

# A NATIVE AD CAMPAIGN by POSTMEDIA

## Alive 375 Montreal Gazette Native Campaign

#### **Table of contents**

- 3 Postmedia Content Works: Who we are
- 4 Campaign summary
- 5 Campaign objectives
- 6 Flight 1: Hivernales (Jan. 7 to Feb. 11)
- 7 Flight 1: About the Hivernales coverage
- 8 Flight 1: Performance review
- 9 Flight 2: City of Design (April 11 to 28)
- 10 Flight 2: About City of Design
- 11 Flight 2: Performance review
- 12 Flight 3: Neighbourhood Maps (May 6 to Sept. 9)
- 13 Flight 3: About the Neighbourhood Maps
- 14 Flight 3: Links to Neighbourhood Maps
- 15 Flight 3: Performance review
- 18 Client feedback on the overall campaign
- 19 Our takeaways







#### **Postmedia Content Works: Who we are**





Postmedia Network Inc. is a Canadian newsmedia company representing more than 200 brands across multiple print, online, and mobile platforms. Award-winning journalists and innovative product development teams bring engaging content to millions of people every week whenever and wherever they want it. This exceptional content, reach and scope offers advertisers and marketers compelling solutions to effectively reach target audiences.

Content Works is Postmedia's commercial content division. It produces award-winning content solutions for advertisers across all of Postmedia's brands, and for each of its platforms. Content Works solutions include native advertising in the form of articles, videos, infographics, social media posts, and more.

Representing Postmedia Content Works for the Alive 375 campaign with the Montreal Gazette are:

Olivia Collette, Senior Producer

Manon Landry, Key Account Executive

Edwin Biroun, Media Strategist



#### **Campaign summary**



As the City of Montreal geared up to celebrate its 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary with activities, events and festivals throughout 2017, the Montreal Gazette pitched and executed a year-long native campaign that supported the 375<sup>th</sup> from many different angles.



The native campaign was split into three flights:

- Les Hivernales (four native articles about some of the winter activities planned for the celebrations; with two videos)
- **City of Design** (four native articles on design-related topics and events occurring during the anniversary year; with two videos)
- Neighbourhood Maps (a 19-part series coinciding with the 375<sup>th</sup>'s neighbourhood tours)

Meantime, a special hub was created on the Montreal Gazette's website. The hub, called "MTL 375<sup>th</sup>," hosted not only the native content, but also any editorial articles reporting on the numerous events and celebrations lined up for the 375<sup>th</sup>. In addition, historical articles mined from the Montreal Gazette's archives were published on the hub every day for the whole year. This kept the hub populated with content linked to the 375<sup>th</sup>.

The Neighbourhood Maps were our top-performing initiative, exceeding our own benchmarks. On top of doing well in terms of our metrics, user engagement was quite high on Facebook, with hundreds of shares, comments and positive reactions.



#### **Campaign objectives**



The Society of the Celebrations of Montreal's 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary's **Alive 375 project** had several objectives, namely:



- To build a sense of pride and belonging among locals
- To boost the city's international profile
- · To increase tourism
- To create an impact beyond 2017 and leave a lasting legacy

For the Society, the purpose of their partnership with media, like the Montreal Gazette, was to promote all Alive 375 activities, events and celebrations.

The Montreal Gazette's primary goal was to deliver traffic – both to their website and to their events – through a fully integrated content and ad strategy.

## Flight 1: Hivernales (Jan. 7 to Feb. 11)





January 7

FIVE REASONS TO GET OFF THE COUCH FOR BARBEGAZI les hivernales

January 21



January 28



February 11





## Flight 1: About the Hivernales coverage

This flight included four native articles about some of the winter activities planned for the celebrations. Two of the articles included videos.





Because some of the activities had actually occurred in previous years (e.g. Igloofest, Montréal en Lumière) we advised the client to use these native articles to focus on new events, premiering during the 375<sup>th</sup>.

