

## Marketing success on a tight budget

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BCSC Shopping Centre Management Conference,  
ACC, Liverpool

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# Hempstead Valley

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## **Background**

Hempstead Valley is a 375,500 sq ft, district, destination, out of town shopping centre, located just off the M2, midway between London and Dover.

Hempstead Valley is located within the Medway Towns with a population of over 250,000.

The core customer is an ABC1, 25-44 year old female or classified by MOSAIC, as Suburban Comfort, Happy Families, Ties of Community, and Symbols of Success.

It is a single level enclosed centre, with over 50 stores - main anchors are Sainsbury's (the largest in Kent) and M&S.

The centre was 30 years old in October 2008 and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest out of town shopping centre after Brent Cross, London. Since the centre opened it has been a hub for charity and community events and the centre is positioned firmly at the heart of the local community.

The centre offers out of town shopping modelled on successful complexes in North America. Hempstead Valley was innovative when it was built with a North American idea in fast food service - our 'Picnic Parlour' and was the first food court in the UK. It also pioneered commercialisation in the malls with the 'handcart barrow' (RMU), introducing these into the malls in 1979.

In 1980 Hempstead Valley won the ICSC European Award for 'outstanding and creative shopping centre accomplishments'.

# Hempstead Valley



Aerial view of Hempstead Valley. The site was completely surrounded by field and woods when it opened. The houses were built during the 1980's onwards.



Bhs/Food Court entrance

# Hempstead Valley



Phase I  
L shaped mall, scheme  
anchored by 'SavaCentre',  
mall built in 1978



Food Court,  
refurbished and  
extended 1997



Phase II  
M&S mall built in 1992

## Background - The Competition

Hempstead Valley has to compete in a highly competitive market.

High profile regional and district competitors target the Hempstead Valley catchment:

- Bluewater, 20 minute drive time away, marketing budget £3,375,000, commercial income £6,000,000
- Lakeside, Essex, PR budget £155,000
- Maidstone - The Mall Chequers, Fremlin Walk and Royal Star Arcade
- Canterbury - Whitefrairs

# Hempstead Valley

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## **Fashion Features at Hempstead Valley – Media and PR Campaign May 2006 to September 2007**

### **The situation**

- Traditionally Hempstead Valley's marketing focused on the strength of the food offer, supporting the 2 key anchors Sainsbury's & M&S (2 out of 52 retailers) and centre events to pull in customers.
- While sales were strong at Sainsbury's and M&S, the centre's core customer of 25-44 year old women shopped predominantly elsewhere for fashion.
- The perception of the fashion offer needed to be addressed and improved.
- Limited marketing budget - 2006/07 budget was cut by 20%.
- Media relations were poor and in decline.
- The reduced marketing budget could not support an advertising campaign focussing purely on the centre's fashion and subsequently we could not begin to compete head on with the budgets of the local, high-profile competition.
- **The centre needed to draw back fashion customers and repair relations with the local and regional press**
- This necessitated a creative approach of thinking outside the box. A public relations campaign was therefore devised to promote Hempstead Valley and its fashion offer, combined with current fashion trends and styles and the popularity of the celebrity look.
- Out of this 'Fashion Features' at Hempstead Valley was born.

# Hempstead Valley

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## **Strategy**

- Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre to be marketed as a destination strongly associated with fashion.
- Developing effective and long-term partnerships with regional newspapers/media and the centre's retailers would be vital in achieving strategic goals.

## **Implementation**

- After a meeting with KOS Media, publishers of the Kentish Saturday Observer and Kent on Sunday newspapers I became the Kent on Sunday's contributory fashion features writer.
- I wrote regular editorial features, specific to the fashion tenants at the centre, with commentary about celebrity style and current fashion trends.
- High quality photography, sourced from the retailers' press offices, PR agencies or PR Shots website accompanied the copy.
- I also bi-weekly consulted the centre's retailers to share their expertise on key trends and products.

