



CASE STUDY

Vitality Health Foods

Healthy alternatives



Vitality Health Foods looked to boost in-store sales by supplementing its traditional direct mail flyer with unique new creative.

Increasing possibilities

Founded in 1993, Vitality Health Foods has grown from a single store in Edmonton, Alberta, into a chain of 20-plus stores in the capital city and surrounding area. The vitamin, supplement, and health food retailer prides itself on not only an intimate knowledge of its products, but also an ability to use its buying power to offer the most affordable price.

Those are important qualities for the company to stand out in a crowded marketplace filled with superstores, smaller chains and online-only outlets.

While seniors comprise the largest part of the segment's customer base, there has been increased interest from younger consumers in recent years. In Canada, the vitamin, mineral and health supplements industry has grown

substantially, topping more than \$4 billion dollars annually last year.

Supplementing the marketing mix

Vitality Health is a brick-and-mortar-only operation. There are no online sales, as the company's website is currently only used to promote store locations and provide a PDF copy of the current sale flyer. While the company plans to add online sales in the future, those plans are still taking shape.

The lack of ecommerce puts tremendous pressure on the company's marketing mix of direct mail, radio and print ads to deliver customers into store locations – a task that largely falls to an eight-page flyer printed on newsprint with creative crammed full of product photos and details.

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Recently, however, the company noticed response rates to the flyer were declining.

Now, facing increasing online competition, as well as still feeling post-pandemic impact on foot traffic, Vitality Health needed a new way to entice customers into stores.

Thinking bigger with creative

Vitality Health needed to stand out in mailboxes.

To do so, they opted for a new approach to their direct mail creative. Instead of the usual eight-page flyer, they designed an oversized postcard (10 inches X 11 inches) printed on high-quality paper. In addition to a new size, the postcard featured refreshed creative, showcasing fewer products, a special offer and a QR code driving to the company website for more information and store locations carrying the product they wanted.

“This was a huge departure for us. But we needed something different, something people would notice,” said Zul Bharwani, Owner, Vitality Health Foods.

Using Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail™, the company tested the new creative by conducting two drops: one featuring the oversized postcard in August and September 2021, a second featuring the eight-page flyer in October and November 2021. Both drops targeted areas within a 2 km radius of store locations.

The company was eager to see if the new creative resulted in healthy growth over the eight-page flyer used the previous year.

Growing stronger every year

Vitality Health was thrilled with the unexpected results.

The oversized postcard resulted in 18% year-over-year growth in sales – double the growth of the eight-page flyer (9%). The QR code also generated new traffic to the website.

“The customers like it. But we haven’t even caught up yet to what the QR code can do for us. As our website develops, we will, too,” Bharwani said.

While seniors responded best to the flyer format, Bharwani said younger customers were drawn to the refreshed creative. He plans to continue mixing the new design into future campaigns.

“

This is a motivational business. You have to energize people and get them into stores. Canada Post gets to everyone, everywhere we want – it puts the flyer in people’s hands. It has been a godsend for us.”

Zul Bharwani

Owner, Vitality Health Foods

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