



CANADA'S NEW VOICES



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For brand and market leaders in Canada, our challenge is clear: we must move beyond superficial gestures to build genuine connections, empowering every New Canadian to thrive and enrich the vibrant fabric of our nation, guided by the power of impactful marketing and communications solutions."

Kevin Johnson
President, WPP Canada

WPP

CANADA'S NEW VOICES

PART 1.
THE JOURNEY TO
BELONGING



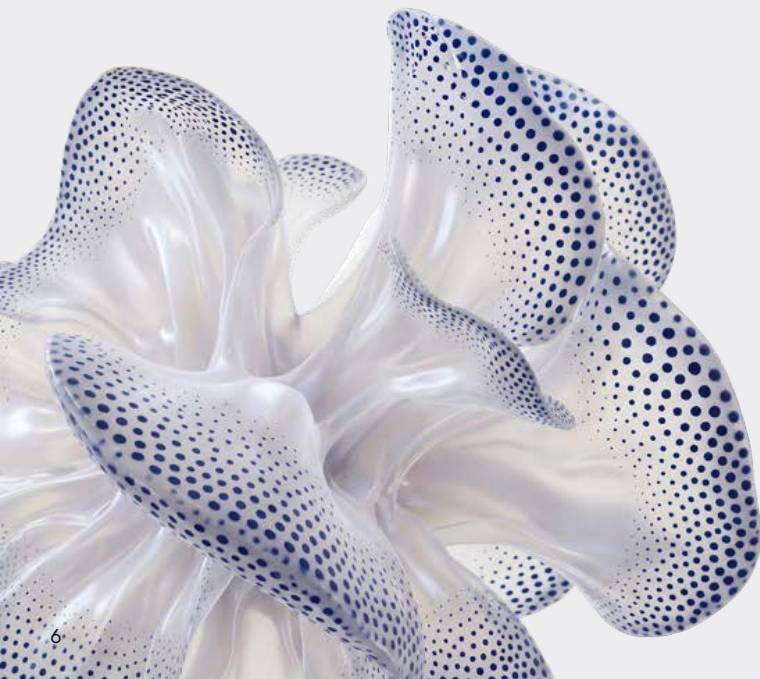
CANADA'S NEW VOICES

Canada has long prided itself on being a beacon of multiculturalism and opportunity for newcomers. Yet, beneath the surface of successful immigration stories lies an "invisible struggle": a profound emotional and psychological journey often overlooked by institutions, brands, and even existing Canadians.

WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" insights report uncovers critical insights into the real-world experiences of recent immigrants, revealing a complex landscape of evolving identity, pervasive discrimination, and hidden challenges that threaten their sense of belonging and, ultimately, their long-term commitment to Canada.

This insight report, the first in our series, delves into the human side of the newcomer experience through a comprehensive marketing and communications lens. We expose how the definition of "Being Canadian" is shifting, the alarming statistics around discrimination (particularly linked to language and accent), and the bureaucratic and cultural "taxes" that add significant stress.

Our findings underscore that true integration is not a given; it's a dynamic process heavily influenced by authentic representation, targeted communications, equitable treatment, and empathetic brand experiences. We illuminate these often-unseen challenges and provide actionable pathways for public institutions, HR/DEI leaders, and brands to move beyond superficial inclusivity to foster genuine belonging, combat bias through strategic messaging and creative solutions, and truly empower the success of new Canadians across all touchpoints.



THE UNSEEN CHAPTER OF CANADA'S STORY

Each year, four to five hundred thousand embark on a new life here, drawn by the promise of safety, opportunity, and a vibrant multicultural society. But what happens after the initial welcome? What are the emotional and psychological realities that shape their path to becoming Canadian, and how do their experiences and perceptions often influenced by marketing, communications, and brand interactions impact this journey?

Our extensive research, "Canada's New Voices," unearths an often-invisible chapter of this story. It reveals that, for many, the journey has emotional and social hurdles—challenges that, if unaddressed through thoughtful communications and integrated brand strategies, could undermine Canada's reputation as a top destination for global talent.

From grappling with a nuanced sense of national identity to facing systemic discrimination and unexpected bureaucratic complexities, newcomers are undergoing a profound adaptation that demands deeper understanding and more strategic, empathetic engagement across every touchpoint.



SHAPED BY PERCEPTION & EXPERIENCE

This insight report explores three critical dimensions of this invisible struggle: the evolving concept of Canadian identity and the elusive nature of belonging; the chilling prevalence of discrimination, particularly through the lens of language and accent, which directly impacts how newcomers engage with and are perceived by society; and the "hidden costs" and emotional toll of adapting to a new system, often exacerbated by unclear or culturally insensitive information and brand experiences.

By shining a light on these human elements, WPP Canada's goal is to equip leaders across public and private sectors with the insights needed to build a Canada where every newcomer not only survives but truly thrives and belongs, facilitated by powerful and inclusive marketing and communications.



CHAPTER 1

THE ELUSIVE SENSE OF "BEING CANADIAN" BEYOND PATRIOTIC SYMBOLS

The quintessential "Canadian identity" is evolving, especially in the minds of those who choose to make this country home. Our research shows a clear preference among newcomers for a definition rooted in shared values and multiculturalism, rather than traditional heritage or patriotic symbols.

This shift in perception presents both a challenge and an unparalleled opportunity for brands and institutions operating within Canada to redefine and reinforce what it means to be Canadian.

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Today's new Canadians are looking for a shared experience and a sense of belonging in their new home. How they see that reflected (or not) in the media around them makes a big difference."

