

# KROGER

## A CASE STUDY

By Impact XM

When company officials with the Kroeger Co. Family of Stores wanted to connect with its employees, while also introducing them to their nearly 24 dozen brands, it wasn't by way of interoffice memo, email or even a webinar.

Similar to their belief in building strong local ties and brand loyalty with their customers, they want the same, too, for their employees – all 5,500 of them. So, a massive summit meeting will have to do. The Cincinnati-based company turned to Impact XM to make it happen.

### STEP 1: What were their needs?

Kroeger needed to find a way to incorporate all of its brands, ranging from grocery, multi-department and discount stores to convenience and jewelry stores under one umbrella. They were seeking a cohesive way to integrate all of them in an exhibit space for what's dubbed the Kroger Leadership Summit, where there would be 40 different areas or stations.

They desired a fun and social environment, but also one that would be educational for the employee training break-out sessions that were planned. There needed to be room for the many areas, such as human resources, accounting and, a hiring and retaining space to meet face-to-face with employees. Other stations would be for current store amenities, such as The Little Clinic – convenient neighborhood medical care or, upcoming ones like The New Checkout Experience; Touch Screens; Scan, Bag and Go.

The summit also would be a way for everyone to get to know all the Kroger brands, while sending the message: We are family.

### STEP 2: What were the challenges?

A few obstacles were faced along the way, however.

"We were challenged," said Stephen Huneycutt, an Impact XM account director, who led the large-scale project. He added the first directive for his team was to avoid designing the exhibit with its individual stations in a similar fashion as a flea market, yet it had to be cohesive as requested by the Impact XM newly acquired client.

Next, due to the conventional hall having only enough room to hold a banquet dinner for the more than 5,000 employees, the exhibit would have to be located in a hallway area adjacent to the hall, Huneycutt recalled.

In turn, this created some nuances, such as not being able to have signage hanging from the ceiling. The hallway ceiling did not have the same hanging abilities as the exhibit hall. Another nuance was bringing additional electric to that area.

Bigger than that was the space itself, however.

Would there be enough room for the size exhibit that was needed, while at the same time making sure there is plenty of room for a smooth traffic flow?

## STEP 5: How Impact XM solved the challenges

It was a combination of using Impact XM's three fabrication facilities in Canada, Las Vegas and New Jersey to design and build the exhibit, including all of its bells and whistles and team work that made the exhibit more than expected.

The over 13,000 square foot exhibit utilized about 80-percent of the hallway space. And, the Impact XM design and install teams made sure there was enough room for a smooth flow of pedestrian foot traffic and, Huneycutt's Hoverboard. The motorized levitating board was a big hit to those wanting to take it for a ride – a definite hot topic for the watercooler at the employee relations event, especially when Kroger's CEO, W. Rodney McMullen took a try.

"It was amazing," Huneycutt said of the finished exhibit, as well as McMullen taking his toy for a ride.

Huneycutt applauded the Impact XM teams who worked feverishly to not only get the job done, but create the exhibit in a way memorable to Kroger employees.

"The whole entire Impact XM team was amazing. These guys were working twenty-four, seven. The print shop never stopped," he said. "It would have never happened without these guys."

## STEP 4: Results

The Impact XM teams met Kroeger's objectives, creating a 13,800 square foot exhibit for the highly successful summit that ran three days, starting Sept. 28 at the Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati.

What really made an impact on the team was when Kroger's, Senior Director of Talent, Performance and Development, Kevin Edmonds sang his praises.

"He came in (the exhibit before the summit started) just saying our praises; how proud he was of us. That was the highlight; the pat on the back that everyone appreciated," Huneycutt said.

"We build environments that compliment experiences they want their audience to achieve. We did that for their employees. We knocked it out of the park."

Kroeger plans on holding the employee summit every two years. Impact XM might just be a shoe-in for the 2017 event.