While they agreed to go this route for the most part, they were also worried about not promoting their full lineup. So we used one of the videos they booked to do that job. In this video, we asked organizers for each of the key events to tell us which activities they were looking forward to, other than their own. This resulted in a dynamic video that provided our audience with a solid roundup of the Hivernales schedule.

For the second video, we shadowed participants in the ice canoe race as they trained on a cold January morning for the upcoming event. The video gives us a fascinating look at the athleticism behind this unique race.

Here are links to each of the stories:

Story 1: Five reasons to get off the couch for Barbegazi

Story 2: Hivernales invites players and fans to Classique Montréalaise pond hockey tournament (with the video roundup)

Story 3: Snowmobiles to take flight over Ste-Catherine St.

Story 4: Five reasons to try being a Polar Hero (with the video on the ice canoe race)



## Flight 1: Performance review



## alive∰375

#### **Content Metrics (Four stories)**

- Total Page Views 10,962
- Total Unique Visitors 8,694
- Avg. Time Spent On Pages **3:05m**

#### **Notes**

To put the odds in this campaign's favour, each article was paired with a digital strategy that included visibility on the Montreal Gazette's web pages; "co-brand" ads, which promoted the 375 stories specifically on the Montreal Gazette website; as well as social media posts on Facebook and Twitter.

These activities allowed us to gather performance data like a click-through rate (CTR; measures clicks divided by impressions times 100, to get a percentage), and an engagement rate (measures clicks divided by social impressions on Facebook and Twitter, times 100 to get a percentage). Industry benchmarks calculate that a decent CTR should be at 0.41% while a good engagement rate is at 1.28%.

With the Hivernales series, we achieved a CTR of 0.40%, and an engagement rate of 2.01%. In other words, the first flight did quite well, and on the engagement front, surpassed our own benchmarks.

#### Flight 2: City of Design (April 11 to 28)





April 11



April 15 (video)



April 21 (video)



April 28





## Flight 2: About City of Design

Design is integral to the city's identity. Montreal is often perceived – both on the outside and from within – as a hub of creativity, and in all the major creative fields. Whether it's fashion design, architecture, filmmaking, music, graphics, advertising or video games, Montreal's at the forefront of it, and it makes Montrealers very proud.





So for the second flight, we wanted to talk about unique 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities that were in line with Montreal's creative identity. That's why we talked about an orchestral performance of video game music; the launch of Hub Montreal, a conference for people in a variety of creative fields; the lighting design of the Jacques-Cartier bridge; and a look at architect Moshe Safdie's iconic Habitat 67, 50 years after it was built.

Two videos were produced for this flight; one for Hub Montreal, and the other on the lighting of the Jacques-Cartier bridge. Both offered a glance into some of the city's foremost creative minds, and what it's like to play there.

Here are links to each of the stories:

The Montreal Video Game Symphony hopes to wow music lovers and gamers alike

Hub Montreal will allow creative industries to converge, converse, and play (with video)

The Jacques-Cartier Bridge's lighting design will turn it into an interactive public space (with video)

Architect Moshe Safdie looks back, and ahead, at the meaning of Habitat 67



## Flight 2: Performance review



## alive 375

#### **Content Metrics (Four stories)**

- Total Page Views 17,994
- Total Unique Visitors **15,483**
- Avg. Time Spent On Pages 3:12m