Kevin Johnson
President
WPP Canada



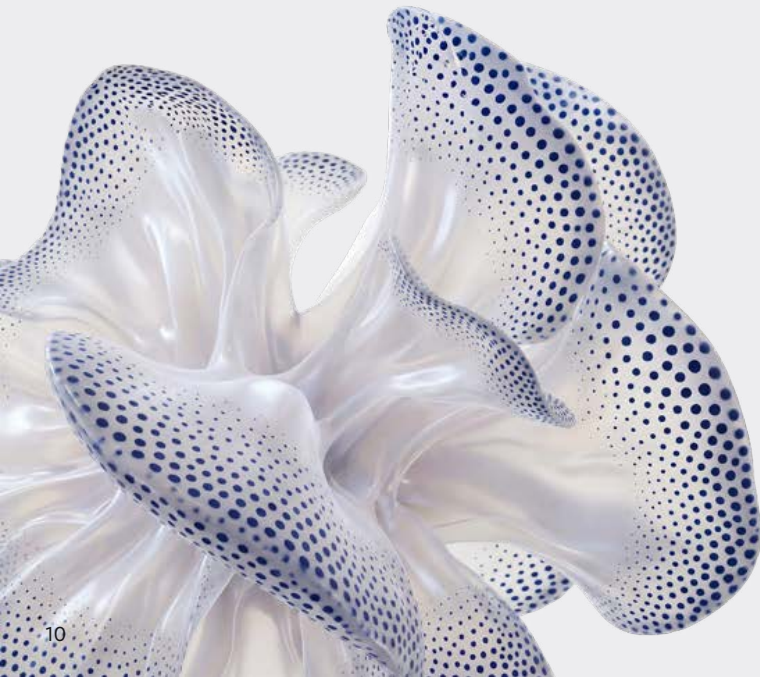
KEY FINDINGS

A NEW DEFINITION OF CANADIAN

- Newcomers largely define "being Canadian" by multiculturalism (**65%**) and shared values (**60%**), significantly preferring these over historical heritage or patriotic symbols (**under 40%**).
- Multiculturalism is important for younger newcomers (18-24 y.o.) for whom being Canadian is a state of mind, a feeling that comes from within, while cultural heritage and symbols are important for 35 y.o.+ immigrants.
- The shared values include but are not limited to: kindness, politeness, fairness, equality, environmental care. This indicates a desire for an inclusive identity that reflects their lived experience, one that Canadian brands and communications can either uphold or inadvertently undermine.

THE BIRTHRIGHT BARRIER

- Despite this modern outlook, some recent arrivals (**16%**) believe true belonging requires being born Canadian.
- This perspective creates a paradox: while they embrace Canada's diverse future, an internal or external perception often reinforced by dominant narratives in advertising, content, and public discourse can still make them feel like outsiders.
- While half claim "adaptation" to be a part of the cultural code, learning the laws, understanding social norms, and adopting local behaviours to fully participate in society they still feel a wall between them and those born in Canada.



KEY FINDINGS

"The real integration to me means blending and participating in broader society while keeping some personal traditions privately."

INTEGRATION EXTREMES

This tension pushes newcomers to two extremes:

24%

Prioritize minimizing integration, potentially limiting their opportunities and community connection. This often translates to disengagement from mainstream Canadian brands and information sources.

30%

Push for at-any-cost integration, sometimes out of a fear of exclusion, leading to burnout or a loss of authentic self. This group may be highly receptive to inclusive messaging but also vulnerable to pressure. That is more common for women who also worry gender bias could affect career advancement.

- Almost half (**46%**) find ways of organically blending their heritage with the new-to-them multicultural Canadian environment and tend to be happier than the two mentioned groups above.
- Newcomers tend to start adopting public customs like holidays while keeping traditions in food, religion, or language. Food and attire are often the last to change, and positivity grows with time in Canada, with recent newcomers needing the most support.

KEY FINDINGS

THE BELONGING CRISIS & RECONSIDERATION

- Perhaps most alarming: not feeling belonging makes newcomers reconsider their country choice.
- More than ever, immigrants are rethinking their future plans, with only **29% planning to settle in Canada for good**. The burden of practical challenges like the job market and cost of living makes it difficult for some newcomers, particularly recent arrivals, to avoid these extremes and to engage socially—which is vital for integration.
- When they stop seeing the benefits of Canadian society, which can be amplified or diminished by brand experiences and public communications, it contributes to them thinking about leaving.



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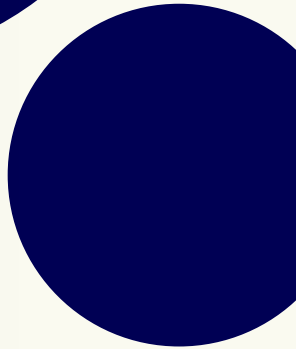
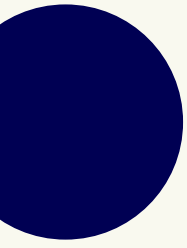
Real integration to me means blending and participating in broader society while keeping some personal traditions, private.”

- Male, 36, Europe

”

Being Canadian is synonymous to being accepting, respecting each other's backgrounds and, most importantly, sharing."

- Male, 32, India



WHY THIS MATTERS

A strong sense of belonging, nurtured through resonant and inclusive communication and brand experiences, is fundamental for successful integration, mental well-being, and long-term retention of talent.

When newcomers feel that their contributions are valued and that they are *genuinely* part of the social fabric, they are more likely to invest in their new communities.



The current trend of reconsidering Canada as a permanent home represents a significant risk to the nation's future economic and social vitality, and WPP Canada believes strategic, integrated communications can play a pivotal role in reversing this trend.

FOSTER BELONGING THROUGH INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS

ACTIONABLE STRATEGY #1 SHIFT COMMUNICATION NARRATIVES

- Brands, community organizations, and public institutions should move from a potentially biased or historically traditional "Canadian" image towards highlighting shared values (e.g., respect, equity, innovation) and the rich, lived experience of multiculturalism. This involves diverse casting, authentic storytelling, and representing the new face of Canada in all advertising, digital content, and public relations efforts.
- Develop messaging and campaigns that explicitly challenge the perception that true belonging requires being born Canadian. When managing segments of newcomers, their age and length of living in Canada should command the content.



FOSTER BELONGING THROUGH INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS

ACTIONABLE STRATEGY #2

FACILITATE CULTURAL EXCHANGE VIA BRAND PLATFORMS

- Create and promote content and brand activations that actively facilitate cultural exchange, encouraging interaction and mutual understanding between newcomers and long-term residents.
 - Belonging is achieved through engagement, not birthright, and brand platforms are powerful vehicles for fostering this genuine connection.
-
- Move beyond abstract concepts of diversity by actively showcasing "diversity in action"—people engaging with each other's traditions—using relatable and aspirational real stories.
 - Actively offer easy-to-access opportunities for newcomers to connect with Canadian society, such as community events and informal everyday interactions, to foster genuine engagement.



