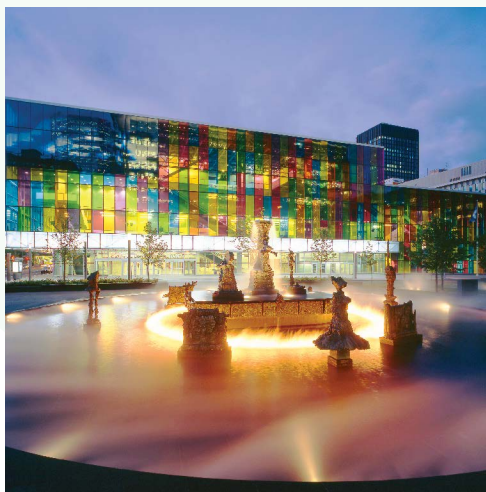


ICCA 2013 Entry Application Form

The Palais des congrès de Montréal: “At the Centre of Everything” Direct Mail Campaign



What were the marketing challenges being addressed?

Many Europe-based associations are less familiar with Montréal than they are with many European and U.S. cities. Therefore, in order to inform international clients about the destination and make them more susceptible to consider Montréal as a host city for their events, the Palais des congrès de Montréal wanted to build awareness about Montréal and its many advantages.

The goal was to position Montréal as a world-class destination for meetings and conventions, and position the Palais des congrès de Montréal as an industry leader.

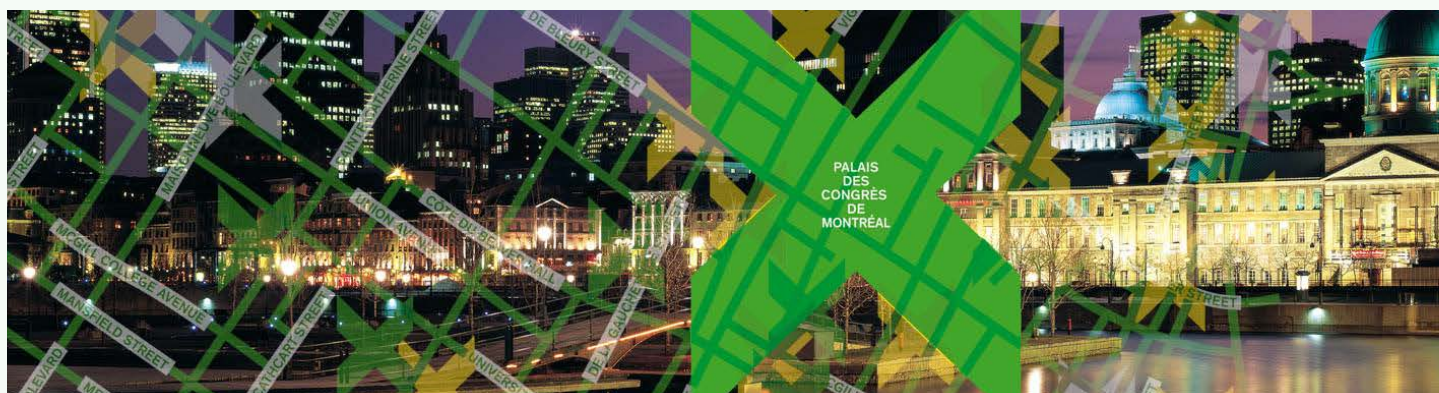
More specifically, the Palais des congrès had two objectives in deploying this direct mail campaign:

- 1) Inform its international clients about the layout of the city, the location of the Palais and its proximity to attractions and amenities;
- 2) Demonstrate Montréal's signature creativity and originality, and present the Palais' unique selling proposition.

The strategy was to take advantage of the Palais team's presence at the EIBTM show in November 2012 to reach out to a targeted list of international clients and invite them to visit their booth during this major annual show in Barcelona, Spain. To achieve the objectives of the campaign, the creative had to be original, easy to personalize and it had to clearly communicate the advantages of choosing Montréal and the Palais des congrès.

What is innovative and creative about the campaign/project; what lessons can other ICCA members learn from your ideas?