## **Budget**

- Expenses £41.80

## Results

- 47 fashion features have been published by KOS Media between May 2006 and September 2007.
- The value of the PR is £144,890.21, based on our discounted advertising rate card value.
- Over half the features were published as a full page full colour.
- During a period when shopping centre footfall declined 6.08% nationwide, Hempstead Valley's increased 4.66%.
- The catchment area has expanded to a 30 minute drive time.
- A survey of Hempstead Valley's fashion store managers found, 89% said their relationship with the centre's marketing function had improved, and 77% said that the number of younger shoppers had increased.

# Hempstead Valley



Montage of published 'Fashion Features'

## Awards

BCSC Purple Apple Award 2007

ICSC MAXI Silver 2007

ICSC European Solal Gold 2008



## Media Partnership – Media and PR campaign 2006 to date

### **The situation**

A media and public relations plan was developed in March 2006

- ‘The PR plan is set out as a proactive process to drive customers to events; maintain awareness in the community and create human interest stories’.
- ‘A focus on building media and public relations and developing marketing partnerships with key retailers.’

Marketing budget was cut by 20%.

Media relations (with Medway Messenger, the dominant newspaper in our core catchment area) were poor and in decline

# Hempstead Valley

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## **Strategy**

- To build a mutually beneficial and long-term dynamic partnership with the Medway Messenger.
- To improve internal communications. It is important that colleagues understand how they can be actively involved with and contribute towards Hempstead Valley marketing.
- To build marketing partnerships with key retailers by regularly visiting them in their stores. Liaise and discuss with them the benefits of pro-actively informing centre marketing about potential PR opportunities.

## **Implementation**

- Regular meetings are held with Medway Messenger at their Medway office, in order to get to know and better understand how the key reporters work and how they like to receive news.
- Story ideas that are compelling and newsworthy are discussed with the editorial team (via email or telephone).
- Centre events are solely marketed through PR.
- Photocalls are booked via their newsdesk.
- Regular face-to-face visits with store managers along with information releases keep tenants up dated and informed about centre marketing and events.

## **Budget**

- Total expenses £213.13

# Hempstead Valley

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## **Results – 2006 to January 2008**

- Dynamic, highly effective and ongoing mutual relationship forged with the Medway Messenger.
- A total of 248 pieces of editorial have been published about Hempstead Valley and its retailers.
- Medway Messenger photographers have attended 57 photocalls.
- PR valued at £142,899 has been generated.
- Footfall 2007 compared against 2006  
Hempstead Valley +2.6% , UK national –5%, SE regional -1.5%  
(Source: FootFall Index)
- Over 69% of Hempstead Valley's stores have been mentioned in the Medway Messenger and KM Extra.

## **Award**

BCSC Purple Apple Merit 2008

# Hempstead Valley

**REAL life**

## Seeing double

Being a twin is great, but people always want to know... Do you like the same things? Do you dress the same? Some twins are very alike, but Sarah Hills and her sister Rachel have become very different characters, with totally different tastes in clothes. Focus sent them off to Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre to be dressed up for the Christmas party season.

Words: Sarah Hills. Pictures: Paul Dennis



**T**he Hills twins have been spotted in their local shopping centre, where they were dressed up for the party season. Sarah Hills, 28, and Rachel Hills, 27, are both models and have become very different characters. Sarah is a fashionista and Rachel is a more practical dresser. They were spotted at Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, where they were dressed up for the Christmas party season.

**Sarah Hills** was spotted in a black dress with a white belt, a black jacket, and a black hat. **Rachel Hills** was spotted in a black dress with a white belt, a black jacket, and a black hat.

It's easy and saves lives

Autumn fair to feed imagination

We're aiming to make this a good habit

Where public union counts

**KM EXTRA** WE'RE NUMBER 1

**KM MEDWAY MESSENGER** New-look Gillis all set for the big kick-off

We should be so lucky

It's time to start the bauble rolling

Youngsters pack a lot into celebrations

Cash top-ups for trip Down Under

Award winner flying flag for Britain in USA



A sample of published coverage in the Medway Messenger and KM Extra

Shopping centre for brides-to-be

The vital outing for brides-to-be

Youngsters hit the right note

Oh shop, all ye faithful

It's game on for football

Three lions on a T-shirt

Our lads strip for a set piece in menswear

Yes, we'll hire cruise ship just for you!

