

Presentation helps mall land Crate & Barrel

Cherry Hill Mall was about to undergo a dramatic redevelopment to reclaim market dominance in Southern New Jersey. Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust, the mall's owner, used the closure of the center's Strawbridge's department store to bring the first upscale department store to South Jersey and overhaul the center, adding specialty stores and restaurants.

The mall, opened in 1961, has attracted top retailers to the affluent suburb of Cherry Hill. But since the late 1990s, local retail growth has exploded, including new lifestyle centers with exclusive upscale tenants that at one time would only have been found at Cherry Hill Mall.

The mall's staff knew that to attract new luxury tenants it had to showcase the future potential of the center, rather than the current merchant mix. They also felt that Crate & Barrel was critical to the redevelopment plan. The retailer was looking for a South Jersey site and was considering Cherry Hill Mall and also a lifestyle center under construction minutes away.

Rather than hosting a meeting in a conference room at corporate headquarters, PREIT's team decided to make the most of their chance to impress Crate & Barrel executives.

Implementation

PREIT's team wanted to connect with Crate & Barrel's representatives on more than just demographic information and number crunching. So PREIT built a combination meeting and dining room at the mall, using Crate & Barrel furniture and accessories.

In four days, the PREIT team put together the meeting site. Working with the distribution center about 50 miles away, they put together an order for a dining room set and complementary furniture. The marketing vice president visited a Crate & Barrel store to buy all the tabletop items to complete the scene and be used for serving lunch and refreshments.

The mall's Bahama Breeze restaurant donated the use of its outdoor porch for the meeting, where the Crate & Barrel furniture was set up. The space was perfect — it faced the proposed pad-site location for the Crate & Barrel store, near Route 38, the major road adjacent to the center. More than 50,000 vehicles pass by each day. The potential store site was marked off in the parking lot, to make it easily visible to the guests.

PREIT's senior management personally welcomed the Crate & Barrel team to the mall — those attending included the mall's



Visualizing the Deal: Crate & Barrel

Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust
Philadelphia

Expenses: \$7,110,90

Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust
Philadelphia

Professional Recognition: Cheryl K. Dougherty, SCMD, vice president, marketing, Robert Wahlquist, CSM, senior regional manager, Joseph F. Coradino, president, Tim Rubin, senior vice president, leasing, Judith G. Trias, CMD, regional marketing director

senior director of leasing, marketing vice president, senior vice president of leasing, the president of PREIT's retail division and the company's chairman and CEO.

The presentation focused on Cherry Hill Mall's future, and emphasized the fact the mall will gain tenants Crate & Barrel considers peers, including a new luxury department store exclusive to the mall in Southern New Jersey.

Results

Crate & Barrel signed a letter of intent to open its first Southern New Jersey store at Cherry Hill Mall and that became a catalyst for additional leasing deals from luxury retailers. ■