

Keeping a Retail Center's Merchants and Customers Happy During Construction Requires Thinking Caps and Hard Hats

Hawthorne Plaza, located at the corner of 119th and Roe in Overland Park, faced challenges and set specific goals, all during a major center-wide renovation.

Hawthorne Plaza is one of the few truly unique shopping destinations in the Kansas City metro. In fact, some storeowners are local residents and find much of their merchandise during their world travels or source it from local artisans. Not only does Hawthorne Plaza have boutique merchants and stores found nowhere else in the area, but also national retailers, such as The Container Store, that choose Hawthorne Plaza as their only KC-based store.

Be that as it may, it was our job to keep merchants and shoppers happy before, during and after a center-wide renovation.

A Major Renovation Makes for Interesting Twists

CBRE, the largest commercial real estate services company in the world, manages Hawthorne Plaza. CBRE representatives set specific goals:

- Increase foot traffic
- Increase merchants' sales
- Reach 100% occupancy rate
- Welcome a new anchor tenant, The Container Store

While construction crews renovated Hawthorne Plaza's exterior, the EAG Advertising & Marketing crew broke ground on new campaigns to get merchants' messages across loud and clear, even above jackhammers.

Merchants made an "impression" with **digital display advertising** via the Google Ad Network with dramatic results: 100,000+ impressions to increase awareness the center was open during construction and drive traffic to the website through direct click.

Variable print data took advantage of merchants' mail lists, allowing us to send personalized direct mail at a fraction of the cost of each business doing it themselves.

A **television ad co-op program** let merchants participate in advertising that's usually out of their budget to reach a city-wide audience. Merchants could buy in or tag Hawthorne Plaza TV spots for a co-branded commercial.

Merchants included their offers in a Hawthorne Plaza **branded direct mail piece** mailed to 15,000 targeted local residents, ending in results that could be measured by collecting the mailer in exchange for the sale incentive.

E-newsletters aren't new to shopping centers, but few centers let merchants benefit individually. EAG developed an e-news and



What's protecting physical retail stores from being bulldozed by online shopping?

- Digital display advertising generating a hundred thousand impressions for very little cost
- Variable print data
- Direct mail campaigns
- Television ad co-op program stretching tenants' advertising dollars
- E-newsletter for customers
- E-newsletter for merchants that increase collaboration and satisfaction
- High traffic signage that made heads turn

invited merchants to add to the mailing list, use our creative work for their own emails or even send it in PDF format.

A newsletter for merchants kept everyone in the loop on advertising and marketing options available and improved communication among merchants.

When Construction Delays Create Anxiety

Keeping shoppers on top of the renovation progress required creativity.

Street signage, direct mail and digital marketing provided updates, maps, parking information, sales, offers and even apologies when needed.

EAG hired parking lot attendants to direct traffic and shoppers to parking spaces, as well as helped carry bags to cars with a smile. In the end, smiling was the best part of this strategy.

A Reopening with a Bang

Events

- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- 2 Radio Station Remote Broadcasts

Media

- Pandora & Local Radio Spots
- Digital Ads
- Facebook Ads

Other Tactics

- E-news, Posters, Bag Stuffers, Public Relations

Marketing's Impact on Leasing and Occupancy

Continuous, consistent messaging before, during and after the renovation, along with compelling leasing graphics led to a 100% occupancy rate at Hawthorne Plaza. And, when space opens up, it's quickly off the market.