

IDA Awards - Marketing and Communication - March 30, 2018
San Jose Downtown Association - Scott Knies, Executive Director,
and Bree von Faith, Director of MarCom and Events - 408.279.1775

In 2017, San Jose Downtown Association intensified efforts to market its Music in the Park summer concert series. New marketing tactics resulted in a wildly successful season.

BACKGROUND:

2017 was Music in the Park's 29th season overall, featuring internationally known performers Katchafire in June, Blues Traveler in July and Brenton Wood and WAR in August in downtown's central park.

From 1987-2011, Music in the Park grew as a free event to 13 shows. The series became too big, too complex, and not fun for staff. SJDA put the series on hiatus in 2012. Music in the Park came back as one show in 2013, two shows in 2014, three shows in 2015 and four shows in 2016.

During 2013-16, SJDA worked on the recipe for a fun, family, all-inclusive community series, which included: ensuring a quality experience // 4 concerts per season // fenced venue for security purposes, but unscreened so that the shows flow and energize in synchronicity with the downtown // selling tickets at affordable pricing (12-under free) // adding opportunities for family and creative connection to the event, such as interactive chalk murals; San Jose Sharks interactive slap-shot booth; San Jose Earthquakes mini-soccer field; giant Connect Four and other games // local gourmet food trucks and booths representing downtown restaurants // local craft-beer options // local musicians & DJs as openers and during intermissions.

INTENSIFIED PROGRAM MARKETING CHALLENGE

- Maximize revenue and fun factor.
- Target 40-younger (base audience is 40+)
- Expand marketing strategy beyond tried-and-true methods, including media trade, posters and flyers, press releases, calendar listings, email, website, Facebook posts and SJDA newsletter. (2017 marketing budget increased by 5% vs. prior year, requiring some shifting of funds)

KEY PROGRAM TACTICS AND RESULTS:

- Introducing three digital photo kiosks, which rewarded the participant with a commemorative "selfie," and from which SJDA could collect new email addresses. The kiosks were set up at all four concerts, and at three downtown eateries and bars that target 25-40-year-old audience. The kiosks captured 4,800 positive images of downtown and were used for social media and to build targeted emailing capabilities. SJDA's email lists grew 30% from 12,000 to 17,000.
- Revamping email marketing with marketing automation tactics resulting in open rates as high as 69% and click rates as high as 17%, both well above industry averages. SJDA staff ensured the email automation was coded so that people would not receive the same email or message twice.

- More dialog and interaction on Music in the Park Facebook Events pages, which had a total organic reach of 1.37 million for four shows.
- Instagram ads 12,000 impressions and 200 click throughs with a target audience of 25-35 within 10 miles of Downtown San Jose.

MORE PROGRAM REWARDS

- **Partnering with businesses:** The digital photo kiosks proved to be a valuable way to partner with local businesses. One general manager shared that their patrons stayed at their venue longer and purchased more food and coffee as a result. Another venue was able to leverage the digital images to support their branding on social media and people started to visit the third location asking where the kiosk was located. SJDA plans to expand the number of digital kiosks across Downtown San Jose this summer and to build a sustainability model where businesses can support the deployment of machines through sponsorship.
- **100+ Facebook comments to a post:** “What WAR song is your favorite?” also elicited an impressive 32 different answers.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS ACHIEVED

- **Incremental Revenue:** SJDA sold out its final two shows of the 2017 series while expanding the footprint for these concerts. When Brenton Wood was the headliner, the event boundaries expanded into the street around Plaza de Cesar Chavez. For the WAR show, the boundaries extended to closing the entire street and a portion of a side street.

For all four shows, SJDA sold out its VIP section. This was the first time the organization created a section where festival-goers could pay a premium to be close to the stage, ensure a seat, upgraded restrooms and concessions booths. The VIP areas expanded from show to show.

Instead of breaking even, Music in the Park revenues exceeded costs by \$200,000, which were spent on other programs. It was by far the most ever for a four-event series. And the stage is set for four more sold-out shows in 2018.

- **Recruiting younger audiences to the shows:** The Business Improvement District Board mandated a strategy that SJDA target younger audiences, more in line with the clientele they want in their establishments. By gaining 4,800 emails, SJDA is able to personalize messaging to the 25-40 group. The number of under-40s at the concerts increased 118% and event attendance overall proved to be 50%-50% balance between those under 40 and over 40 vs. previous 30%-70% split.
- **Building perception and interest in the rest of downtown:** 36% said they intended to return to explore more of downtown within one week of the event. Attendance increased overall at most Downtown San Jose summer events. And the targeted email lists should prove useful in recruiting more event excitement in 2018 and beyond.
- **Tactics translate to other events:** SJDA utilized expanded email lists to personalize invitations to the winter Downtown Ice, which also helped achieve record sales. Combined, SJDA exceeded revenue goals by 100% for the year.