#### **Notes**

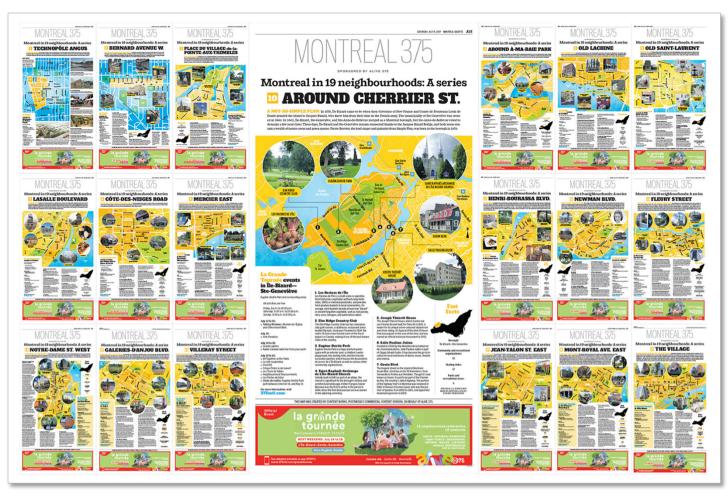
As with the Hivernales series, City of Design had a fully integrated campaign, complete with visibility on the Montreal Gazette's website, co-brands and amplification on social media. While the page views, unique views and time spent suggest these stories resonated with people, the most astounding piece of data is no doubt the engagement rate of 3.22%, which is more than double our benchmark. This indicates that readers interacted with these stories actively on social media.

So we're very pleased with the way this flight performed. It tells us that we tapped into something that's important to Montrealers.

## Flight 3: Neighbourhood Maps (May 6 - Sept. 9)







## Flight 3: About the Neighbourhood Maps

When we pitched this campaign, we knew that one of the activities lined up for the 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was a series of neighbourhood tours.





Called "La Grande Tournée," the tours were designed to encourage Montrealers to discover the island's neighbourhoods. Hosted over the period of 19 weeks from May to September, one tour took place in each of the city's 19 boroughs.

With this in mind, we felt that the best way to draw readers to these areas was to illustrate them in map form, and to highlight certain key sites in each neighbourhood.

Because the tours consisted of a lot of activities in or around a specific park in each of the neighbourhoods, we also felt it was important to draw people into that micro-zone, if you will. So when we highlighted certain sites, we tried to make sure they were around the given park. This means that the Verdun map, for example, focused on sites around Lasalle Blvd. since the neighbourhood tour events would be happening in a park on that street.

In selecting the key sites, we tried to zero in on green spaces (often the park where the tours took place), public places (libraries, etc.), historic sites, a couple of well-known businesses and a couple of lesser-known businesses. This is because we wanted people to see the neighbourhood as a dynamic environment, bringing all these diverging elements together.

In our introductions, we gave readers a round-up of that area, its history and its significance.

We felt that this simple approach is ultimately what helped us connect with readers, who often learned a thing or two about these areas they love so much.



#### Flight 3: Links to Neighbourhood Maps

Map 1: Technopôle Angus

Map 2: Bernard Ave. West

Map 3: Place du Village-de-la-Pointe-aux-Trembles

Map 4: À-Ma-Baie Park

Map 5: Old Lachine

Map 6: Old Saint-Laurent

Map 7: Lasalle Blvd.

Map 8: Côte-des-Neiges Road

Map 9: Mercier East

Map 10: Île-Bizard's Cherrier St.

Map 11: Henri-Bourassa Blvd.

Map 12: Newman Blvd.

Map 13: Fleury St.

Map 14: Notre-Dame St. West

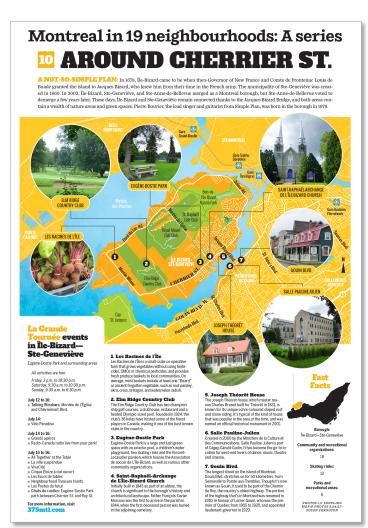
Map 15: Galerie d'Anjou Blvd.

Map 16: Villeray St.