The innovative approach and creativity of this campaign was evident in the strong, iconic visual design and the high degree of personalization applied. The key learning from this campaign was that a single, central message applied in a highly targeted way could provide a significant return on investment for the fraction of the cost of a traditional advertising campaign.



HOTEL

WITHIN WALKING
DISTANCE OF 15,000
OF THE 26,500 CITY'S
HOTEL ROOMS



Concept:

At the Centre of Everything

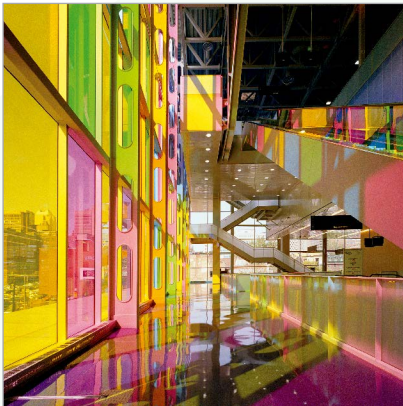
As the concept was developed, it was decided to build the campaign around one key concept:

PROXIMITY

The design and execution had to express this idea of “proximity” on multiple levels:

- Easy access to the destination: Montréal is easy for international travellers to access and is in close proximity to a large pool of potential attendees from the U.S. and the rest of Canada.
- Walkable, compact downtown core: Montréal is easy to get around on foot, by car or using public transit, putting a wide variety of gastronomic, entertainment and cultural experiences in close proximity to the Palais and most accommodations.
- Central location of the Palais: The Palais des congrès de Montréal is located in the heart of downtown Montréal, in close proximity to a vast array of amenities and attractions, from the hip and happening downtown sector to the historical atmosphere of Old Montréal and more.
- Close ties with key economic sectors: With its thriving health sciences, technology, academic, research and creative sectors, Montréal makes it easy for international associations to forge close ties with local communities in their field of activity. These close ties facilitate the planning and hosting of meetings and conventions in Montréal for Europe-based associations.
- Personalized, one-on-one service: The Palais team works closely with its clients to offer top-quality professional services, acting as a partner in their clients' success.

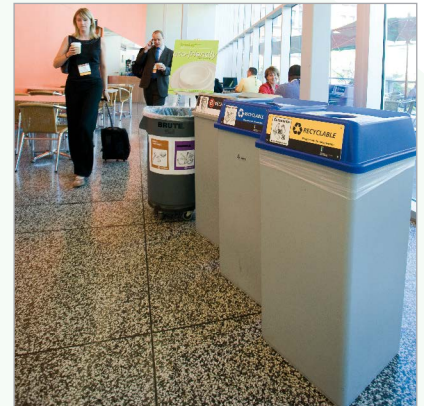
The campaign also had to reflect the Palais' unique selling proposition (USP) and values:



Flexible spaces and ultra-modern facilities



High-quality services tailored to clients' needs



A commitment to sustainable development with a range of green meetings options

The marketing-communications team, working with its agency, Paprika, therefore created a direct mail campaign that would be complemented with ad placements and e-mail communications. The campaign was deployed intensively starting in October 2012.

Visual design

The core of the design was a stylized map showing the streets of Montréal with a green “X” to indicate the location of the Palais in the heart of the city. The “X” design was integral to the concept as it communicated the idea of convergence, of many elements coming together at one location, both geographically and conceptually.





Personalization

The goal of the campaign was to personalize the mailings according to the targeted client's sector of activity; therefore a great deal of time was invested in the planning stage to ensure intelligent choices. The marketing-communications team worked closely with the sales team to hand-pick the accounts that would receive the direct mail piece. Health and sciences emerged quickly as sectors to target; but much dialogue and reflection went into grouping the remaining sectors. It was decided that "knowledge" was the unifying concept to address associations in the fields of education, social sciences and politics. For clients outside of these sectors, "creativity" was chosen as the common interest these associations shared.

A series of seven small booklets was produced on specific themes: the Palais, the destination, proximity, and themes according to economic sectors (health and life sciences, knowledge, creativity, science and engineering).

