

“I’d rather tell fairy tales and welcome guests”

Thanks to DirectFactory the Märchenhotel (Fairy-Tale Hotel) is able to take care of its mailings quickly and easily



The former Grand Hotel – now the Märchenhotel (Fairy-Tale Hotel) – was built in 1907. Previously a retreat for wealthy guests from England and later France, the hotel is now a fabulous family holiday destination of fairy-tale proportions.



Märchenhotel
Bellevue ****
Familie
Martin und Lydia Vogel
8784 Braunwald
www.maerchenhotel.ch

In terms of efficiency, DirectFactory – Swiss Post’s online tool for designing mailings – is unrivalled. Martin Vogel, manager of the Märchenhotel (Fairy-Tale Hotel) in Braunwald, recognized this and used DirectFactory for the first time in the summer of 2009 to send out a card mailing. The hotelier was so impressed by the tool’s user friendliness, the print quality and value for money that he is already planning his next mailing.

Märchenhotel (Fairy-Tale Hotel) Bellevue

It was over 30 years ago that Martin Vogel told his first fairy tale to baby Monika in an attempt to stop her crying. Ever since, a crowd of hungry young eyes have waited in eager anticipation each evening to hear the animated stories of the resident storyteller. He has never tired of telling his stories: “Seeing the children’s comical reactions provides me with the inspiration for new stories.”

Surrounded by majestic 3,000-metre-peaks, the former Grand Hotel is proudly situated in a prime location on the Braunwald terrace. Inside its 100-year-old walls, the magic lives on. Here, mums and dads have a chance to be their own person again, enjoying exquisite six-course meals dressed in their finest evening attire, or taking a relaxing break from family life in the “Wellness on the top” roof-top spa while the little ones are looked after in the bouncy castle and at the hotel nursery.

Lydia and Martin Vogel have clearly identified their hotel’s target market: “We welcome all guests, however our services are particularly tailored towards families with children. This segment makes up around 80% of our customer base”. In order to surprise their guests, the pair like to do things “out of the ordinary”: elephants in the hotel garden, a glass lift through the aquariums, a ghost evening for the kids with a sleep-over in a tent... These kind of attractions not only make the stay more exciting for the guests, but also represent an investment in the hotel’s future. “If guests leave impressed, they are more likely to recommend us to others. As such, we are able to reach potential guests in a much more targeted way than by simply purchasing addresses” says the hotelier and Chairman of KidsHotels Switzerland with conviction.



Martin Vogel has been reading stories to his young guests every evening for over thirty years. “The best ones are those that come to me out of the blue”, says the storyteller.

The challenge

Martin Vogel is convinced that half his success is down to good publicity. This said, he doesn’t advertise on a grand scale: “I only write to my guests if we have something new to offer them”. Lydia and

Martin Vogel send out two printed mailings and three to four electronic newsletters per year. There are also posters at Zurich main train station and other holiday destinations advertising the hotel. Coverage, such as that generated by the presentation of a "Milestone" international tourism award by Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard in 2006, and praise from Trudi Gerster in books such as "Schweizer Familie" and "Wir Eltern" have proved particularly effective for the hotel. And of course, the Internet continues to have an increasing impact. According to Martin Vogel, around 90% of future guests find out about our services via the hotel's website.

Martin Vogel prefers to focus on his core market. "Like plenty of other hoteliers, I'm not a great salesperson. I much prefer my role as storyteller and host". As a result, advertising has to be quick and easy to implement, but nevertheless extremely effective.

DirectFactory online tool

It was Patric Vogel, a son of the family, who first drew his father's attention to the DirectFactory online tool from Swiss Post (www.swisspost.ch/directfactory). In fact, it was through a DirectFactory online mailing that Lydia and Martin Vogel recently informed their guests of their latest idea to place the running of the Märchenhotel in the hands of the kids every Wednesday. "This is a truly sensational idea. A total of 52 kids took part this week", beams the hotelier. "The little assistant managers wore their ties with pride, long after the event was over."

The mailing designed the kid's programme "Traumjobs für Kinder zu vergeben" (Creating dream jobs for kids) says Tobias Knecht from the typography plant in Glarus. "DirectFactory was ideal for this mailing. Everything worked perfectly", says the typographer, who was also impressed with the tool's user friendliness. "The tool was very reliable and easy to use and even the address data were imported without any problems".

Benefits for the Märchenhotel

Martin Vogel is impressed by the DirectFactory service: "We used to have to address, stuff and frank the mailings ourselves, which required a great deal of time and effort on our part. Thanks to DirectFactory, we no longer have to worry about the dispatch process; all we have to do is select the addresses". He appreciates the price transparency, the excellent value for money and the high quality of printing and addressing. "Any undeliverable cards were returned to us in excellent condition", Tobias Knecht was also impressed with the results: "The printing and finish were of an exceptionally high standard".

It is not possible to carry out a detailed assessment of the results, as the purpose of the mailing – which was sent out to around 8,000 customers in Switzerland – was not to draw conclusions. "We wanted to show our guests that there is always something new afoot at the Märchenhotel. We made a conscious decision to steer clear of a teaser", explains Martin Vogel, who also learned a useful lesson from the new method: "The feedback we received was altogether positive, however sending the mailing out in mid-July was definitely somewhat late – as the number of bookings showed. This experience has taught us how important it is to get our timing right". Martin Vogel also plans to use Direct Factory in the future: "We intend to promote our Igloo Weeks next winter using this method". We can only imagine what other wonderful treats the Vogel family has in store for its guests.

You will find the online tool for creating and sending mailings at

www.swisspost.ch/directfactory



Thanks to DirectFactory, not only the management of the Märchenhotel but also the dispatch of mailings has become child's play.

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