

Krown Rust Protection

A post-pandemic customer appreciation campaign pays off



When they fully re-opened, Krown Rust Protection wanted to thank the loyal customers who stuck by them through the pandemic. A direct mail offer brought the regulars back and helped to acquire new ones too.

Protecting an important asset

Krown is the premier after-market rust protection company in the country. In business since 1986, the dealer-owned cooperative has 250 locations in Canada, 60 in the US and 40 in Europe. Each is independently owned and operated. "Our goal is to help consumers extend the life of their vehicles by protecting them from corrosion with an environmentally friendly rust inhibitor," says Craig Shuttleworth, Marketing Director at Krown.

It's an enterprise driven by repeat business. "Once the customer is educated on the benefits, they become extremely loyal," says Shuttleworth. COVID, however, changed everything. Krown Rust Protection's commercial service was deemed an essential service, but for months lockdowns shut out individual vehicle owners.

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Making ourselves right at home

As the pandemic went on, consumers hunkered down and stayed in. When businesses started opening up, consumer habits and patterns were different. Those changes helped usher in what one research company calls the Decade of the Home.

With more Canadians working, studying and socializing from home, marketers needed to re-evaluate how to reach their audience. Direct mail finds consumers where they are and holds their attention where they're most likely to make important buying decisions – at home.

Krown Rust Protection knows first-hand how well direct mail fulfills marketing objectives.



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Case study

Physical mail drives both loyalty and acquisition

Krown Rust keeps its customer base engaged with direct mail – it's the company's number one marketing tool. "By mailing our customers an annual reminder letter to come in for their Krown treatment, our locations average close to 80% return business every year," says Shuttleworth. "If we don't mail them a reminder, our customer return rate is impacted dramatically. Nothing works as well for us as mail."

When the company reopened to individual customers, it launched a Personalized Mail™ campaign reminding people to book their annual treatment. That communication triggered record-breaking action. "We blew the doors off in terms of sales. 2020 was by far our best year ever in business." At the end of the year, sales were up about 15% over 2019; 2021 is on track to surpass 2020.

And in the spring of 2021, Krown wanted to thank existing customers and also inform potential new customers about its service.

To accomplish both, the company launched a Neighbourhood Mail™ campaign offering \$25 off a rust protection treatment and almost \$75 in additional free products and services. "We've done Neighbourhood Mail many, many times," says Shuttleworth. "In many markets it generates a tremendous response."

Exceptional results in exceptional times

Krown mailed 1.5 million postcards in Eastern Ontario, the Maritimes and Quebec. Each postcard had a promo code so Krown could track redemptions, of which there were over 40,000. "That's a 2.6% return, which is outstanding in our industry," says Shuttleworth.



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Marketing Director, Krown Rust

Nearly 27% of campaign redemptions came from people who had never been to a Krown Rust Protection location in the past. The other 73% were returning customers. Since Krown does about two thirds of its business between September and November, the campaign had another benefit: those new customers will be due for annual treatments every spring. That means the company will increase sales during down times and free up space during busy times.

"We've had such success with this program," says Shuttleworth. "A few of our store owners have tried e-mail in the past but it just didn't have the same results."

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