Each booklet used bold text, images and graphics to provide information on an aspect of the city or the convention centre. Each mailing included four of the seven booklets: All clients received the Palais, the destination and proximity booklets, while the fourth booklet varied according to the client's field of activity.



The four booklets were placed on the map, their covers forming a green "X" to mark the spot of the Palais on the map, showing how it is indeed "At the Centre of Everything". The map then folded around the booklets like an origami puzzle game to form the containing envelope. This kept packaging to a minimum. All materials were 100% recyclable.

Notebooks with stunning images and "fast facts" about Montréal were also produced to give to clients on-site at EIBTM. One batch was personalized for priority accounts the Palais team knew would be attending EIBTM; another batch was left blank as giveaways.



The bold green “X” was used in all creative for the campaign: the direct mail piece, the print ads, the e-mail communications, the backlit booth at EIBTM and the follow-up letters. A custom URL was also used for the campaign (<http://congresmtl.com/centre>) which loaded the International Congress page with the campaign map grid and “X” design overlaid across the cover image of the Web page.

Montréal's unique blend of cutting-edge creativity and savvy business smarts sets the stage for great exchanges of ideas and knowledge. At the Palais des congrès de Montréal, the city's convention centre, we are constantly raising the bar to offer our clients personalized services and innovative solutions in signature Montréal style. Come see us to discover our new ultramodern technological environment, our green meeting options and our superb gastronomical menu.

We can help make your next meeting in Montréal the most successful and memorable ever.



Direct mail piece

**Number one
host city in
the Americas
for international
events in 2011**

— Union of International
Associations, 2011

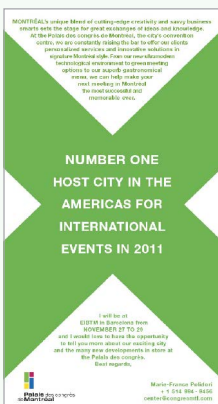


Backlit booth at EIBTM

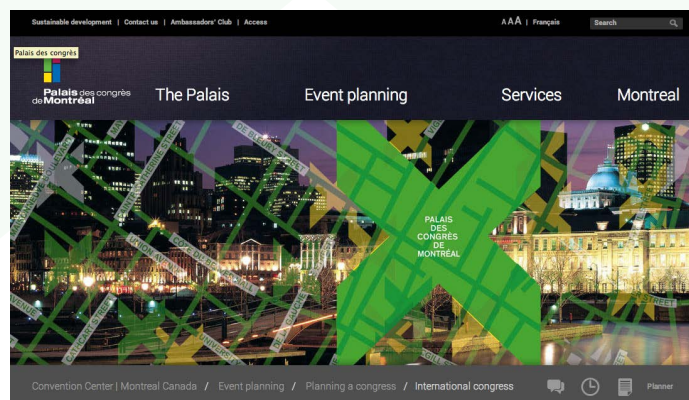


Print ads

For additional impact, the advertising placement in EIBTM had two components: a round sticker on the cover page inviting readers to view the content on pages 8 and 9, and the double-page spread itself, featuring the “X” design boldly displayed on the right-hand panel.



E-mail communications



International Congress page with the campaign map grid and “X” design overlaid across the cover image of the Web page.



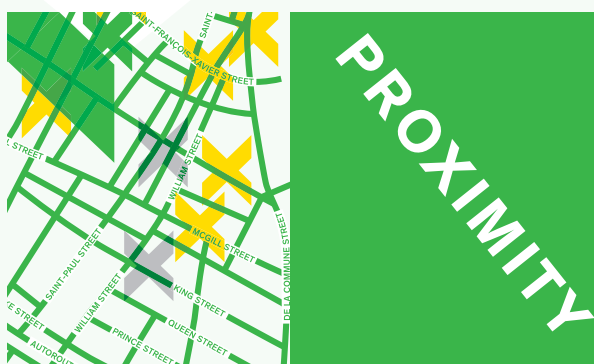
How was the campaign/project undertaken - demonstrate the professionalism involved by setting out all the key steps.

Because of limited time and budgets and the high degree of personalization required to deploy the concept, each step of the planning process was critical in the success of the campaign.

