

sessions for those whose schedules didn't permit face-to-face briefings. Salespeople got a \$1 bonus for each customer signed up. The employee with the most entries across all seven locations won a cruise. Since some salespeople, by virtue of a lesser performing store or odd-hour shift, wouldn't be in the running for the grand perk, all salespeople who signed up customers were entered in a random drawing for a cruise.

Nearly all of the design and training was handled by Light. Managing so much in-house also meant grappling with the exacting oversight Ralph Lauren is renowned for. Light had to change

brochures on press because an executive preferred a different color, for example.

The attention to detail paid off in the numbers: The seven stores signed up 2,300 members and saw same-store sales rocket 27.4 percent over the same week in 2002. Those results came in a particularly weak period—nationally, retail sales slumped 5 percent that week, while April sales tumbled 9.1 percent for the 241-store division of Saks that includes Parisian. The ROI was 74 percent—every dollar spent spurred another \$1.74 in revenue.

The greatest benefits, however, may be yet to come. Regardless of wrangling between Ralph Lauren and Jones New

York over the Lauren brand, Lauren Week will likely be held again this fall in Parisian and other department stores. The next round will encompass a number of new events, such as members-only sales the night before a line hits stores, and drink and hors d'oeuvres previews. Already, the campaign has followed up by mail with members, offering a 25 percent discount on their next purchase as well as reminding them of eligibility for other awards.

Results aside, Light says, the whole purpose was to set the stage for future Lauren Weeks and more efforts to build the brand. "Now we have a valuable customer in our mitts." **IS**