

A black and white photograph of a woman with long, wavy hair, looking down at a laptop. The image is overlaid with several thin, red, intersecting lines that form a geometric pattern. The text 'POSTAL CODE TARGETING' is centered in the middle of the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

POSTAL CODE TARGETING

TODAY, INNOVAPOST HELPED CANADA POST CONNECT BUSINESSES WITH THEIR MOST RECEPTIVE AUDIENCES

Delivering Postal Code Targeting to Canadian Businesses.



While today's marketers have access to more advertising channels than ever before, many find it difficult to cut through the noise. Digital advertising can put businesses in front of millions of potential customers, but catching their attention and speaking to them directly is another story.

To help businesses advertise directly to their ideal prospects, Canada Post recently launched an exciting new addition to its Smartmail Marketing family: Postal Code Targeting (PCT).

"Postal Code Targeting lets companies target postal codes that exhibit the demographic characteristics of their best customers," says Dominique Sutherland, Commercial Mail Product Innovation, Canada Post. "Businesses can know a lot about a person by knowing their postal code. And with Postal Code Targeting, they can reach out to the people who have the needs, wants, and attributes they are looking for and connect with them in a meaningful way."

To develop and implement this new service, Canada Post called on Innovapost, the Information Technology Shared Services provider for the Canada Post Group of Companies.

UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Postal Code Targeting would be the first major new commercial mail product for Canada Post in nearly two decades, so the stakes were high. Not only would PCT play an important role in Canada Post's strategic vision, it would require an innovative combination of technology and business knowledge.

"We wanted to give companies the ability to create standard machineable mail items, like postcards and envelopes, on which Canada Post could print unique 2D barcodes," explains Sutherland. "During processing, Canada Post's automated equipment would spray an address found

within the 2D barcode on the item, and then sequence the item for delivery. To speed operations and reduce costs, all of this needed to be done automatically."

As part of the Canada Post Smartmail Marketing™ suite, Postal Code Targeting would offer a unique solution that was more broad than Personalized Mail™, which reaches a single individual, but more targeted than Neighbourhood Mail™, which targets entire neighbourhoods.

"First, we went to market with a beta solution," explains Janet Brearton, General Manager, Commercial Mail, Canada Post. "We were interested in learning whether this was a product that would meet a real need. We kept that beta solution in place for almost a year and a half to understand what worked best for customers and our operational teams. Then, we worked with Innovapost to fully commercialize Postal Code Targeting and launch it to customers."

“ Better targeting through PCT means a better return on investment for our customers and new revenue for Canada Post. ”

Dominique Sutherland,
Commercial Mail Product
Innovation at Canada Post.

Teams from Canada Post and Innovapost worked closely to develop and deploy a viable Postal Code Targeting solution on time and on budget under extremely tight timelines. In total, nearly 200 people across both organizations were involved in bringing PCT from prototype to pilot to fully-supported commercial mail product offering.

“The project team focused on a common goal and worked as a true team, adopting an ‘in this together’ attitude,” says John Abraham, VP Application Development at Innovapost. “There was no reference to client or vendor – only to team and partner. When faced with challenges under aggressive timelines, the team dug in, communicated openly, and thought creatively.”

Moving from prototype to launch in less than a year, the project required a strict focus on only the most critical deliverables. “We had a very tight deadline and worked hard to keep the minimal viable product in everyone’s mind and avoid scope creep,” says Donna Kettles, Director, Application Development at Innovapost. “There were also several applications impacted by this project—from ordering systems to shipping, billing, and invoicing—that we had to consider.”

HELPING CANADIAN BUSINESSES

Now publicly available, Postal Code Targeting is being promoted as a key component of Canada Post’s Smartmail Marketing suite and is being used by businesses across the country. With the tool, Canadian companies can:

- Expand into new markets by identifying the postal codes that match the profile of their ideal prospects.

- Leverage their customer data by targeting the “look-alike” audiences most likely to respond to their marketing message.
- Optimize their targeting by layering Canada Post geographic, demographic, and lifestyle insights onto the postal code data.
- Maximize their acquisition efforts by targeting new audiences and skipping existing customers with mailings.

“Better targeting through PCT means a better return on investment for our customers and new revenue for Canada Post,” says Sutherland. “By reaching out to the postal codes of customers who are most likely to respond to their offer, they will see better response rates, acquire more customers, and want to invest more in physical mail.”

Postal Code Targeting will also continue to evolve. “We’re now using real-world feedback to expand and improve PCT,” explains Pierre Perras, Solution Lead, Innovapost. “We delivered a tightly-focused product and have the ability to add only the features that customers are asking for. We don’t have to guess what users want, or implement something that may have seemed important two years ago but is not actually needed.”

WORKING TOGETHER

In addition to developing a valuable service for Canadians and creating a new source of revenue for the Canada Post Group of Companies, the project highlighted the benefits of Innovapost/Canada Post collaboration.

“One of the biggest internal takeaways was how successful this approach can be,” notes Brearton. “This cross-functional team truly embraced the business objective, understood the audacious goal we were looking to achieve, and worked together to realize it.”

In early 2017, leaders from Canada Post travelled to Innovapost to personally thank members of the team for their efforts and present awards to the project team.

“Around the table I kept hearing people

say: ‘That was fantastic! When’s the next project?’,” said Brearton. “Folks shared that they were excited to work on such an impactful initiative, and said that they’re eager to do it again. That energy for innovation at Innovapost, combined with outstanding collaboration, is what will enable us to continue taking such innovative steps forward.”

Learn more about Postal Code Targeting on the Canada Post website: www.canadapost.ca/postalcodetargeting

Contact us at info@innovapost.com

Head Office

365 March Road
Ottawa, Ontario K2K 3N5
T 613-270-6262
F 613-270-6525



www.innovapost.com

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