FOSTER BELONGING THROUGH INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS

ACTIONABLE STRATEGY #3

ADDRESS PRACTICAL BARRIERS IN BRAND MESSAGING & EXPERIENCE

- While communications can't solve all practical challenges, they can inform and guide.
 - Develop clear, accessible brand communication campaigns that acknowledge and address common newcomer challenges, including the situation with the job market and cost of living, offering resources and pathways to solutions, building trust, and demonstrating genuine support through products and services.
-
- Position the blending of heritage with Canadian norms as the most fulfilling path in overcoming obstacles to settling, supported by sharing examples of newcomers who have successfully achieved this balance and the benefits it brings, while acknowledging and respecting newcomers integrating selectively.



CHAPTER 2

THE SILENT BARRIER: DISCRIMINATION AND THE ACCENT LOOPHOLE

Beneath Canada's veneer of welcoming multiculturalism lies a harsh reality: a significant majority of newcomers face discrimination, often rooted in subtle yet pervasive biases that undermine their sense of safety and equality. Our research reveals how communication itself, particularly in relation to accents, becomes a critical point of vulnerability, and how strategic communications can challenge this bias.



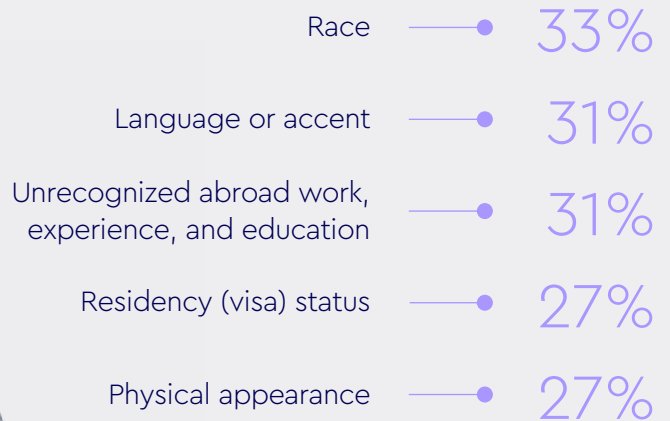
KEY FINDINGS

PERVASIVE DISCRIMINATION

A CHILLING **87%**
OF NEWCOMERS IN CANADA
REPORT DISCRIMINATION.

THIS PERVASIVE EXPERIENCE
OFTEN BEGINS, OR IS EXACERBATED,
IN COMMUNICATION SETTINGS
AND THROUGH SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS.

LEADING TRIGGERS



KEY FINDINGS

THE INSIDIOUS ROLE OF LANGUAGE & ACCENT

- While directly cited in **31%** of cases, language and accent act as underlying triggers, potentially facilitating discrimination in up to **80%** of all incidents. It all starts with communication, and communication differences often become the first point of judgment in daily interactions, professional settings, and even media portrayals.

THE "SELF-IMPROVEMENT" FALLACY

- Unlike other condemned forms of discrimination (e.g., race, work experience, visa status), language or accent is often seen as an area for "self-improvement." This outlook rationalizes direct linguistic discrimination and subtly legitimizes prejudices triggered by communication differences, forming a critical loophole in Canada's equity commitments.
- While personal development is welcome, accent is part of personality and must be respected and treated well, not weaponized. This narrative is often perpetuated in media, cultural portrayals, and even workplace norms, consciously or unconsciously.

THE CYCLE OF IMMIGRANT DISCRIMINATION

- While a bias prevails that discrimination comes from those born in Canada, almost **every 4th action** of discrimination comes from other immigrants or visible minorities: some of those immigrants who experience discrimination in the beginning of the journey, start unintentionally using it as a local behavioural model.



“ They doubt my qualifications because of how I sound and my accent. I can't express myself well.”

- Male, 30, Nigeria

KEY FINDINGS

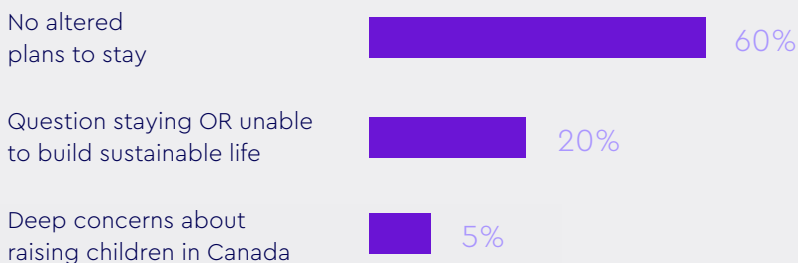
THE DUAL IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION

- A significant majority of respondents (**68%**) express strong negative emotions related to discrimination, ranging from sadness and insecurity to frustration and mental exhaustion. However, a notable portion (**23%**) also demonstrates resilience or an ability to accept/cope, though this still means they are still affected.

SILENT TOLL & ACCEPTANCE

- Despite this emotional toll, a majority (**over 60%**) explicitly state that their discrimination experiences have not altered their long-term plans to stay in Canada, showcasing remarkable resilience. However, a combined **20%** indicate that discrimination either directly makes them question staying or severely undermines their ability to build a sustainable life, which is a critical factor for retention. An additional **5%** express deep concerns about raising children in Canada, suggesting a potential long-term demographic impact.

IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION ON LONG-TERM RETENTION INTENT



KEY FINDINGS

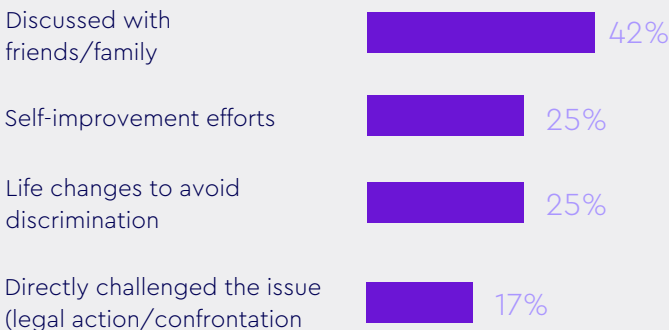
SILENT TOLL & ACCEPTANCE

- A significant **43%** of those experiencing discrimination took no action beyond personal coping or avoidance. This inaction often stems from a belief that discrimination is a pervasive, systemic problem individual efforts cannot effectively address, compounded by fear and lack of knowledge.
- When actions were taken, most focused on personal well-being and adaptation: discussing with friends/family (**42%**), self-improvement (**25%**), or making life changes (e.g., job, place) to avoid discrimination (**25%**).
- Only in **17%** of cases did newcomers take actions to directly challenge the root problem, such as seeking legal advice or confronting perpetrators.

