

# Borderfest Association - Stripes Sponsorship

## SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### OVERVIEW

One of BorderFest's key partnerships is with Stripes Convenience Stores. Stripes is a 325+ chain of convenience stores scattered throughout South Texas, Houston, and Oklahoma. In the Rio Grande Valley, Stripes is the market leader, with more than 180 locations throughout the area, and over 90 in our county.

Stripes has participated in BorderFest by being the event's exclusive advance sale ticket outlet. They sell two-day passes to BorderFest for \$12, offering a 40% savings to customers. Stripes promoted these tickets by dedicating in-store advertising to Borderfest (i.e., gas pump toppers, front door signs, beer cooler window decals, and in-store displays with signage). Another sponsor of Borderfest and a Stripes vendor, Budweiser leveraged its in-store foot traffic and visibility to promote BorderFest through its store display and beer cooler door advertising. BorderFest tagged Stripes on all its advertising as the exclusive advance ticket outlet, driving traffic to Stripes stores. BorderFest funded a compelling incentive offer for Stripes employees, and did a presentation for all Stripes store managers to inform them of the program and the incentive (4 day Caribbean cruise for 2 for the highest selling store manager, and another for the highest selling area manager). To drive traffic back to Stripes after the festival, Stripes offered a coupon on the back of all BorderFest tickets, redeemable for a Buy 1, Get 1 Free Breakfast Taco from the store's restaurant, the Laredo Taco Company. This year, BorderFest introduced two **NEW** elements to the Stripes sponsorship program: a new sponsored event (which Stripes named the "Stripes Shake Shack"), and inclusion in BorderFest's media stunt (the Mystery Egg). The Stripes Shake Shack offered BorderFest patrons the opportunity to make their very own dance video and take home a FREE DVD copy. The DVD and its label featured both the Stripes logo and the Borderfest logo. The week leading up to BorderFest, a giant green egg on a float began making appearances at select Stripes Stores throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Clear Channel radio stations KBFM and KHKZ would alert listeners of the general vicinity of the Mystery Egg. The first 5 people to stop by a Stripes store and say they heard about the BorderFest Mystery Egg on the radio would win a pair of two-day passes to BorderFest, and a pair of free taco and coffee coupons from Stripes. The culmination of this promotion was when the giant green Mystery Egg hatched during BorderFest's televised parade, revealing another mascot for BorderFest.

### INITIATION

For the past three years, Stripes' involvement with BorderFest had been under a different name, Circle K. The company was a licensee of the Circle K brand before switching to their own proprietary brand they called "Stripes" last fall. With this name change came a new look, a new image. BorderFest recognized its sponsors' evolving needs and sought to meet them through a new sponsorship program—one that combined the successful elements of last year's program, coupled with new components that would help them raise awareness of their new brand.

### INNOVATION

*"I knew that Stripes wanted a sponsorship opportunity with BorderFest that included more than just paying for an event and hanging their banner in front of it. When I saw the Dance Heads exhibit at IAFE, I knew it was the perfect opportunity for Stripes. It was **new, fresh, and creative**—just the way Stripes was." --Joe Vera, BorderFest*

Dance Heads had never been presented at any festival, event, or venue in the Rio Grande Valley. It was new and innovative, and perfect for Stripes. Prior to presenting the opportunity to Stripes, we knew what obstacles might challenge the sponsor, based on conversations with them regarding the company's on-site activation of grassroots events: staffing. Stripes needed a sponsorship package that was turn-key, low-maintenance, and high-impact. BorderFest tailor made the Dance Heads sponsorship for Stripes, resolving the sponsors' issue for them. By ensuring that Dance Heads would execute the creation of the DVD, BorderFest assigned volunteers to help Stripes' limited personnel staff the event, a DJ to set up a large screen and sound system outside the tent to project the videos being made to the more than 66,000 BorderFest patrons, and set up their tent just inside the main entrance for increased exposure and impact.