Shopping centre farmers' market off to successful start

Gillis legend says goodbye

Shopping centre for brides-to-be

Yes, we'll hire cruise ship just for you!

Shopping centre farmers' market off to successful start



12 Monday, December 3, 2013 Medway Messenger (GMT) www.kmextra.co.uk

## It's time to start the bauble rolling

DECEMBER is here and if you've not started your Christmas shopping, then head to Hempstead Valley.

A Christmas market is set up in the main until Sunday and offers a range of festive goods and services for the festive season.

The local Land method Christmas decorations made by Polly-anna, a local artist, will be on display in the main until Sunday.

Goodies, Christmas cakes and puddings always will not make sense to your shop. They take orders and come back to order in the shop to make sure you are in the shop.

The event is open from 10am to 4pm on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm.

**WHYLL BE THERE**

- The Decorated Eggs Company
- Winged Trading Fruit Scented Candles
- Friday Dishes Pottery
- Woodland Design - woodturning and painted boxes
- Ian Kent Wildlife Art
- Sandra & Geoffrey Hall Pottery
- Artesians
- Goodenough Christmas Cakes & Puddings
- Friday Dishes Pottery
- Personal Touch - make your own boxes
- George Gosale
- Charonite Jewellery
- Palmed Cockatoo Imports
- The Salsobles Company
- Jaschke's Flowers & Candles
- Personal Touch - make your own boxes
- San Kent Wildlife Art
- Is & B Bronnfield enamelled china & military figurines
- Candy Bouquet - chocolate bouquets
- Lighthouse Emporium
- Flowers by Louise - artificial flowers
- The Fudgery Christmas Boxes
- Romance hampers



**ELEVENTH HEAVEN:** Customers impressed by variety and quality of food and drink available at the fair

Brenda Payne, from Pine Trees Farm, near Sittingbourne, tantalises with a delicious-looking plum cake, and, right, Andrew Dainly tempts three-year-old Erin and six-year-old Liam Ponsbury with wares from Sally's Ginger Dainties

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Customers enjoy a selection of festive treats when Hempstead Valley shopping centre is held in the former Market units local farms.

Three heavenly baubles have cakes, jams, fruits and fudge proved a hit with shoppers, as did the selection of locally produced meats.

Hempstead Valley marketing executive by Andrew said: "Our customers were especially impressed by the variety and high quality of festive produce on offer."

Many of our local stallholders had to re-stock their stands only a few hours into the first day of the fair, such was the demand for their produce.

Hempstead Valley will be running another two-day food fair beginning at 10am on Sunday August 18.

For more information visit [www.hempsteadvalley.co.uk](http://www.hempsteadvalley.co.uk)



## Media & Public Relations

- Get to know key reporters. Build up mutually beneficial relationships
- Make the news; get regular positive PR exposure for your centre and retailers
- Drive customers to your centre; maintain awareness in the community and create human interest stories

## Charity and Community Events

Tourist Information Centres and local hotels

Website

## Media & Public Relations

Get to know key reporters/editors. Find out what stories they want to cover, what their objectives are and what their readers/listeners/viewers are interested in. By reading their newspapers, listening to their radio stations and watching the regional TV news, this should hopefully give you a better understanding of what type of stories make the news.

Building an excellent mutual relationship with key reporters/editorial team is crucial if you want to increase your positive PR coverage success rate.

Target and personalise your stories to the local and regional media.

Find out how they like to be contacted, ie a quick phone call to run a story by them, then a press release emailed over with full information.

**Think creatively!** Particularly creative and out-of-the-ordinary stories can be popular and in turn they are more likely to make the news. These stories can provide excellent visual photo opportunities.....