RESPONSE TO DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCES



PRIMARY COPING ACTION STRATEGIES



“ I chose to focus on
adapting,
Improving myself,
and trying to
avoid conflict.”

Female, 32, Mainland China



WHY THIS MATTERS

Discrimination, whether overt or subtle, erodes trust, impedes integration, and creates an environment where newcomers feel devalued.

The "accent loophole" is particularly insidious because it shifts the burden of adaptation entirely onto the newcomer, absolving society of its responsibility to foster inclusive communication environments.

This not only causes distress but also prevents individuals from fully contributing their skills and perspectives, impacting everything from job interviews to social interactions—all of which are mediated by effective communication and authentic representation. WPP Canada understands the power of perception and the critical role of creative campaigns in shaping it.



ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

1

LINGUISTIC EMPATHY CAMPAIGNS

Develop and execute powerful public awareness campaigns that make diverse accents an asset, celebrating the linguistic tapestry of Canada and promoting "linguistic empathy." This involves featuring diverse accents positively and neutrally in ads, public service announcements, and educational content.

2

EMPOWER THE VULNERABLE THROUGH AWARENESS

Utilize comprehensive communication channels (PR, social, digital) to raise awareness about accent-based discrimination, providing accessible information on protection measures and reporting mechanisms.

3

DISRUPT THE "CANADIAN EXPERIENCE" MYTH IN RECRUITMENT MARKETING

Challenge the notion that a specific accent or communication style is a prerequisite for success. Craft compelling recruitment marketing campaigns targeting employers and job seekers that promote a "skill-first" approach in hiring and professional evaluations, de-emphasizing accent in favour of competence and contribution.

4

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

Addressing accent and communication styles, utilizing engaging content and case studies. Review all internal and external communications (e.g., job postings, internal videos, employee handbooks) to ensure they are inclusive and do not subtly perpetuate accent bias. Foster an inclusive workplace culture where diverse communication styles are respected and understood through deliberate messaging and internal engagement strategies.

CHAPTER 3

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF ADAPTATION: NAVIGATING THE BUREAUCRATIC LABYRINTH

The initial period of settling in Canada is universally intense. While newcomers often look back with immense pride on their resilience, they navigate a "rollercoaster" of urgent decisions, bureaucratic hurdles, and financial shock—a journey often exacerbated by an overwhelming excess of information rather than a lack thereof and frequently delivered in confusing or inaccessible formats by institutions and brands.



KEY FINDINGS

At least **85%** consider their landing experience to be at least moderately challenging, with **42%** saying it was considerably challenging and only less than **15%** said it was not more than slightly challenging. Top hurdles are employment & housing: the job market (**28%**) and securing housing/navigating credit (**22%**) are the most significant and frustrating barriers, reflecting the need for "Canadian experience" and credit history that newcomers often lack.

Despite pre-arrival research, newcomers face significant frustration from Canada's bureaucratic systems, experienced as a stark cultural difference, highlighting a major friction point beyond typical job or housing issues, and facing unexpected "taxes" on their time, energy, and peace of mind. These include:

PERVASIVE BUREAUCRATIC & LENGTHY PROCESS

- A significant **19%** of respondents were surprised and frustrated by the general slowness of government processes, the sheer volume of paperwork, and the extensive time required to set up basic services. This includes an unexpected "appointment culture" for everything from banking to apartment viewings.

COMPLICATED CREDIT SYSTEMS

- Navigating Canada's unique credit system was a major unexpected hurdle for **17%** of newcomers. The demand for Canadian credit history, often for crucial needs like renting housing or obtaining loans, was poorly understood and vastly different from their home countries, leading to significant frustration and delays.



“ What was missing was a clear newcomer checklist all in one place. Something that explained housing, banking, credit...”

- Male, 23, India

KEY FINDINGS

SIGNIFICANT PHONE-BASED CUSTOMER SERVICE CHALLENGES

- The heavy reliance on phone-based customer service ("many appointments needed," "a lot of phone calls to make, sit on hold") posed substantial communication barriers for **17%** of respondents. This is particularly difficult for those with language differences, who found it "hard to hear" or "difficult to understand" diverse accents, making effective communication challenging.
-

INTERLINKED SYSTEMS & UNEXPECTED DEPENDENCIES

- The surprising interconnectedness of basic services, where one essential item (like a phone plan) might require another (like a bank account) to be already established, caused confusion for **3%** of newcomers, creating a perceived circular dependency.
-

LACK OF CENTRALIZED, COHERENT GUIDANCE

- Despite doing extensive online research, **11%** of respondents identified a critical missing support: a clear, integrated newcomer checklist or comprehensive "how-to" guide that demystifies these processes and explains their interdependencies. This absence forces reliance on fragmented information, exacerbating the overall confusion.



KEY FINDINGS

THE DISCONNECT


- These elements, often different from home country norms, create a steep learning curve.
- The contrast between an organized system (Canada's reputation) and its slow, often impersonal execution highlights a critical disconnect between brand promise and newcomers' lived experience, particularly when information and services are not communicated effectively through accessible channels and positive brand interactions.
- While there's a bias that newcomers feel a lack of information, they are, in fact, often overwhelmed by fragmented and untrustworthy sources.



