

Barbies Restaurants

Direct mail with geo-targeting helps increase traffic



Campaign only available in French

Barbies Restaurants use targeted direct mail to grow its business and to entice new customers.

Background

When Spyros Christopoulos and partners Ahmad Keramudin and Marc-André Dayan opened their first Barbies Restaurant in Dorval, Que. in 1992, they embraced a world of possibilities. Then they put their heads down and went to work.

From the outset, the eatery offered great value on grilled food made from fresh ingredients at an affordable price. These ingredients, and a welcoming family environment, turned out to be a recipe for success. The Barbies experience struck a chord with people immediately. Loyal customers spread the word and the brand grew, and grew, and grew.

Today, there are 13 Barbies in the greater Montréal area and one in Gatineau, Que., near the nation's capital. Barbies opened its newest outlet in Sainte-Julie this spring – and the company plans to continue to expand.

Advertising that 'feels like home'

While Barbies uses billboards, television and radio to advertise, direct mail advertising has always been a staple of its marketing programs. Christopoulos is a longtime believer in physical mail because it triggers sales.

"I built my life on direct mail," he says. "It's a first-class way to communicate with people. It's tangible. You can touch it. You can see it." More than that, it is local.

"When a flyer arrives, it feels like home" because the message is from businesses in your neighbourhood, Christopoulos says.

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Case study

Competing for traffic in a crowded market

By the end of June 2019, the Canadian Food Service industry had reported sales of \$61 billion over the previous 12 months, an increase of 4%, compared to the same period in 2018.¹

But the competition is fierce and the market crowded. Since 2010, more than 5,000 new quick-service restaurants entered the Canadian market, a growth rate of more than 25%;² and visits to individual stores have been declining, according to Restaurants Canada.

“The secret to success,” says Christopoulos, “is traffic.”

Barbies turns to trusted partner

In 2019, Barbies partnered with Canada Post on a 100,000-piece fall Neighbourhood Mail™ mailing that used two Barbies outlets as its focal point, then a larger 1-million piece winter campaign involving all of its stores. The goal: Increase traffic, strengthen the brand and grow the business.

Both campaigns sent 2-for-1 coupon offers. Additional coupons targeted single diners, so no one was missed.

Barbies also leveraged Canada Post postal code data to target customers geographically. Results showed strong value offer and geo-targeting can help even small businesses expand into new markets, leverage customer data, optimize targeting and maximize acquisitions.

Campaign delivers one-two punch

The redemption rate for the fall campaign was about 3%, double what Barbies had achieved in previous promotions. The larger winter mailing, which kicked off Jan. 1, 2020 and was to last through the end of March, had a redemption rate of 2.3% – though the campaign was affected for two weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, the campaigns increased traffic to Barbies by between 4% and 5%, which left Christopoulos “very satisfied.”

“Direct mail, no matter how we look at it, will be part of what we do,” says Christopoulos.

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Spyros Christopoulos

Co-owner and co-founder, Barbies Restaurants

1. The NPD Group/ReCount® 2018

2. BrandonGaille Small Business and Marketing Advice, *20 Canadian Fast Food Industry Statistics and Trends*, <https://brandongaille.com/20-canadian-fast-food-industry-statistics-and-trends/>



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