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MasterCard Navigates Herald Square for Promo

Controlled access and security placement helped manage seasonal crowds during the credit card company's two-day event.

There's no question that **Herald Square** is a festive place this time of year, and a tempting location for a holiday-related event. But staging a promotion on a tiny piece of real estate amongst literally thousands of people also produces its fair share of logistical challenges. On November 29 and 30, as part of its "Home for the Holidays" national sweepstakes, **MasterCard** staged its Winter Wonderland promotion in Herald Square, that postage stamp of an island at the intersection of Broadway, Sixth Avenue, and 34th Street. Planned by MasterCard director of worldwide communications **Jon Schwartz**, the event invited people into booths in the square to decorate ornaments, get photographed at a winter scenery station, enjoy some hot chocolate, and try some other activities. To complicate matters a little more, the promotion also featured a lunchtime concert by **Jewel** on the second day.



Jewel played a lunchtime set on the second day of the MasterCard promotion.



Thousands of people strolled through the Winter Wonderland setup in Herald Square.



Ornament-making was one of the event's free activities.

MasterCard Winter Wonderland promotion

Herald Square

Wednesday, 11.29.06, 10 AM to 4 PM, Thursday, 11.30.06, 10 AM to 4 PM

Event Production

Zalbens

PR

Alan Taylor Communications

Schwartz worked with **Action Marketing Group** and the **Zalbens** to pull off the event, which required three permits: one from the **34th Street Partnership**, one from the **Parks Department**, and one from the **New York City Police Department**.

"Part of the concern of the police department was they envisioned a very unmanageable situation with an overflow of people creating a dangerous situation," says the Zalbens executive producer and C.E.O. **Charlie Zalben**. To address the crowd-control issues, the Zalbens created strategic access points: two at the north entrance on 35th Street, and one on the south side at 34th. When more crowd management was needed—such as at the beginning of the day and during Jewel's performance—the two north entrances were closed. Additionally, to aid in crowd control, as many as four security personnel were positioned on the island throughout the event.

Zalben also believes that the choice to elevate Jewel during her set helped maintain order, as even those people farther away from the stage were able to see her with ease. "Even though there was a huge crowd, it never felt overwhelming or out of control," remarks Zalben.