KEY FINDINGS

THE DISCONNECT

- They frequently cite the absence of a clear, centralized newcomer guide as a key missing support (**19%**), which directly contributes to navigating bureaucratic confusion (**33%**). This dynamic drives a strong reliance on personal networks like friends and family (**61%** across various contexts) and official government websites (**47%**) for trusted advice.
- Conversely, some newcomers view profit-driven entities such as banks (**14%**), mobile operators (**8%**), and unverified social media (**8%**) with skepticism due to concerns about hidden costs, inconsistent information, or biased advice.
- As a result, newcomers bring a skepticism about information from brands—so building trust for owned channels and using credible paid or earned channels is essential.
- Despite initial challenges, newcomers experienced significant positive surprises: the overwhelming helpfulness and friendliness of people (**25%**) deeply resonated, often exceeding expectations.
- Many found unexpected ease in setting up essential services like banking or mobile plans (**8%**), and the challenging process ultimately culminated in a powerful sense of personal growth, independence, and pride (**61%** retrospective happiness, **28%** more independent/confident). These highlights underscore Canada's capacity for unexpected support and personal triumph.



86%

of respondents ultimately managed to break through the challenges and get what they needed, underscoring the determination and resourcefulness of individuals navigating this complex transition.

KEY FINDINGS

PRIDE IS SEEN AMIDST ANXIETY

- Despite the stress, the process of landing in Canada transforms into a powerful sense of accomplishment for **61%**, especially for younger individuals embracing independence and looking back with pride, happiness, or gratitude: they often highlight becoming more independent and confident (**28%**) through overcoming personal hurdles.
- This inherent resilience underpins their successful navigation, and brands can authentically join this celebration of resilience, acknowledge the journey, and empower their continued success.

"I had no hope and I was broken..."

But now I'm proud of myself because I could do it."

- Female, 32, Other



WHY THIS MATTERS

These "hidden costs" create unnecessary friction, leading to frustration, burnout, and a sense of being overwhelmed.

While newcomers are resilient, these systemic challenges can slow down their integration, impact their financial stability, and undermine their overall satisfaction with life in Canada.

Brands and institutions have a unique opportunity to alleviate these pain points and build profound loyalty by genuinely facilitating, rather than hindering, this crucial phase through clear, empathetic, and culturally intelligent experiences and communications.



ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

1

EMPOWER SUCCESS THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS AND UX, DON'T JUST SELL

Brands must shift their mindset from merely selling products or services to actively empowering newcomer success. Develop campaigns and optimize customer journeys that position brands as partners in this journey, offering solutions and guidance through every touchpoint.

2

ALLEVIATE INFORMATION OVERLOAD WITH CLARITY AND PRECISION

Craft clear, concise, culturally sensitive communication strategies that move beyond generic diversity. This includes designing information campaigns for critical services (e.g., banking, mobile) that are tailored to newcomer needs, available in multiple formats and languages, and delivered through preferred channels, including digital platforms and community outreach.

3

COMMUNICATE STREAMLINED PROCESSES AND EXPERIENCES

Brands should simplify onboarding, application procedures, and customer service interactions. WPP Canada can develop campaigns that clearly communicate these streamlined processes, manage expectations, and highlight ease of access and positive customer experience.

ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES

4

TRANSPARENT PRICING & CREDIT SOLUTIONS EXPLAINED AUTHENTICALLY

Ensure brands communicate transparent pricing models and accessible and flexible credit-building pathways in an understandable way, recognizing international history rather than solely relying on Canadian credit scores. This includes creative solutions for conveying complex financial information simply.

5

LEVERAGE DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR SEAMLESS SUPPORT

Invest in intuitive, multilingual digital platforms and apps. Design, promote, and manage these resources to counter the frustrations of phone-based customer service and the "appointment culture," providing seamless digital support and self-service options.

6

CELEBRATE THE JOURNEY THROUGH AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING

By recognizing that newcomers view early challenges as personal growth opportunities, brands can build profound loyalty. Develop compelling storytelling campaigns that genuinely facilitate and celebrate their journey towards confidence and integration, turning stress into success and fostering deep emotional connections through diverse creative content.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE JOURNEY OF NEWCOMERS TO CANADA IS A TESTAMENT TO HUMAN RESILIENCE AND AMBITION

Yet, as our "Canada's New Voices" series reveals, it is also a path marked by invisible struggles. A complex interplay of identity, discrimination, and adaptation challenges that demand our collective attention and, crucially, a strategic, integrated approach to marketing and communications.

The insights from this report illuminate a pressing need for a more empathetic, equitable, and efficient approach to integration. When newcomers question their belonging, face subtle yet pervasive discrimination, and navigate unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, Canada risks losing not just valuable talent but also the very essence of the inclusive society it strives to be.

WPP Canada believes that true belonging is not a birthright; it is built through engagement, respect, and support, effectively communicated and amplified through strategic brand experiences and integrated campaigns.

By embracing linguistic empathy in campaigns, dismantling discriminatory narratives in public discourse, and proactively easing the practical burdens of adaptation through clear and accessible information and streamlined services, public institutions, people operation leaders, and brands have the power to transform the newcomer experience.

Let us move beyond superficial gestures to forge genuine connections, empowering every New Canadian to thrive and enrich the vibrant tapestry of our nation, guided by the power of impactful marketing and communications solutions from WPP Canada.

Kevin Johnson
President, WPP Canada

NEXT STEPS

FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY MAKERS

SHAPE PUBLIC NARRATIVES ON INCLUSION

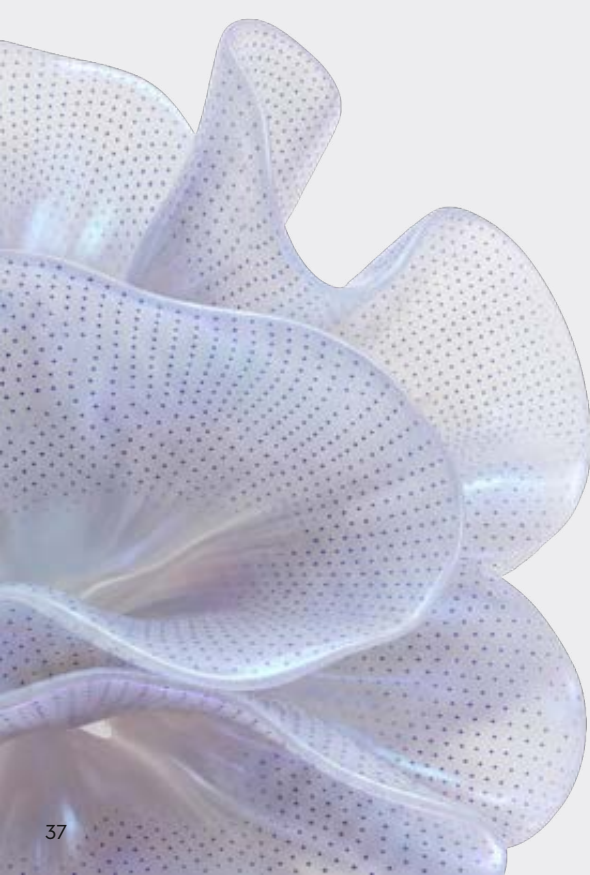
Partner with WPP Canada's PR and creative agencies to develop and disseminate compelling public education campaigns that celebrate linguistic diversity, challenge xenophobic biases, and promote genuine integration as a two-way street, leveraging all available media channels.