Identifying the target clientele

The Palais des congrès de Montréal's "At the Centre of Everything" direct mail campaign targeted 350 potential clients in international associations based in Europe. These clients were hand-picked by the sales and marketing teams based on their potential to choose Montréal, their conference rotation schedules and their next open years.

A great deal of painstaking effort was focused on database analysis and the choice of clients' sectors of activity. This was a complex strategy in that it was impossible to create content specific to every single client's sector of activity, yet it was important to create a pertinent message for each client targeted. Intelligent choices and combinations were the building blocks for creating a successful strategy. A total of 80% of the targeted accounts in the science and engineering, knowledge, and health and life sciences sectors received a highly customized message. The remaining 20% received a booklet showcasing Montréal's signature creativity, rather than an industry-specific message.



Complementary advertising support

The complementary advertising placements in the EIBTM Dailies, MeeT and TRaVeL MaG and Convention Source reached an additional 58,200 readers before and during the show. For additional impact, the advertising placement in EIBTM had two components: a round sticker on the cover page inviting readers to view the content on pages 8 and 9, and the double-page spread itself, featuring the "X" design boldly displayed on the right-hand panel.

Carefully timed deployment

Timing was a key to the success of the campaign; if the mailing went out to clients too early, it risked being diluted by the abundance of communications that clients receive before EIBTM. If sent to late, it risked arriving after clients departed for Barcelona.

Therefore, the campaign was deployed in a series of carefully timed phases:

- Early October: Production of all creative elements
- Late October: Mailing of the direct mail piece and delivery of print ads for the EIBTM Dailies, MeeT and TRaVeL MaG and Convention Source
- Early November: E-mail blasts from sales representatives to clients inviting them to visit the booth during EIBTM. The personalized and blank notebooks were also shipped to Barcelona in early November. Here, an unexpected development came into play: the notebook shipment was held at customs and was not released in time for EIBTM. The sales and marketing teams had to re-acquire the shipment and arrange for the notebooks to be shipped individually to clients after the event with personalized letters to say thank you, or "sorry we missed you".
- December: Post-event correspondence included e-mails and the notebooks mailed to EIBTM clients. The adaptation of the campaign for PCMA Convening Leaders in January was also deployed in December.

It is also important to note that, because each mailing was personalized according to the client's sector of activity, a great deal of hands-on manipulation to assemble the pieces for shipping was required. The execution of the campaign necessitated great attention to detail and a personalized approach.



Building on the Success of the Campaign

Positive reactions to the campaign from clients and peers and the strength of the creative approach inspired the Palais to adapt the campaign for its U.S. clientele in a second phase. The marketing-communications team and sales teams worked together to adjust the piece to address the specific interests and concerns of U.S. clients when considering a host city.

Approximately 100 potential U.S. clients were targeted to receive the “At the Centre of Everything” direct mail piece. The U.S. version of the campaign rolled out in two parts: the direct mail piece was sent in December 2012 before the PCMA Convening Leaders conference; then notebooks with personalized letters were shipped in January 2013, just after the conference.

Seizing the opportunity to adapt the strategy for the U.S. market made efficient use of the budgets allocated for the original campaign, resulting in significant cost savings for the Palais.

Set out detailed objectives/targets and explain how well these were met, covering both financial and non-financial issues.

The objective was to build awareness and recall for the destination and the convention centre on the international association market with a limited budget and less than three months from concept to deployment. The total investment of \$61,225 CAD (approximately €45 850, or £39 200) for the international direct mail campaign (including media) was a modest investment for a project of this scope and personalization.

The feedback received from clients at EIBTM was overwhelming positive. Clients appreciated the originality of the design, the clarity of the information conveyed and the practicality of the approach. Many clients contacted their sales representatives by e-mail after the shows to compliment them on a job well done, which is unusual; it is rare that clients take the time to thank a marketer for a direct mail piece. One client, for example, wrote to say how much she appreciated the campaign, calling it, “creative and fun and practical, too”.

While a direct correlation cannot be established between the campaign and specific sales, the fact that the Palais des congrès de Montréal attained its 2012-2013 sales objectives, coupled with anecdotal feedback received from clients, points to the success of the campaign.