Dancers shake their tail feathers at Hempsstead Valley. Pictures: Barry Crawford pd 550995

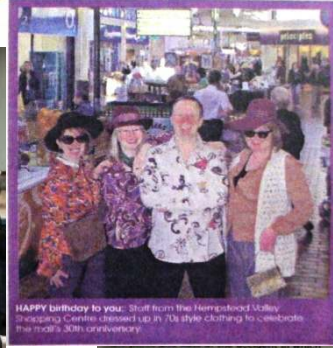
# 30 years of shopping: Let's bop!

by Hayley Robinson

CELEBRATIONS to mark the 30th anniversary of Hempsstead Valley Shopping Centre came to an end with the cutting of a cake. The Mayor of Medway Cllr David Carr and his wife Kirstine carried out the honours in front of shoppers on Monday. Entertainment was provided by Michelle's School of Dance. The event marked the end of the month-long celebration at the Gillingham centre, and also marked the launch of a scheme for National Talent Week.

This was started by the Enterprise and Talent Task Force to celebrate and showcase local talent. 'Talent wall' Medway schools, colleges, community groups and clubs are encouraging young people aged 14 to 25 to go online to [www.talentweek.co.uk](http://www.talentweek.co.uk) and create their own 'brick' which will then be used to create a Talent Wall outside Marks & Spencer in the mall area of the shopping centre. It will also be available to view online. A host of prizes are up for grabs for the best bricks. The event is a pilot for National Talent Week which will take place in all shopping centres next spring.

## PICTURE OF THE WEEK



HAPPY birthday to you: Staff from the Hempsstead Valley Shopping Centre dressed up in 70s style clothing to celebrate the centre's 30th anniversary.



The Mayor of Medway Cllr David Carr cuts the birthday cake at the Hempsstead Valley birthday party.

www.medwaymessenger.co.uk Keeping you in the picture



Entertainment by Michelle's School of Dance. Pictures: Barry Crawford pd 550995

## Centre celebrations 30 years of shopping

STAFF and shoppers at Hempsstead Valley Shopping Centre took a journey back in time to celebrate 30 years of the complex. Uniforms were swapped for flares and platform shoes in honour of the grand opening in 1978 and a host of activities have been planned for the two-week-long party. Centre manager Mark Rumfitt said: "Hempsstead Valley has for 30 years been a key part of the community of Medway and Kent and we are proud to provide first class customer service and retail excellence in a safe and clean environment."

- Hempsstead Valley was the first out of town shopping centre in England to be built outside of London.
- It was modelled on successful complexes in North America and was originally planned to be an open air shopping centre.
- About 50 million items were sold and more than five million people visited the complex in its first year.
- It was the first shopping centre in the UK to have a food court.



Top on: Centre manager Mark Rumfitt tries one of the store's best sellers in the 70s.

Since its opening in 1978 the centre has seen millions of shoppers pass through its doors as well as a few celebrities, including radio presenter Terry Wogan, glamour model Jordan, boxer Henry Cooper and TV presenter Philip Schofield. Its three decades of success have silenced its critics, who protested against the initial plans in 1975. Councillors, residents and retail workers across Medway believed the proposed £5 million Savat Centre, a joint project between Sainsbury's and British Home Stores, would ruin the quiet village of Hempsstead and draw business away from the town's high streets. The plans were turned down by the county council because of "inadequate roads leading to the site", but permission was granted in December for work to begin in November 1976. More than 20,000 shoppers attended the new centre's opening on October 17, 1978, and the complex also boasted Midland Bank, N.S.S. newsagents and tobacconists, Dixons

These memories and much more will be on display from Tuesday, October 21, in a special exhibition at Hempsstead Valley, which documents its progress. Mr Rumfitt said: "Customers can reminisce over the old photos and press cuttings and can add their memories of Hempsstead Valley to the nostalgia book."

Another major development took place in 1991 when a new shopping mall and five storey car park were added. A massive Marks & Spencer store became the centrepiece and 10 more shops were added to the space.



Star attraction: Terry Wogan wowed the crowd at the complex.

MOTHER-of-two and grandmother Chris Van Cill, 50, from Rainham, said: "I remember when it opened 30 years ago. It was like going to a French supermarket. I'd never seen washing machines for sale in a supermarket before. And I still see them today."