## **EXECUTION**

With the help of a BorderFest team of volunteers dedicated to Stripes, their on-site activation accomplished their program goals. They branded their event "The Stripes Shake Shack", creating a custom logo for it, which they displayed on banners and signage, and which was featured on guides and maps at the event. The DVD copies of the Shake Shack dance videos were emblazoned with the Stripes and Borderfest logos both in the video and on the DVD label. To help raise awareness of the Stripes Shake Shack, BorderFest leveraged its relationship with media partner KGBT-TV (CBS affiliate) and had their weather anchors pre-record their own Shake Shack video, which they ran as promos during newscasts. The Festival also tagged Stripes on all its advertising as the exclusive advance ticket outlet, and tied them in to the Mystery Egg Promotion with Clear Channel radio, successfully delivering value beyond expectation to its sponsor.

## TARGET IDENTIFICATION

The Rio Grande Valley has more than 2.7 million people (1 million U.S., 1.7 million northern Mexico), the majority of which are Hispanic and young. Eighty six percent of the Rio Grande Valley's population is Hispanic, and the average age is 27. In our county (Hidalgo County) 11.7% of the population is under the age of 5. The average household size is 3.5 persons, which is higher than the state of Texas' average of 2.7 persons. Aside from this fixed population, the Rio Grande Valley also has a transient population of approximately 127,000 called *Winter Texans*. They are Winter visitors from out of state whose average stay is 3.7 months, and whose return home generally occurs in late March or early April (after BorderFest, which occurs the first weekend in March). The city of Hidalgo, the home of BorderFest, is just north of the Rio Grande River, and the point of entry for visitors coming from Mexico to the United States. More than 52,000 people cross the Hidalgo/Reynosa International Bridge each day. As BorderFest is a family event that reaches across all ages, income levels, and cultures, each of these segments of the population is a potential target for Stripes. As Stripes is a convenience store, it too, reaches across all ages, income levels, and cultures. With a mutual target audience, BorderFest provides Stripes the opportunity to interact directly with its customer, providing the customer with an experience, instead of simply a message (as is the case with traditional media).

BorderFest and Stripes worked jointly to identify the program goals of this sponsorship, ensuring that all aspects were mutually beneficial. The objectives for this sponsorship program were to:

- Increase sales of BorderFest Advance Sale Tickets
- Build brand recognition of Stripes in the community
- Build awareness of the Stripes Shake Shack *prior to* BorderFest
- Drive in-store traffic to priority sales items for vendor partner, L&F Distributors (Budweiser)
- Drive traffic to Stripes *before* BorderFest
- Bounce BorderFest customers back to Stripes *after* the event
- Leverage media relationships to promote the Stripes Shake Shack and BorderFest
- Create media excitement around BorderFest and Stripes

## RESULTS

### ***I. ADVANCE SALE TICKETS:***

- 85% increase over prior year (note: 2006 had an 80% increase over 2005)
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED : Increase sales of BorderFest Advance Sale Tickets**
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Drive traffic to Stripes *before* BorderFest**

### ***II. STRIPES SHAKE SHACK:***

- Initially slated for select hours each day, the Shake Shack had to remain open to accommodate the long lines of participants. As each DVD took approximately 4 minutes to make, participants had to wait. They would either watch the performances while they waited, or visit the rest of the event grounds before coming back to the Shake Shack. Despite the wait time, participation at the Shake Shack soared, exceeding expectations, and requiring an extra batch of DVDs be shipped to BorderFest.
- By leveraging BorderFest's relationship with KGBT-TV and having their weather anchors pre-record a Shake Shack DVD which aired during newscasts, Stripes received prime-time publicity reaching a total of 75,750 persons and making a total of 132,400 impressions (as per RGV Media Monitoring Services),
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Build brand recognition of Stripes in the community**
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Build awareness of the Stripes Shake Shack *prior to* BorderFest**
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Leverage media relationships to promote the Stripes Shake Shack and BorderFest**
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Create media excitement around BorderFest and Stripes**

