

# Marketers Look to the Lap

Marketers love to get into people's faces, and get product right into their hands, but some are literally putting their brands into laps, at least at sporting events. Pepsi, Best Buy and ESPN are among companies using StadiumTray as an ad medium. The trays are sturdy and also glossier and more striking than the typical molded or corrugated cardboard trays that one typically gets for carrying those overpriced snacks from the concession stand.

That's a lot of signage, assuming at least a third of the sellout crowd watching the Atlanta Braves, an Auburn Tigers football game or a Kentucky Wildcats basketball contest likely will venture from their seats for refreshments and tote the trays for all to see multiple times during a 3 1/2-hour event.

StadiumTray creator, Spectator Advertising Solutions, said exit polls show very high sponsor memory retention.



"It's a fantastic advertising vehicle for Pepsi and works as a good souvenir," said Todd McEntyre of the Atlanta food-services unit for Pepsi Bottling, which used the trays during the Lanierland

Tournament—a premier Georgia high school basketball invitational. "The belief is it will increase our sales over the course of the Lanierland Tournament."

Concessioners get trays for free and stadium managers get

another source of ad revenue.

StadiumTray has appeared in Atlanta at Turner Field and at Philips Arena, home of the NBA's Hawks and NHL's Thrashers. University clients include Arkansas, Georgia Tech, Northwestern, Navy and UConn. —Mike Beirne

**Program:** StadiumTray

**Marketer:** Spectator Advertising Solutions, Kennesaw, Ga.

**Key player:** George Poston, CEO/founder

# Sexy Icons Help Arouse Brand Interest

Sneaker brand LA Gear is hoping that its attractive LA Gear Girls will help the brand make a comeback. And if images of the gals don't do the trick, maybe a date might.

Formerly a big name in athletic footwear, LA Gear fell into bankruptcy in 1998, but was recently acquired by investment group ACI, Los Angeles. The relaunch includes a slew of new basketball, cross-trainer and running shoes, and a \$2 million ad campaign via Fundamental Communications, N.Y. Plus, an opportunity to win a dream date with two glamorous LA Gear girls.

"The girls embody LA Gear's vital new message of fitness together with beautiful form and style," said evp Jay Jackson. "They not only are dream dates, but also perfect representatives of new LA Gear athletic shoes offering contem-



**Gal pals:** Sneaker brand figures LA Gear Girls will get noticed.

porary styles for men and women for basketball, cross-training and casual wear."

LA Gear originally rose to prominence in the '80s, when women's aerobics was all the rage.

The dream date sweeps—entries closed Jan. 11—offers one guy and a friend a trip to Los Angeles, two tickets to an NBA game, dinner, accommodations and \$250 in spending money.

Two LA Gear Girls will accompany the winners to the game and to dinner.

LA Gear is an official sponsor of the LA Lakers. Rookie forward Luke Walton is brand spokesman. —Sandra O'Loughlin

**Program:** Win a date with two LA Gear Girls

**Marketer:** LA Gear, Los Angeles

**Key player:** Jay Jackson, evp

Any ideas for Tools of the Trade? Contact Christine Bittar at (646) 654-5404 or e-mail [cbittar@brandweek.com](mailto:cbittar@brandweek.com)



**Santa squad:** Value City had a team of Santas skip the sled to hop on crutches

# Value City Seeks Lift with a Limp

Being Santa isn't the cushy job it used to be. There's the cold weather, long hours, those pesky little reindeer and, of course, chimney practice. This past Christmas, in the Cincinnati suburb of Covington, Ky., Santa was injured during a practice slide down the sooty chute. But he didn't let Value City shoppers down. The indomitable do-gooder, resplendent in a plaster cast, donned his crutches and spread holiday cheer—and deals—throughout the town.

The injured St. Nick and his team of five additional Santas hit the streets and gave away thousands of Value City coupons the two weekends before Christmas, an attention-grabbing stunt planned by the retailer. Coupons offered fun messages such as, "Been Naughty? Who cares? Great holiday bargains in every department" and "Santa has elves. You have us," and \$10 off purchases of \$50 or more. Value City also kept one Santa in the store for those traditional pictures.

"This is a fun and quirky way for us to cut through the clutter and deliver our message," said store manager Bob Renner.

Covington shoppers earlier last year were also the first to experience Value City's revamped retail environment, with better lighting, wider aisles and bigger dressing rooms, all designed to provide a more enjoyable shopping experience. —S.O.

**Program:** Injured Santa street teams

**Marketer:** Value City Dept Stores, Columbus, Ohio

**Agency:** Cliff Freeman, N.Y.

**Key players:** VC: Michelle Lesvesque, mktg mgr; Tena Hammond, media mgr; CF: Peter McCallum, acct. supervisor