

Public Relations

Philadelphia ■ Pittsburgh

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Case Study:

Galleria at Pittsburgh Mills

The Challenge

One look at Pittsburgh's varied retail landscape, and you might think the area is saturated with stores. However, The Mills Corporation, an international developer, owner and manager of retail destinations, knew that the northern corridor of Pittsburgh was actually under-retailed, and knew that residents had long awaited the opening of the Pittsburgh Mills, which was not going to be your average mall.

Galleria at Pittsburgh Mills, a 1.1 million square-foot retail and entertainment destination, opened in summer 2005 to significant fanfare and interest. Architectural components such as its one-level racetrack design, hardwood floors, colorful courts and mall "neighborhoods" make the mall shopper friendly. A compelling tenant mix brought new retailers to the area such as H&M, Sears Grand and Forever 21. Pittsburgh Mills also brought new entertainment /dining options to the market, including Johnny Rockets and Lucky Strike Lanes.

To properly introduce the new destination to the Greater Pittsburgh region, The Mills Corporation called on Jack Horner Communications (JHC) to comprehensively manage all strategic media communications.

The Solution

JHC developed and implemented an all-inclusive media strategy, starting more than six months in advance. We proactively leveraged every angle—from economic impact and architecture to fashion and food. We always had a story to tell.

A constant flurry of media activity continued through July 14, 2005, when the mall opened. The day began at 3:00 a.m. and didn't end until late into the evening. TV stations and print media all sent reporters and photographers throughout the day to capture the thousands of giddy shoppers that streamed through the doors to see the new bowling alley/martini bar, the kids play areas and everything in between.

The media relations program continued throughout the rest of the summer, building to early September, when Pittsburgh Mills hosted its Grand Celebration—three days of star-studded, Black and Gold festivities—starting September 8—to coincide with the Pittsburgh Steelers Home Opener that Sunday. While JHC was challenged to entice the media to come back to a mall that had been opened for nearly two months, the media relations surrounding the weekend's events remained strong, thanks to a solid lineup of events and activities.

The Results

JHC was expected to meet three goals for Pittsburgh Mills. Measures of evaluation included mall visitors, number of media placements and overall media impressions. JHC significantly exceeded all of them.

More than 50,000 people experienced Pittsburgh Mills on July 14, 2005, well exceeding first-day traffic numbers at comparable Mills properties. The media coverage of opening day was non-stop. Both major newspapers ran large stories, and it was THE story of the day—all day—with live and taped broadcasts running from morning 'til night.

In total, approximately 280 print, broadcast and Internet stories ran, generating more than 88 million media impressions. NOT your average mall—and not your average media coverage!

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"JHC did an exceptional job promoting the two-tiered Grand Opening of the Pittsburgh Mills and creating great excitement for the venue in a way that advertising alone could not."

Dave Macdonald
General Manager
Pittsburgh Mills

