Mall's flashy Web site gets teens shopping

Shoppers age 12 to 16 are a growing commercial force. The average Québec teen-ager spends $40 to $120 per week on clothing, makeup and more and exerts increasing influence on families' spending. Teens are extremely brand conscious, under great social pressure to have the right clothes.

There are 11,700 kids 12 to 16 years old living in Les Rivieres Shopping Centre's primary and secondary trade areas. The center has 30 stores catering to them, of which 20 sell clothes.

The mall wanted to improve direct communication with teens to boost awareness of the Les Rivieres stores targeting them, and to build loyalty among this important consumer group.

Implementation

Les Rivieres launched pasdestoutnus.com, an interactive Web site linking teen-agers to the center. The slang expression "pas des tout nus" roughly translates as someone with style and confidence who does things well.

Visiting pasdestoutnus.com, teens could create a virtual bobble-head figure of themselves, then navigate through the site choosing outfits for their bobble head to wear. The clothes were available for sale at Les Rivieres stores. The browsing made teens more aware of the fashions available at the center and let them mix and match fashion pieces to create their favorite looks. Les Rivieres launched the site in March 2006, during spring break.

The center publicized the site with ads in 26 transit shelters for four weeks, reaching students traveling to and from school. It also distributed 15,000 postcards to teens at the mall. Posters, tent cards and more were displayed at cashier's stations.

To drive sales in the unisex category, the mall held a contest in which teens would receive a ballot when they bought something at a participating store. They could validate the ballot's number on the Web site to instantly see whether they'd won a $500 mall gift card or one of two $250 gift cards.

Pasdestoutnus.com–Dress-yourself.com
Les Rivieres Shopping Centre, Canada
Trois-Rivieres, Québec
Expenses: $33,274
Owned/Managed by: Ivanhoé Cambridge
Professional Recognition: Jean-Luc Bernard, marketing director, Stephan Landry, general manager, Marlène Théberge, regional marketing director

Results

Teens enthusiastically shared their bobble-head creations with friends online, creating buzz at no cost to the center.

The mall recorded 3,715 visits to the Web site during the promotion and 4,267 hits as of May 6, 2006. This represents 79 percent of the youth ages 12 to 16 in the primary market and 37 percent of those in the secondary market — and this in an area where only 63 percent of households have Internet access.

Regional businesses with similar target customers provided contest prizes, donating $2,400 and leveraging the budget for the program by 7 percent. Prizes included MP3 players, cell phones, driving lessons, brand-name clothing, event tickets, sporting equipment and more.

Nearly 25 percent of site visitors entered the contests. All of the 2,741 contest participants gave permission for the Les Rivieres to put their e-mail addresses into its database for future promotions.

The site showcased 27 articles of clothing, allowing 182 virtual outfits. Twenty-one stores, 80 percent of the center's unisex category, participated. The unisex category enjoyed a 23 percent sales increase during the first month of the program, compared with the same period in 2005. ■