

Community Support Through Innovation

How Mary Brown's Used Paywall Removal to Connect with Canadians

OVERVIEW

Mary Brown's Chicken & Taters, a beloved Canadian fast-food chain, sought to support communities during the COVID-19 pandemic while educating customers about their menu and takeout options. The challenge was to engage Canadians meaningfully amid widespread uncertainty and media consumption shifts.

APPROACH

In partnership with Mary Brown's marketing team, Postmedia launched a unique campaign by lifting the paywall across all Postmedia properties for one month, making trusted news widely accessible during a critical time. A catfish ad unit prominently displayed the Mary Brown's logo alongside a message explaining the paywall lift and linked readers to a letter from Postmedia editorial detailing the initiative. Complementing this were targeted display ads both on and off the Postmedia Network aligned with campaign objectives. Mary Brown's also sponsored contextually relevant news and food newsletters, which saw an impressive 43% open rate and 22% CTR. Programmatic display advertising further boosted awareness, delivering 5.8M+ impressions with a 33% higher CTR than benchmarks and viewability rates exceeding 70%, well above the Canadian average.

CONCLUSION

The campaign exceeded all expectations, garnering national media coverage and even a mention in the Canadian Senate. Mary Brown's trended positively on Twitter the day the paywall was lifted, highlighting the campaign's strong public reception. Engagement metrics remained robust throughout, with editorial page views surpassing 85.7K and average article time on site over two minutes. Paywall removal units alone generated 20M+ impressions and 58K clicks. Overall, this innovative approach successfully built awareness, supported communities, and strengthened Mary Brown's connection with Canadians during a challenging period.



"Postmedia was fantastic to work with. With a seemingly impossible task of bringing this concept to life in two weeks, they made it happen. Weekly status reports helped to make sure the campaign was on track, and Postmedia made strategic optimizations throughout the campaign to exceed our expectations. Postmedia allowed Mary Brown's to bring crucial content to Canadians in a time of need. On top of that, they overdelivered on their estimates and helped drive sales to individual locations. Postmedia has a great team to work with—from their sales team to senior management—they are smart, strategic, and easy to work with. Postmedia worked with us to execute an innovative, media-first campaign. Definitely worth it."

Jeff Barlow
Vice President, Marketing
Mary Brown's Chicken & Taters

59.5M+

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

211K+

CLICKS TO MARY BROWN'S WEBSITE

85.7K

EDITORIAL PAGE VIEWS