Map 17: Jean-Talon St. East

Map 18: Mont-Royale Ave. East

Map 19: The Village







## Flight 3: Performance review

#### **Content Metrics (19 maps)**

- Total Page Views 110,301
- Total Unique Visitors 88,808
- Avg. Time Spent On Pages 2:31m







#### **Notes**

It's no secret that the Neighbourhood Maps are the darling of the campaign. Not only did we produce beautiful visuals for this flight, but it performed incredibly well. You can see from the above page views that we exceeded not just our expectations, but industry standards as well. The CTR for this series was 0.65%, and the engagement rate was a whopping 4.14%.

But we had other indicators that told us this series was doing especially great; namely, the audience.

On Facebook in particular, the maps exploded, with shares, reactions and comments that eclipsed editorial stories running during this time.

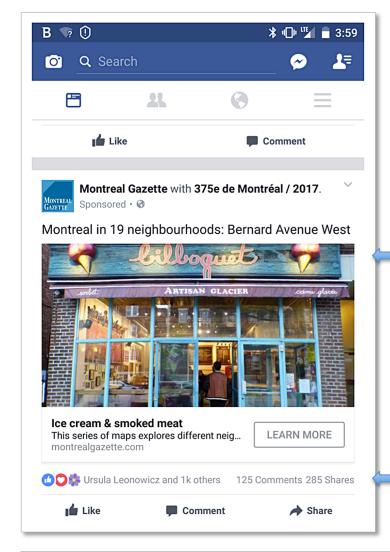
What's more, we frequently received requests from readers who wanted either print copies or PDFs, since they were collecting the maps. Readers also emailed us to ask for links to these maps.

When we reflected on why people responded so well to the maps, it quickly became clear that it was because people have a personal attachment to neighbourhoods, either because they live there, grew up there, or have a friend or loved one who calls that place home. The comments on Facebook confirmed this, and demonstrated that this series touched people right in the heart places!



## Flight 3: Performance review continued

#### Screen capture of weeks 2 map









This screen capture was less than one week after the map was first published.

Note that it has over 1,000 reactions, 125 comments, and 285 shares.



## Flight 3: Performance review continued

#### Screen capture of weeks 3 and 4 maps









We're bringing these up because they demonstrate that even with relatively unpopular or suburban neighbourhoods, like way-out-east Pointe-aux-Trembles or recently flooded Pierrefonds (they were still rebuilding from the springtime floods when their map published), this series really resonated with our audience.

These screen caps were taken about a week after publishing.



## Client feedback on the overall campaign





"The content developed by the Montreal Gazette allowed us to cover topics that complemented the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary's programming, especially the maps that were developed around our neighbourhood tours. What a great way for readers to discover or rediscover the richness of some of Montreal's neighbourhoods."

Julie Tardif, Marketing and Communications Director, Society of the Celebrations of Montreal's 375th Anniversary

#### **Our takeaways**







You always hope that readers will respond to a campaign as positively as they did with this one. So when they do, it's both gratifying and humbling.

Although **Content Works** is a branch of advertising, our goal is to create content that will ultimately be as useful to the reader as what the editorial team produces.

When it came to this campaign, we discovered just how much readers care about their city, its identity and its neighbourhoods. This wasn't altogether surprising to us, because we know that readers come to the Montreal Gazette for the latest on the place they care most about. Still, their reaction certainly surpassed our expectations.

With this campaign, we discovered that sponsored content can be just as effective as editorial in creating engaging and thoughtful stories. The key is to listen to the audience, and to understand them. So when we conceived of this campaign, we decided to focus on what Montrealers care about, because it's those very things that will build the next 375 years of the city's lifetime.

Olivia Collette, Senior Producer





#### **OLIVIA COLLETTE**

Senior Producer 514.435.1161 | ocollette@postmedia.com

#### **EDWIN BIROUN**

Media Strategist 514.467.9561 | ebiroun@postmedia.com

#### **MANON LANDRY**

Key Account Executive 514.710.0759 | mlandry@postmedia.com

