

Try it, Love it, Buy it

Hy-Vee raises the bar on the shopper experience

by WILLIAM F. KENDY

From London department store Selfridges' "No Noise" campaign last year that paid homage to founder Henry Gordon Selfridge's original "Silence Room," to the pop-up "Blood Store" that the Fox Channel in Portugal opened in Lisbon to promote the launch of Season 4 of AMC's "The Walking Dead" television show, few things get people buzzing — and hopefully, shopping — like experiential product marketing.

It's not necessary to send someone on the world's highest skydive to make an impact, though — smaller moves can still pack a punch. Employee-owned Hy-Vee food stores worked with retail

grams. The retailer, which has sales of \$8.7 billion annually, has more than 235 stores in eight states.

"Hy-Vee is a trusted household name in the supermarket industry," says Nicole LeMaire, Interactions senior director of marketing. "We look forward to launching a best-in-class event program that will engage shoppers through unique and interactive in-store and outdoor experiential events."

Three years ago, Hy-Vee and Interactions developed and implemented a campaign that used single red carnations, attached to \$1 coupons, to attract potential shoppers in Madison, Wis., neighborhoods. By the end of the event, brand ambassadors had

customers to the new items."

Interactions also provides compiled data and consumer feedback and comments to clients, she says.

"Experiential marketing has never been a Hy-Vee formalized, organized program where they worked directly with their individual store cultures, so the programs tended to be more corporate in nature," LeMaire says, "yet the stores had a lot of autonomy. We tailored the programs based on the organization's sales and marketing perspective."

DEMOS PAY

According to a report released in November by Interactions, 96 percent of shoppers prefer to spend their money at retailers that offer in-store product demonstrations. "Retail Insights: The Consumer Demand for Non-Food Demonstrations," the fifth iteration of the marketing agency's Retail Perceptions trend report, also found that 82 percent of shoppers would rather learn about products from in-store demonstrations, as opposed to online research. After experiencing a demonstration of a product, 81 percent of shoppers have purchased an item on impulse.

Nearly all respondents said they'd like to see more demonstrations year-round, not just during the holiday season. And although product demonstrations create a same-day sales lift, 37 percent of shoppers would buy the demonstrated product at a later time; of those shoppers, 86 percent will return to the same store to purchase the item.

Interactions also offers "analytical driven services and research that goes far beyond just sampling," says Interaction Senior Director for Business Development and Creative Ryan Dee. "We collect the data and supply the results to the client and assist them in taking corrective action." **STORES**

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services and experiential marketing agency Interactions on a demo program that was piloted in 12 stores in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area last year; the campaign was so successful that it was expanded to 50 stores in Iowa, Illinois, Kansas and Missouri and is planned to expand to more than 145 stores throughout the year.

In addition to planned event services, Hy-Vee will also collaborate with Interactions to create and implement experiential marketing activities including new store openings, community events and Hy-Vee branded pro-

distributed 5,000 flowers and coupons — resulting in a 9 percent redemption level, significantly higher than the standard 1-2 percent.

DETAILED ANALYTICS

Sampling will be an integral part of the program and the results will be diced, sliced and intensively measured.

"We track unit sales for each product and provide detailed analysis and ROI reporting typically on the same period a year ago," LeMaire says. "We look at post- and pre-event time frames for 12 weeks, and the number of converted