

BULK CAT LITTER WAREHOUSE

CASE STUDY

DIRECT MAIL

For a company who sells cat litter, most marketers would advertise to an audience of cat owners. Bulk Cat Litter Warehouse went one step further and directly targeted cats. How? By spraying catnip over the mail.

Promoting a product as seemingly utilitarian as cat litter on a tight budget was the challenge facing Bulk Cat Litter Warehouse. Canadian ad agency Rethink Canada was tasked with creating a small-scale direct mail campaign that would be highly engaging to its target audience. Instead of focusing on cat owners they opted to appeal directly to the cats. The mail was sprayed in concentrated catnip so that the cat of the house would immediately take notice and start fondling the flyer as soon as it came through the door.

“We think that DM is still a viable option for a lot of small businesses—especially if it’s creative enough not to be thrown in the junk mail pile”

Mary Lunny, Account Manager at Rethink Canada

OBJECTIVE

Bulk Cat Litter Warehouse wanted to increase sales with a direct mail campaign that targeted homes with a cat within driving range of their store.

METHODOLOGY

The catnip sprayed cards were illustrated with cute cat cartoons and ‘to-the-point’ copy. This was a targeted campaign using a database of 500 homes with cats within the specified driving radius of the store. Once the flyer was delivered, it was down to the cats to do the rest.

However, the relatively small direct mail campaign did not limit brand exposure to just the 500 recipients of the flyer. As part of the campaign, Rethink Canada also created a video showing audiences how the cards were created and the amusing consequences it had when exposed to the cats. This ensured the campaign’s reach surpassed the initial 500 mailings in style.





“Cats went nuts for it... and so did their owners!”

Rethink Canada

RESULTS

When the cats started to respond to the flyers, so did their owners. They were by far the most effective direct marketing ever completed by Bulk Cat Litter Warehouse. There was a huge spike in both customer counts and sales, with many people mentioning that they came in specifically because of the flyers.

“Traffic to the store has increased with lots of people even coming in with the catnip DM in hand”

Mary Lunny, Account Manager at Rethink Canada



CONCLUSION

Triggering multiple senses increase the effectiveness of advertisements, mailings and brochures. Martin Lindstrom (2010) explored this idea with his Brand Sense research. He concluded that when triggering more than two senses the effectiveness of the advertisement would increase by 30%.

Mail is the only advertising medium that appeals to all five senses, including smell and using this distinguishable feature has been employed to great effect by the perfume industry for years. The genius of this particular campaign is that the primary target were the cats and using smells that appealed to them and not their owners.

The human brain is hardwired so that direct mail's physicality has an advantage over other channels when it comes to impact, retention and response. The more senses that are engaged, the more attention the brain pays and the more emotional weight it assigns to the brand.

With printed material comes incredible scope for creativity, meaning that you can deliver your message to your audience in a way that will get noticed.