## Hempstead Valley's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday 'Celebrating 30 years in fashion'

Events held to celebrate the centre's birthday included a range of free events, including a community exhibition, charity fundraising events (nearly £20,000 was raised for 7 local charities), display of 70's memorabilia and fashion and the pilot of Talent Week (a BCSC/Business in the Community initiative).

This event had the support of retailers, staff, local community, customers and local media, with PR coverage for the celebrations valued at nearly £40,000 including a Medway Messenger special publication.

(The previous slide shows some of the events that took place during the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations and examples of press coverage received)

## Charity and Community events

As part of a Corporate Social Responsibility plan allocate one area in the shopping centre for local charity and community events.

Support the local council, important and influential stakeholders and let them hold outreach or roadshow events at your centre. This will benefit the local community and it also the type of news that local and regional media like to cover.

Find out if the local media are supporting specific local charities. If suitable, get involved with the media's community and charity campaigns.

Utilise your media contacts to help them gain greater awareness for their organisation in the wider community. Offer to write quotes for press releases etc.

# Hempstead Valley

## COMMUNITY NEWS: ROUNDABOUT

**COLLECTION SUCCESS:** Generosity and kindness to the Poppy Appeal make for a terrific contribution to the British Legion

KIND-HEARTED shoppers have bolstered this year's Poppy Appeal by almost £12,000.

Hundreds of customers at Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre dug into their pockets to contribute to the Gillingham branch of the Royal British Legion's collection. The branch was out collecting with the help of Medway's Mayor, Cllr Angela Prodger and Gillingham MP Paul Clark.

Although the final figure hasn't been announced it is estimated the total will reach the £12,000 mark. A huge success thanks to those who contributed.

■ From left: Brian Lakeland, Mayor of Medway, Cllr Angela Prodger, Bill Strong, 92 and Joe Pitcher

COPYRIGHT: Su Button  
Marketing Executive  
Hempstead Valley Shopping  
Centre Gillingham



## **Retailers**

Get your retailers actively involved with centre marketing. They can provide valuable PR stories, but you need to know about them.

Regularly visit your retailers personally, this will help you to build up a good rapport with staff and managers.

Use your media contacts to help them get their news covered and help them with writing quotes for press releases etc.

For example are they holding an event, promotion, has a member of staff retired? Or announce new store managers etc. Are your stores supporting a local charity and staff dressing up to encourage fund raising?

## **Offer retailers mall space**

If your retailers have interesting promotions and offers, help them to promote their products to customers outside their store.

le Argos during their new catalogue launch weekend give away their new catalogue to customers in a mall located away from their store.

# Hempstead Valley

## BRA-VO: Staff brave the cold to sell raffle tickets



■ Caroline, Angela, Tracy, Kerry, Carly, Allisa and Natasha, from Supercuts, Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, on wear it pink day Picture: Barry Crayford pd309327 Buy this picture from kentonline.co.uk

THERE was glamour and glitz galore when a hairdressing salon held a charity fun day. Staff at Supercuts in Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre wore their best pink outfits to raise awareness of breast cancer on Breast Cancer Care's wear it pink day.

There were more than a few raised eyebrows as the girls put on fluffy bras and angels' wings. But it was all in a good cause and they managed to raise nearly £400 through donations and the sale of raffle tickets. Assistant manager Tracy Little

wore a special bra made by her mum, who was a cancer sufferer. She said: "It was a really cool day. We all had loads of fun running round like kids collecting money. All the customers were supportive and we really enjoyed ourselves."



## MEDWAY MESSENGER

YOUR BIG WEEKEND PAPER

A Kent Messenger Group Newspaper

www.kentonline.co.uk

Friday, August 10, 2007 55p

## New-look Gills all set for the big kick-off

Squad's team picture and match preview - see Sport supplement and back page



## PIZZA EXPRESS: Children get lesson in healthy fast food



■ Sainsbury's staff visit Hempstead Infant School to show pupils how to make healthy sandwiches

SAINSBURY'S staff have been giving cooking lessons to pupils in Medway. Kelly Wood, personnel manager of the Hempstead Valley Store, visited Rainham Mark Grammar School, along with her colleagues, Lyn Gibby and Teresa Kent. There they showed Year 9 pupils how to make pizzas. The team also visited Hempstead Infant School, where they showed Year 1 pupils how to make sandwiches. The cooking lessons marked Sainsbury's sixth "make the difference day" and the Active Kids Get Cooking initiative. It also celebrated British Food Fortnight, with all the ingredients used coming from British suppliers.

