

Shopping mall activations - why it's important and how to execute one successfully

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Amanda Rabinowitz is the founding owner of Jellybean Concept Events, a specialist in shopping mall activations. Rabinowitz and her team have successfully launched more than 1,000 activations in 8 years and know a thing or two when it comes to 'bringing one home'. Here she shares her top tips for planning an effective activation.



Amanda Rabinowitz

As retail becomes tougher and online shopping grows, shopping malls are focussing more and more on creating a buzz in their centres. Creative shopping experiences are a prime example of how to increase foot traffic and keep shoppers in the mall.

What started out as a luxury has now become an absolute necessity. Malls are competing with each other to offer the freshest and most original ideas to draw crowds and feet through the doors. Staying ahead of trends and knowing how to execute mall activations successfully and swiftly is key.

Keep the following in mind:

Type of shopper and LSM

It's vital you do your homework before deciding on the type of activation. We suggest spending some time in the mall studying your shopper, also make a note of the type of retailers on offer.

What works wonders in one mall doesn't necessarily work in the next. Activations need to be carefully curated to the type of shopper in order for it to be a success.

Interaction is key

Any successful activation needs to be interactive. This can be for any age, not only for the kids! Involving shoppers in an

activation allows them to be fully immersed in the experience, which means they will more than likely stay longer and share their experience with their family and friends.

With interactive experiences, often a “take-home” is essential. This can be a physical item, a photo opportunity or even a skill learnt.

Will this be a free or charged event?

A free activation sometimes creates chaos. One would need to create a simple barrier to entry to avoid an influx of people. A simple entry fee or proof of purchase of a minimum spend allows for activations to be controlled. However, on the other hand, some malls offer a free activation to ensure numbers are high and interaction is at a maximum. It depends on the shopper, the mall and its objectives.

What is the CSI?

Partnering with a charity for the duration of the activation is essential and there are many ways to do this.

- You can use the entry funds to donate to a charity
- Shoppers can donate items before entering as their entry ‘fee’ which will be donated to the said charity

Community driven activations and competitions are also an amazing way to involve schools in the surrounding neighbourhoods. Fun events such as recycled build-athons, cook-offs and talent shows are all prime examples.

Location of activations

It often happens that the available space within a mall will determine the type of activation presented. Court spaces and vacant stores are top options when looking for a space to activate in. A vacant store is never ideal for a shopping mall, but this makes for such a great space to do a pop-up in between tenant vacancies.

Use mall activations in quieter areas within the mall to draw feet by doing fun activations such as treasure hunts or events that will pull a crowd.

Staffing

The correct events staff is an absolute necessity to ensure a smoothly operated event. They must approach the shopper correctly and not harass anyone. Mall event staff is a reflection on the mall, so training is of utmost importance.

Online booking

If you are creating an activation that is going to attract crowds quickly, setting up an online booking system is a great way

to keep it under control. Allowing a certain amount of walk-ins is also a good idea to keep shoppers happy. Shoppers don't want to arrive at an event experience and be turned away.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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