IMPROVE INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY & DELIVER

Collaborate with WPP Canada's digital and media experts to design multilingual, multi-platform communication strategies for essential government services, simplifying complex information and reaching newcomers where they consume content—from traditional media to digital apps.

SUPPORT SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH STORYTELLING & ACTIVATION

Leverage WPP Canada's content creation and experiential marketing capabilities to highlight successful integration stories and create opportunities for authentic community engagement, inspiring connection and belonging.



NEXT STEPS

FOR PEOPLE OPERATION LEADERS

INTERNAL & EXTERNAL MESSAGING AUDIT

Engage WPP Canada's brand and communications specialists to audit internal communications, job postings, and employer branding materials to ensure they are free of accent bias and promote a truly inclusive, skill-first workplace culture.

DEVELOP LINGUISTIC EMPATHY TRAINING MATERIALS

Partner with WPP Canada's learning and development experts to create engaging, media-rich training modules that educate employees on unconscious biases related to language and accent.

AMPLIFY DIVERSE VOICES

Use internal and external communication channels (social media, corporate websites, events) to showcase the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of your workforce, making it an asset and fostering internal pride and external appeal.

FOR BRANDS & CSR/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

CULTURALLY INTELLIGENT BRAND STRATEGIES & CAMPAIGNS

Work with WPP Canada's strategic planners, creative teams, and data experts to develop bespoke marketing and CSR campaigns that resonate authentically with specific newcomer communities, moving beyond generic diversity visuals to deep cultural insights in every aspect of the brand experience.

OPTIMIZING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE & COMMUNICATIONS FOR NEWCOMERS

Leverage WPP Canada's expertise in CX, digital transformation, and communications to design user-friendly, multilingual communication flows for critical customer touchpoints (e.g., banking account setup, mobile plan activation), ensuring clarity and cultural sensitivity across all channels and digital products.

EMPOWERMENT-FOCUSED BRAND STORYTELLING & PRODUCT INNOVATION

Partner with WPP Canada's innovation and creative teams to craft brand narratives that position products and services as genuine enablers for newcomers, highlighting how they alleviate specific challenges (e.g., credit-building, connectivity) and support their journey. This builds profound, long-term loyalty beyond transactional relationships.

WPP

CANADA'S NEW VOICES

PART 2.

NEW CANADIAN
MEDIA BLUEPRINT



A photograph of Kevin Johnson, President of WPP Canada, speaking into a microphone. He is a Black man with a short beard, wearing a light-colored suit jacket over a white shirt. He is gesturing with his left hand while holding the microphone in his right. The background is a white wall with a pattern of small, dark dots.

|| *Through 'Canada's New Voices,' we've identified a pivotal moment to transform Canadian media into an even more inclusive and vibrant force.*

This is an opportunity for growth and connection, and WPP Canada is proud to be at the forefront, building the bridges that will ensure our media truly reflects, engages, and empowers every voice in Canada."

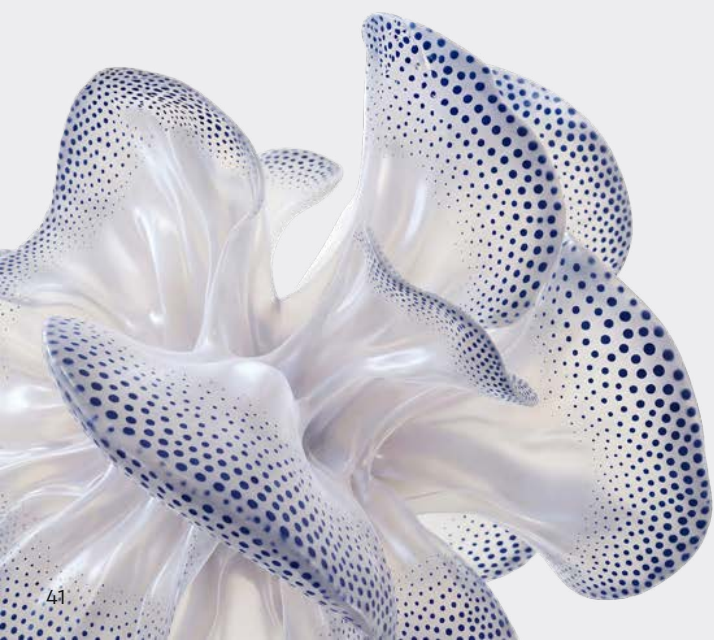
Kevin Johnson
President, WPP Canada

THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

Canada's strength is rooted in its diversity, continually enriched by global newcomers. As new Canadians establish lives, they seek to understand their new home, connect with communities, and stay informed. Media, for them, is a critical bridge to integration. Yet, their media landscape is complex and rapidly evolving, shaped by global digital trends and personal needs.

WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" research explores this reality, delving into newcomers' media consumption. We find a significant challenge and a powerful opportunity: newcomers are eager for Canadian information, yet there's an untapped potential for local media to more effectively capture their attention and build lasting relationships. This represents a crucial missed opportunity, impacting newcomers who might overlook vital integration pathways, and posing a challenge for the Canadian media industry to fully engage with these crucial future audiences.

