Professional Recognition: John S. Kokinchak, SCSM, CLS, senior vice president of property management, Dawn Marie Lecklikner, SCMD, RPA, director of mall management, Jeffrey A. Cohn, SCMD, president & CEO, Cohn Marketing Inc., Scott Kessler, creative director, Cohn Marketing Inc., Karen Johnson, CMD, account executive, Cohn Marketing Inc.

TULIPS

TANKTOPS

Springtime flowers or springtime fashions – it's up to you. Convenience and variety come together with stores like Best Cuts, Tall Girl Shops and MC Sport. Experience life & style at Great Northern Plazas.

GREAT NORTHERN PLAZAS
The Perfect Blend of Life & Style
Owned & Managed by Developers Diversified Realty - www.ddr.com

Results

"The Perfect Blend" uses a single-brand approach using copy, photography and design to present a consistent image for the centers. The campaign acted as a catalyst to bring the centers' staffs together and shift their focus away from their own centers and toward overall DDR productivity. The group reduced the number of agencies used from eight to one, yielding significant economic efficiencies and the ability to leverage more from the selected agency. The agency manages all communications related to the new campaign, saving corporate staff's time. Pooled resources saved tens of thousands of dollars and allowed more time for marketing directors to focus on revenue-generating programs.

For the first six months of the campaign, each center achieved sales increases ranging from 2 percent to 10 percent, with a combined net 5 percent sales growth. "The Perfect Blend" was adapted for use by DDR corporate management as the company's branding campaign and cited by the company's leadership as one of the best marketing programs in DDR history.

The specialty group has since worked together to develop other programs including a new gift-card initiative expected to generate more than \$4 million in new revenue. ■