

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR

Presented By  uscellular

SPONSORSHIP INNOVATION - MEIJER

OBJECTIVE: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wisconsin State Fair had a multi-faceted partnership with Meijer, a Midwest supermarket chain, that included a day sponsor activation and discounted admission promotion as well as the presenting sponsorship of the WonderFair Wheel. The Meijer Day activations were agency run and filled with activities for the whole family. Fairgoers were able to take advantage of the admission promotion by showing a Meijer sales receipt at a ticket booth on Meijer Day and to receive a discount on admission tickets. The COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent shutdowns not only stopped activations for sponsors across the fairs and events industry in 2020 but made many of those sponsors apprehensive in 2021. Sponsors everywhere were unable to activate due to company direction or lack of staff.

Meijer was among one of the Wisconsin State Fair sponsors that was unable to activate in person events in 2021. However, Meijer made it clear that they wanted to remain involved with the Wisconsin State Fair and at the same investment level. The Wisconsin State Fair team had to think out of the box as to how they were going to modify the Meijer partnership to fit their activation restrictions. Through continued conversations Meijer expressed interest in supporting first responders, healthcare workers, and grocery workers (including Meijer employees). The Wisconsin State Fair team created a sponsorship package that included the main components of previous Meijer sponsorships, but with a twist. This new partnership mix allowed Meijer to do something special for their employees as they have been highly involved in the distribution of food and COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic.

EXECUTION: This new Meijer sponsorship package included the presenting sponsorship of the WonderFair Wheel and a day sponsorship with a relevant admission promotion. Meijer was included in all signage associated with the WonderFair Wheel including a digital sign on the wheel, gondolas, and on the ticket booth.

New in 2021 the day sponsor component included the presenting sponsorship of Meijer Day and an admission promotion providing FREE admission to first responders, healthcare workers, and grocery workers (including Meijer employees). While Meijer could not organize a large activation similar to previous years, they wanted to maintain their day sponsor branding presence.

The Meijer Day admission promotion and WonderFair Wheel presenting sponsorships were highlighted in the digital space through social posts, eblasts, and website inclusion. Details were also provided in collateral pieces including the Daily Schedule and Preview Guide. The admission discount was given further promotion through inclusion on outdoor signage leading up to Meijer Day including the Wisconsin State Fair Park's I-94 highway sign and digital billboards. Meijer Day signage detailing the admission promotion was placed at all admission entrances.

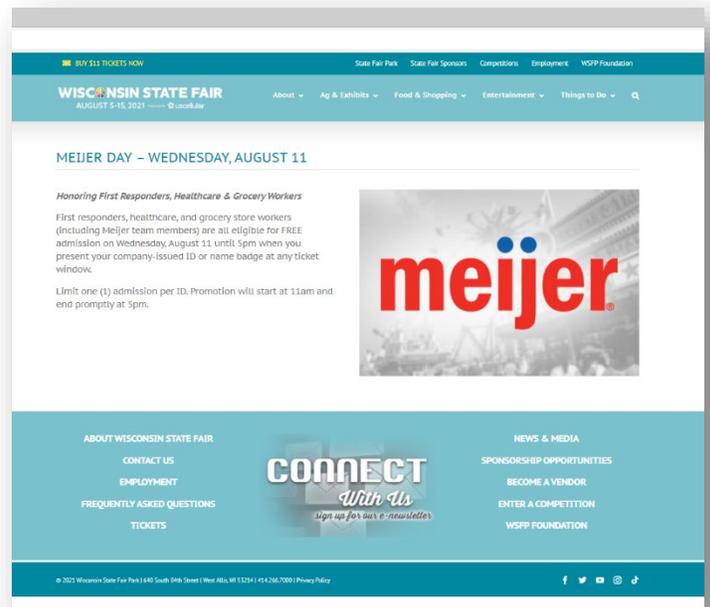
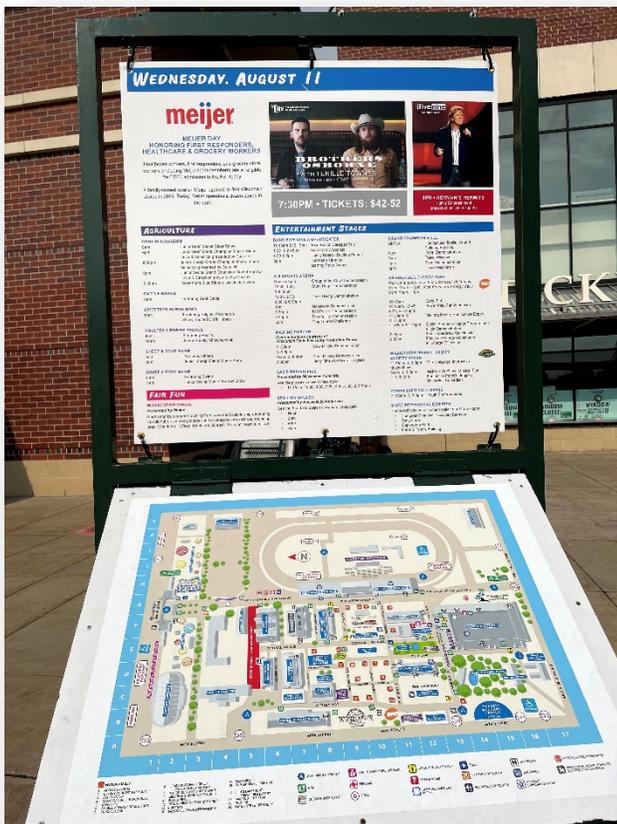
Meijer also aided in communicating details of the Meijer day admission promotion. They included signage in employee breakrooms, played announcements over PA systems in stores, and sent newsletters to employees highlighting the admission promotion. Meijer showed great excitement in being able to sponsor a Wisconsin State Fair admission discount that their employees were able to take advantage of.

Lastly, Meijer was able to creatively provide a small activation on Meijer Day. They were able to provide popsicle samples through the Meijer Grand Taste food truck on Meijer Day.

OUTCOME & EVALUATION: This alternative sponsorship package was an innovative solution to the challenge of Meijer wanting to remain a partner but not being able to activate at their normal scale. We were successful in maintaining a relationship with Meijer while saying a huge thank you to first responders, healthcare, and grocery workers for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CATEGORY SPECIFICS: Remaining flexible during challenging times shows a commitment to sponsors and the challenges that they are facing. Meijer needed an innovative solution to remain a partner for the 2021 Wisconsin State Fair. We were able to have open conversations about what each party needed to succeed as partners. That kind of positive relationship will stimulate innovative ideas to help problem solve due to changing strategies or world events.

Signage was placed at admission entrances and on locator signs throughout the Fair Park to highlight Meijer Day and the admission discount for first responders, healthcare workers, and grocery workers.



Dedicated website sliders informed fairgoers of the Meijer Day discount opportunity which, when clicked, led fairgoers to a dedicated webpage with more information.



