

Citadel Theatre

Citadel Theatre uses Postal Code Targeting to build its audience of the future



To ensure ticket sales stay strong for years to come, the Edmonton-based theatre company begins to focus more on reaching prospective new patrons.

Keeping the arts strong

Often described as the heart of Edmonton's arts community, the Citadel Theatre is one of the largest non-profit professional theatre companies in Western Canada and the third-largest regional theatre in Canada. From September to May, the Citadel produces live performance shows, with an eye toward showcasing local artists and fuelling the arts scene in Edmonton and beyond.

To keep its seats filled, the Citadel focuses mostly on spreading awareness of its upcoming shows among those between the ages of 40 and 80 who typically comprise its audiences. It employs a variety of marketing channels including newspaper, radio, billboards, digital as well as direct mail, through which it connects with its existing base of supporters.

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Though this had been a tried-and-true approach, the theatre recognizes that its existing audience is aging. It needs to focus more on connecting with new households to ensure audience size stays strong.

Seeking new audiences

To begin attracting new attendees, the theatre turned to direct mail and used it in combination with Postal Code Targeting (PCT), which allows organizations to find new and lookalike prospects by targeting households in the same postal code as current customers.

Canada Post profiled the Citadel's existing customer database of single-ticket buyers and applied what it learned about their top 4 Prizm clusters to target postal codes with look-a-like characteristics of their best customers.

Case study

Its existing customers were suppressed from the PCT mailings to ensure the focus was on new customer acquisition.

"We needed to try and get a deeper market penetration, beyond those who currently come to our shows," says Kim Stadelmann, Senior Director of Sales and Patron Development, Citadel Theatre and Academy. "What we liked about Postal Code Targeting is that it allows us to reach out to new potential customers who live near our existing members."

Building on takeaways

Initially, Stadelmann's team used a Postal Code Targeting-enabled campaign aimed at selling new annual memberships; the team decided to experiment more with its strategy in order to improve ROI.

What worked? Focusing on using PCT to generate single-ticket sales of a widely known theatrical entity: its 18th annual production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Reaching the best prospects

The team sent 5,000 direct mail postcards to new prospects with an emphasis on young families. With a 3.2% above average response rate, the campaign not only boosted sales, but it put brand new families in the audience.

"We got a really good response," says Stadelmann. "Choosing our strongest product and placing it directly in the hands of Edmontonians through direct mail proved smart on our part."

Beyond the lift in sales and broadening of its audience, the Citadel marketing team also captured new data and key insights that it plans to use to better target prospects in future campaigns.

"We had wondered if Postal Code Targeting could really be a cultivation tool," says Stadelmann. "This experience proved that's exactly what it is."



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