



FRIDAY 21st NOVEMBER 2008

Case Study: “The sponsor as media: venues of the Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine”

Jean-Marie Guinebert, Director of Communication and Partnerships, Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris

Philippe Khyr, Head of Art & Life Titles, Lagardère Active, Paris

The challenge: When a cultural organisation joins forces with a partner and brings in a third party.

The issue: to carry out a PR and programming operation by associating the venue with a media without having to dedicate funds.



The project

An exceptional site at the heart of the Cité de l’Architecture – the former company apartment of the architect Jacques Carlu, with its 300m² terrace, with one of the most stunning views of Paris.

Elle Déco, partner of the Cité since the beginning of reconstruction building works, was celebrating its 20th birthday and wanted to create, in the heart of the Cité, a decorative space – a meeting point between architecture, interior design and fashion.

For la Cité, to develop a partnership with Elle Déco was to bring them access to a new public, in line with its strategy for repositionment – that is, to open the Cité up to parallel publics in the worlds of cinema, photography and design.

Elle Déco and the Cité found themselves with the project that in 2 months, would become the “Elle Décoration Suite by Christian Lacroix”, from 4th December 2007 to 10th October 2008.

The financing

The two partners wanted to find a sponsor but to avoid as much as possible a sponsor ‘in kind’ (ie, they were looking for cash support). La Redoute accepted to finance the project by contributing 100 000€ with no strings attached, that is without making any demands on the future space to use it as a possible show room for their products, for example.





Shared interest

For the sponsor, La Redoute, there were many interest:

- Despite La Redoute not demanding that the Suite become their showroom, the Suite nevertheless was an opportunity for them to showcase various interior decoration items that Christian Lacroix had designed for La Redoute.
- The originality of the project was supported by Elle Déco and thus gave La Redoute excellent coverage and support in the media
- The Suite provided a magnificent space for their PR events
- An extra showroom was also reserved for La Redoute elsewhere in the Cité

For the Cité:

- No cash investment from their part needed
- Prestigious in terms of image
- Winning over of a new audience (readership of Elle Déco)
- Creation of a VIP space – able to be privatised for soirées and other events that could provide the Cité with an important source of revenue
- Creation of a renewable brand: the Elle Déco Suite was a risk but the project has been so successful that the Elle Déco Suite will become (in 2009) the Ikea Suite, remodeled by Martin Margiela



For Elle Déco:

- The Elle Déco brand was able step out of its usual milieu to co-create a gallery of design, a space that was at the same time prestigious and accessible (3€ per visit)
- Association with Christian Lacroix, who was being positioned as a cultural icon, thanks to the retrospective exhibition held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, which positioned Lacroix as one of the all time designers, and where it was also revealed that he had dreamed of being an architect
- Important media coverage

Reasons for success

Synergy and shared values: Elle Déco was a partner for la Cité right from the start, trust was therefore well established between the two parties. Their passions and values were matching thus a creative and cultural project, which was able to support itself financially, was able to come together. Each party was equally involved and each party 'won'.

Strong brands: the prestigious brands formed a strong alliance which gave the Suite a certain high profile character – a factor that was essential for its success.