

# Westcor's fashionistas spread the word

**W**estcor, a subsidiary of The Macerich Co., owns 14 centers, 10 in greater Phoenix, which faced growing competition.

Business reporters tapped Westcor spokespeople mostly for comments on hard-news retail stories, while lifestyle reporters and broadcast producers relied more on specialty retailers for features and seasonal-trend stories. Furthermore, broadcast producers wanted sources to speak on a variety of topics. Westcor knew these producers' shows reached its targeted shopper, women ages 25 to 54. It needed to become a better resource for features reporters and TV producers.

Westcor already had the "Gift Guru" offering gift advice to the media and consumers. She's become an Arizona household name, and with a deluge of seasonal inquiries, it became impossible for her to handle all media requests. Westcor needed to address a broader range of media requests beyond gift-giving, including those involving fashion, home and family.

## Implementation

Westcor created the "Style Panel," expert resources for the media on a range of topics, resulting in more coverage of Westcor retailers.

Westcor recruited three members of its marketing department with a knack for working with the media to join the Gift Guru on the Style Panel. The team included the Family Fun Aficionado, Home Décor Connoisseur and Fashionista.

The company sent a "Style File" tool kit — with panel members' biographies and Top 10 gift and summer-fun lists — to Phoenix features and broadcast reporters, inviting them to meet the Style Panel.

The panel was formally introduced in June 2005 with an event held at Chandler Fashion Center, one of Westcor's busiest centers. Media and the public met the Style Panel and enjoyed a series of fashion shows.

The Style Panel held a "Holiday Road Show," meeting with *The Arizona Republic*, Phoenix's top newspaper, and three Phoenix TV stations. During these, panel members talked about their expertise and showcased holiday merchandise from Westcor retailers.



Westcor formed partnerships with three Phoenix TV stations.

It created a promotion with ABC affiliate KNXV-TV based on the Style Panel and Westcor's gift card. The effort included an on-air contest with a prize of a \$1,000 shopping spree; 500 promotional announcements delivering 7.9 million impressions; and Style Panel editorial in the station's *Smart Shopper* magazine, sent to 500,000 residents. The panel was also included in four live segments on the channel's lifestyle program.

With KTVK-TV, Westcor launched "Sweet Connection," the channel's loyalty program for women, and featured the Style Panel on the station's Web site.

For the WB6 network, Westcor offered Chandler Fashion Center as the site for the station's "WB6 Casting Call" audition; the panel judged it.

Westcor also ran advertising and used e-mail and its Web site to promote the panel.

## Results

The Style Panel garnered an average of six lifestyle stories monthly from July 2005 through May 2006, more than five times what Westcor earned during the same period a year earlier. In all, 65 lifestyle segments featured a Style Panel member, resulting in 217 minutes of broadcast exposure reaching 1.7 million female TV viewers. More than half of media coverage from July 2005 through May 2006 featured a Style Panel member. The TV partnerships yielded \$366,500 in added value at little extra cost beyond previously planned advertising. Through all efforts, the Style Panel publicized 370 retailers. ■

### Westcor Style Panel

The Macerich Co.  
Phoenix

**Expenses:** \$135,559

**Professional Recognition:** Tracey Gotsis, SCMD, senior vice president, marketing, Traci Weber, vice president, brand planning, Anita Walker, CMD, senior manager, public relations, Jennifer White, manager, brand planner, Linda Whitlow, CMD, senior manager, public relations