



Seaport Village: Building an Image And Success from the Ground Up

Situation

The Port of San Diego and other appropriate agencies had approved construction of this 14-acre, \$14 million specialty center on San Diego Bay. It had a name, but no theme, no marketing plan or direction, no media plan, no brochures or pamphlets; nothing but architectural drawings.

The Plan

Tom Gable assembled a customized team to quickly analyze the drawings, plot plan, location, marketplace and style of the first tenants. After two weeks of brainstorming, the team formulated a comprehensive program to create the image of and feeling for a totally new entity on San Diego Bay. The goal was to introduce the village as a place to browse and enjoy life in a superb waterfront setting featuring charming recreations of 19th century architecture – with the feeling of yesterday, the fun of today. The agency built a quality image from the outset through feature stories that showed the planning detail, craftsmanship, and innovative design that went into the unique shops and restaurants. The grand opening ceremony included the mayor and other key San Diegans who unanimously hailed Seaport Village as the cornerstone of downtown redevelopment. The agency developed on-site promotions, entertainment, concerts and media events to keep the name constantly in front of the public in the right context. All advertising (music, song, print, television, radio, outdoor, transit) supported and reinforced the central theme, with sales-oriented advertising used as required by village merchandising events and promotions. A three-year program was conceived, created and launched.

The Results

Seaport Village finished its first year with sales 25 percent over initial projections, despite a recession economy. It was hailed by Sunset, Los Angeles Magazine and other major publications as the finest waterfront attraction in the West. It gained wide local acceptance, and during its second year had higher attendance (three million) than the San Diego Zoo. By the end of its fourth year, Seaport Village was 215 percent ahead of its original projections since opening.

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