### ***III. BEER SALES AT STRIPES BEFORE BORDERFEST:***

- Budweiser beer sales at Stripes during BorderFest 2007 vs. BorderFest 2006 were up 3%.
- This trend occurred when the beer industry was down -3%.
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Drive in-store traffic to priority sales items for vendor partner, L&F Distributors (Budweiser)**

### ***IV. COUPON REDEMPTION OF BUY 1, GET 1 TACO OFFER:***

- *2.3% redemption rate*
- **GOAL ACCOMPLISHED: Bounce BorderFest customers back to Stripes *after* the event**

## **PRESENTATION**

All of BorderFest's sponsor fulfillment reports are submitted to sponsors using a web-based presentation, which is easy to navigate and designed to be user-friendly. Keeping in mind that our sponsors have a need for hard facts in a concise manner, we prepare our presentations to offer just that. Each category is a link, which directs the sponsor all pertinent facts related that category. Once on that page, they can click for further detail, should they so be inclined. Our presentation is designed to offer what our sponsors want, keeping them and their lifestyle foremost in mind. They can review the details of their sponsorship in a broad overview, or in fine detail. The choice is the sponsors. We provide them with as much, or as little information about their sponsorship at BorderFest as they care to know. Categories vary, and include: BorderFest Overview, Results Are In, Market Overview, Sponsorship Overview, Sponsorship Elements, Sponsorship Objectives, Sponsorship Strategies, Sponsorship Results, Deliverables, Added Value, On-Site Brand Exposure, Broadcast Exposure, Print Exposure, Internet Exposure, Media Strategy.

(Sponsor Fulfillment report available on CD for reference).

## SPONSOR REACTION

### ***Shalimar Madrigal, Promotions Coordinator, Stripes:***

"Our participation in BorderFest 2006 was such an enormous success. Our sale of advance tickets increased 80% over prior year. Our employees were offered a wonderful incentive by BorderFest, so they all worked very hard to achieve the sales objective. Our in-store promotion tied to BorderFest, called Taco Mania, resulted in a 36% sales lift in breakfast tacos. The culmination of this in-store promotion was a *lucha libre*, or Mexican wrestling, event at BorderFest, which drew huge crowds. We had more than 1,000 BorderFest patrons come back to our stores to redeem their buy one, get one free coupon offer featured on the back of their BorderFest ticket. We felt that the cross-promotion between BorderFest and our stores was mutually beneficial, and a formula upon which we wanted to improve.

Upon reviewing the market study BorderFest conducted at last year's event, Stripes found opportunities to maximize its sponsorship. When respondents were asked who the major sponsors were of BorderFest, the most well-known were the ones that had a strong and lasting presence at the event, the ones that did a great job of activating their sponsorship. As we had undergone a re-branding campaign just a few months prior, we decided that our sponsorship needed to reflect who *we* were, and who *our customers* are—young (or young at heart), fun-loving, and hip. When Joe Vera presented the Dance Heads DVD he made with his family at a trade show and offered that sponsorship to Stripes, I knew it would be perfect for us!

To maximize the opportunity, we wanted to **own** our event. We dropped the Dance Heads name and called it 'The Stripes Shake Shack.' We created a logo for it. We had our logo and the BorderFest logo embedded on the video footage, as well as on the DVD label. We had custom DVD cases printed with the Stripes Shake Shack logo and the BorderFest logo. We knew that people would love their dance video so much, that they would show it to others and they would continue watching it for a long time to come...and when they did, the Stripes logo and BorderFest logos would be there.

We feel that our sponsorship, the Stripes Shake Shack, has legs. It can go further than this year. We want to do it again next year, but with a different theme, so we wanted to ensure that we **owned** our sponsorship, that we started training the customer to expect Stripes at BorderFest."