

## CASE STUDY: Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime

"Automating our newsletter with cardcommunications could not have been easier. We have nothing but good things to say. In the time it used to take to manually produce the newsletter we can now help more clients and take on new projects."

**Heidi Illingworth**

*Executive Director*

*Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime*

### AT A GLANCE

**Customer Name:** Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime

**Business profile:** NGO, advocacy leader for victims and survivors of violent crime in Canada.

**Location:** Ottawa, Ontario

**Business need:** Easily managed newsletter program to stay connected to clients and stakeholders.

**Results:**

- Percentage of emails opened: over 50% (industry norm 25-30%)
- 20 plus hour production process reduced to less than five hours of content writing

**Quote:** "Working with cardcommunications was easy. They were professional, proactive and personable."

### Helping victims navigate the judiciary process

The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) is the leading advocacy organization for individual crime victims and their families. Since it began in 1993, the CRCVC has helped thousands of crime survivors to get the services and resources they need. Much of their work is focused on the corrections and parole system, helping victims obtain and understand information on offenders.

### Keeping clients informed

The CRCVC offers a variety of resource materials to crime victims in Canada, including a monthly newsletter. The monthly newsletter program, called the National Justice Network Update, is the organization's primary method of maintaining contact with clients and stakeholders. Content is focused on upcoming and proposed changes to the justice system and their impact on victims' rights. It also examines issues and changes in several key issues such as young offenders and conditional release programs.

With a skeleton staff of just 2 full time employees and several part-time and student staff, the CRCVC has tight constraints on time and resources. They must deliver help to the over 150 active cases they are working on at any given time and in addition, manage the resource centre and newsletter program.

### **Manual newsletter takes time, lacks metrics**

The newsletter is an important connection to their clients, but production was taking resources away from helping clients. "Our students or I would research and write the content, and then we laid it out and produced a PDF which was emailed to subscribers manually. The format had a hard limit of four pages which really constrained our content. We had to send messages in batches to avoid mail server issues. We tracked changes to the list by hand and we didn't have the time to manage the bounced messages and correct our list. The process took a lot of time and effort" says Heidi Illingworth, the executive director of the CRCVC.

All of this production time resulted in over 20 hours of month of staff effort that took away from time helping clients. The CVCVC was not getting any metrics on the readership of their newsletter to know if the investment was worth it. They got positive feedback from a few clients, but they had no way of measuring the effectiveness of the program.

### **Making the newsletter manageable**

A conversation with Carolyn Gardner, cardcommunications founder, gave the CRCVC insight into how a more automated process could help them. "We had just accepted that what we were doing was what you had to go through to get a newsletter out the door" says Illingworth. "Once we talked to cardcommunications, we knew we had to change."

Cardcommunications is a leading outsourcing provider of e-marketing solutions including e-newsletters. They instantly recognized the problems the CRCVC was having and had the solution - a fully managed email marketing program.

Transitioning took just one month. After sending cardcommunications their list, and approving a new template the CRCVC was ready to send out the first new and improved newsletter. For CRCVC the transition was painless and took very little management time. "We sent them out lists, overcame a couple of small web site issues, and approved a new template and we were done" says Illingworth.

### **More effective use of time, measurable results**

For CRCVC today, the newsletter represents a much smaller investment of time and clearly documented returns of that investment. Typically content research

and writing takes five to seven hours and then CRCVC staff simply sends it to cardcommunications. The newsletter is formatted and two tests are sent so that staff can proof read and correct errors. The newsletter is sent to the subscriber list and bounced messages automatically update the list.

Detailed reporting gives the CRCVC a complete picture of the newsletter program's effectiveness. With typical open rates upwards of 50%, the CRCVC newsletter exceeds industry standards.

For the CRCVC the new newsletter provides new found time and measurable results. "Automating our newsletter with cardcommunications could not have been easier. We have nothing but good things to say. In the time it used to take to manually produce the newsletter we can now help more clients and take on new projects" says Illingworth.