## MUM'S THE WORD: Six staff pregnant



■ From left, Suzanne Webster, Katy Wiseman, Carl Lockyer, Karan Brown and Natalie Tumberidge; also expecting, but not pictured, is Karley Bulgin

NEW STAFF are frantically being trained to work at a travel agents following a baby boom. Six women working at the Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre's of Thomson are few pregnant within a few months of each other causing a recruitment headache for their manager. Karley Bulgin, whose baby is due on September 22, went on

maternity leave on Sunday. Katy Wiseman and Natalie Tumberidge are both due in October, Karan Brown is due mid-November and Carl Lockyer and Suzanne Webster are both due in December. Marie Carpenter, manager, said: "I knew all the girls were trying then they all felt pregnant at the same time. "I wish all the women luck with their new babies."

Examples of press coverage achieved for retailers

## **Tourist information Centres & local hotels**

Keep in contact with the local tourist information centres and receptionists in local hotels and keep them supplied with your up to date centre leaflets and store guides. They will generally display leaflets free of charge.

If tourists go to them and ask for advice on where to go shopping make sure your centre is at the top of the list. Tourists generally like to pick up leaflets for ideas of where to visit and your leaflet should be one of these.

## **Website**

Update your centre's website at least weekly with events listings, special offers, retailer and centre promotions etc. Search engine optimisation means that regular updates and inclusion of key words could help to keep your shopping centre top of search engines.

Check your spelling!

In the current economic climate customers are looking for special offers and savings. Find out your retailers' offers and regularly update your website accordingly with this information.

## Notes from groups during workshop

### Gaining PR Coverage

- What do editors want? Get to know them
- How to gain PR coverage?
- Let editors know your ad spend
- Advertorials
- Voucher offers through papers (reader exclusive offers)
- Getting **retailer support** & buy in. Process can be too long winded to get decisions
- Engaging retailer's role and the support from their head office
- Attendance at Tenants Association meetings.
- How do retailers want us to communicate with them?
  - Down to one monthly chats preferred
  - Less formal forums
- Social events with tenants?
- Make it easy for your retailers to get involved: ie supply the eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt
- Role of BCSC?
- Tenant engagement} BRC
- Best Practice} BRC
- Community engagement

## Notes from groups during workshop

### **Contra Deals**

- Butlins – Contra deal
- Vouchers
- Discounts directory
- Town/City
- House builders – welcome pack
- Web – Mail
- Trade offs – bus routes
- Local specialist companies, to run events, kids entertainment, face painting
- Offer companies free space in your mall in return for offering free samples or services

### **Involve local community, key stakeholders:**

- Young Managers
- Local Authorities
- Kids Clubs
- Mummy Mornings
- Wedding Fair
- Students
- Groups
- Schools

## Notes from groups during workshop

### **Creative ideas – turn them into photo opportunities**

- Charities to run events, eg. Abseiling down building (get logo in!!)
- Emergency Services in centre, e.g. Fireman washing cars
- Working in partnership with colleges etc. to create points of interest e.g. murals
- Baby of the year comps / pet of the year, run by paper
- Environment slant e.g. Build sculpture from landfill – involve local schools
- Local celebs to cover events e.g. lights switch on, or panto characters, or book signings
- X Factor type events - covered by paper & radio, vote via paper/text/radio
- Sponsor local sports team – your logo in paper when results published
- Involve management and/or retailers in charity events, e.g. centre manager leg wax for red nose day.
- Radio station – ‘cruiser’ cars and promotional staff visit your centre handing out freebies
- Novel take on seasonal events e.g. daughters who look like mum
- Reward retailers who get you in paper e.g. box of chocolates/retailer awards
- Help local papers/magazines, distribution via handing out publications in centre