How do new Canadians get their news and entertainment? This report dives deep into their habits, mapping the "three distinct media worlds" they juggle. We'll reveal global platforms' magnetic pull and expose the "Canadian Media Gap" the void where Canadian media struggles to connect with this vibrant population. Beyond identifying problems, we offer clear, actionable strategies for media owners, creators, marketers, and public institutions to win back this audience, build trust, and genuinely integrate new Canadians through innovative, inclusive, and relevant media engagement.



CHAPTER 1

THREE MEDIA WORLDS OF NEW CANADIANS

For new Canadians, their media experience is intricate. They're connecting with their roots back home, seeking vital local information, and staying plugged into global digital trends, all at the same time. This creates three powerful media realities for them and truly understanding them is crucial for Canadian media.

“ While four out of five (80%) New Canadians use at least one Canadian channel, the depth and loyalty of this engagement varies significantly; on average, only two-thirds (66%) are actively and regularly engaged in local Canadian Media.”



KEY FINDINGS

THE THREE MEDIA WORLDS: NEW CANADIANS ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH DISTINCT MEDIA SPACES, EACH SERVING A UNIQUE AND CRITICAL PURPOSE IN THEIR LIVES.

1

HOME COUNTRY MEDIA (30%)

Used primarily to stay in touch with their country of origin through news and relevant content. This reliance, while natural, can sometimes delay full immersion into Canadian society.

2

CANADIAN MEDIA (80%)

Consumed for local news and information directly relevant to their new lives. This is crucial not just for understanding their new community, local politics, traffic, and events ("know what's going on"), but as a facilitator of chats with peers/colleagues. While every four out of five (80%) uses at least one Canadian channel, the depth and loyalty of this engagement vary significantly, and in average only about two thirds (66%) of newcomers are actively and regularly engaged in local Canadian Media. Canadian Media primarily serves as just a source of Local News an exclusive, but still a small piece of the available Canadian Content puzzle.

3

GLOBAL PLATFORMS (100%)

These platforms, like YouTube (53%), TikTok (16%), Facebook (13%), and Instagram (21%), overwhelmingly dominate newcomer attention. They are the primary source for a diverse range of needs – news, entertainment, socializing, and more. They are multipurpose and can cover all Media needs of newcomers, with no exceptions.



53%



16%



13%



21%

KEY FINDINGS

30% of New Canadian's are consuming content in their native language from Global or Canadian Media. This content enables deeper understanding of complex information and local news, makes them more accessible and trustworthy.

THE THREE MEDIA WORLDS: NEW CANADIANS ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH DISTINCT MEDIA SPACES, EACH SERVING A UNIQUE AND CRITICAL PURPOSE IN THEIR LIVES.

FAMILIARITY

Newcomers arrive with established habits of using global platforms. These platforms remain relevant to them in Canada, often providing content from their home country and in their native language.

EFFICIENCY

These platforms offer incredible convenience, delivering everything they need from media whether it's news, entertainment, socializing, or something else all in one place.

“ I listen to the channel that gives information in my language. I'm able to understand it better.”

- Female, 41, Other



WHY THIS MATTERS

The dominance of global platforms means that newcomers are primarily forming their understanding of Canada, their communities, and global events through channels over which Canadian media has limited direct influence.



1/3 NEWCOMERS ARE NOT ENGAGED WITH CANADIAN MEDIA

while those who are, treat them as solely a source of local news. This poses a significant challenge to fostering shared civic narratives, promoting local engagement, and ensuring that new Canadians are receiving accurate and relevant information crucial for their integration. Ignoring this reality means Canadian media is ceding a critical battleground for attention and trust.



CHAPTER 2

CLOSING THE CANADIAN MEDIA GAP: STRATEGIES FOR CONNECTION AND INTEGRATION

Despite new Canadian's demonstrated need for local information, there remains an untapped potential for Canadian media to more fully translate this interest into deep, sustained engagement. This area of growth, which we term the "Canadian Media Gap," holds important implications for new Canadians and the long-term relevance of Canadian journalism and content creation.



KEY FINDINGS

BUILDING BRIDGES: CANADIAN MEDIA & NEWCOMER ENGAGEMENT

Canadian media has a powerful opportunity to build even stronger relationships with newcomers. Our research shows that while connections exist, there's a valuable segment, approximately one in three newcomers, where deeper engagement can be fostered. Newcomers share that they are looking for Canadian media to broaden its appeal beyond established audiences, yearning for more diverse voices, dynamic dialogue, and the inclusion of relevant influencers. This insight provides a clear roadmap for creating a more inclusive and relevant media experience.

CANADIAN MEDIA: A VALUED SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS & EXPANDING ENGAGEMENT

Canadian media fulfills an essential role for newcomers by providing critical local news and information. Our research indicates that while 85% of newcomers engaging with Canadian media prioritize news content, there's significant potential to broaden this interaction. The shift in the media landscape since the 2023 Online News Act (Bill C-18), which saw many global digital platforms modify access to Canadian news, further solidifies Canadian media's importance as a direct source. Trusted names like CBC News (29%), CTV News (26%), and Global News (11%) are key providers in this space (unprompted respondents mentioning, %). This strong foundation in news presents a valuable opportunity to introduce newcomers to the full range of Canadian content, from diverse entertainment to compelling storytelling, fostering deeper and more varied engagement.

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I mostly read through CBC sites, especially if it's important news – breaking news."

- Female, 29, Nigeria



KEY FINDINGS

HIGHLIGHTING IDENTIFY: CANADIAN ENTERTAINMENT'S UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Newcomers clearly identify our major news channels as Canadian. Yet, when it comes to entertainment platforms, especially streaming services, there's an exciting opportunity to strengthen their Canadian identity. Many newcomers are simply not always aware which platforms are Canadian versus those with global origins (e.g., from the USA). By making this distinction clearer, Canadian entertainment can unlock greater recognition and engagement, showcasing its unique content to a wider audience.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE GAP

- **Risk of Misinformation:** If not effectively engaged by trusted local sources, newcomers' risk being misinformed about crucial local policies, events, and opportunities, which was flagged by **13%** of newcomers. This in turn leads to more shallow integration and risks of the person to reconsider their new home choice.
- **Loss of Community Connection:** Disengagement from local media means newcomers can lose touch with their new communities, hindering social integration and the development of a sense of belonging.
- **An Opportunity to Future-Proof Canadian Media:** For Canadian media, embracing newcomers presents a significant opportunity to reinforce relevance and build lasting future audiences. Given this population's increasing size, actively engaging them today is key to ensuring the long-term vitality and robust future of Canadian journalism and content creation.
- **Economic Impact: Unlocking New Growth Opportunities:** The economic health of Canadian media thrives on its ability to attract and serve diverse audiences. By effectively engaging newcomers, Canadian media can unlock substantial new growth opportunities, directly driving job creation, expanding advertising revenue, and enhancing its overall resilience and sustainability.

THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

STRATEGY #1

DELIVER EXCLUSIVE DIVERSE CONTENT

(CURATED & MULTILINGUAL)

- Move beyond generic content to create curated, multilingual content specifically for newcomers. This means investing in local journalism that speaks to the issues affecting new Canadians and offering content in the languages they prefer.
- Develop bespoke editorial strategies, produce high-quality multilingual content, and advise on culturally relevant topics.
- Data and insights teams can identify key demographic segments, language preferences, and content needs, ensuring relevance.



THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

STRATEGY #2

EMBRACE INFLUENCERS AND USER-GENERATED CONTENT

FOSTER PLURALISM & TRANSPARENCY

- Recognize and integrate the power of authentic voices. Partner with diverse influencers who are themselves newcomers or deeply embedded in newcomer communities. Actively encourage and platform user-generated content to foster a pluralism of opinions and build transparency and trust.
- Design platforms and campaigns that encourage UGC, moderate discussions, and build engaged online communities around Canadian media brands.



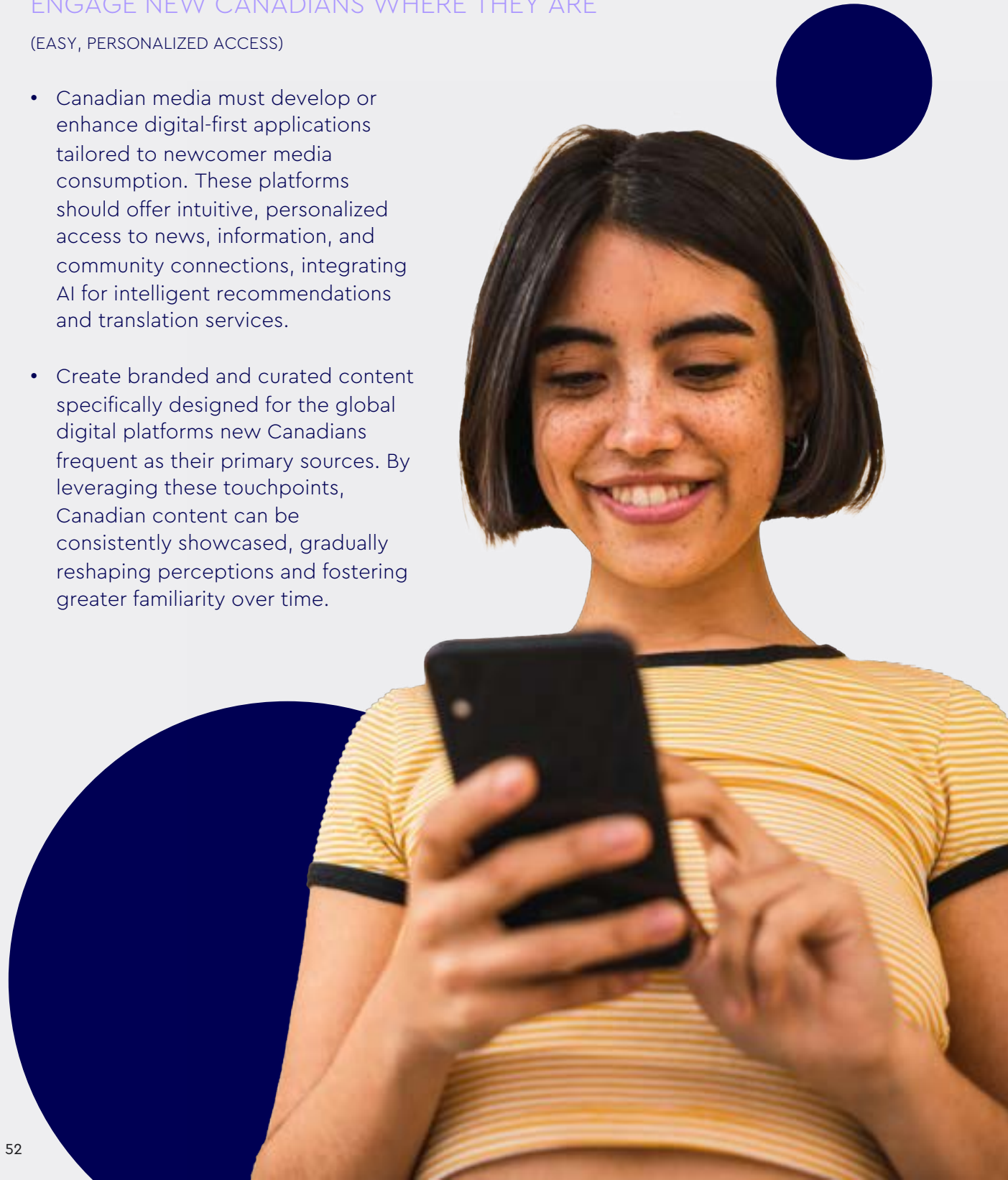
THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

STRATEGY #3

ENGAGE NEW CANADIANS WHERE THEY ARE

(EASY, PERSONALIZED ACCESS)

- Canadian media must develop or enhance digital-first applications tailored to newcomer media consumption. These platforms should offer intuitive, personalized access to news, information, and community connections, integrating AI for intelligent recommendations and translation services.
- Create branded and curated content specifically designed for the global digital platforms new Canadians frequent as their primary sources. By leveraging these touchpoints, Canadian content can be consistently showcased, gradually reshaping perceptions and fostering greater familiarity over time.



THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

STRATEGY #4

ENGAGE NEW CANADIANS WHERE THEY ARE

(EASY, PERSONALIZED ACCESS)

- To ensure these initiatives are technologically sound and user-centric, engage digital transformation and technology experts. They can guide the development of AI-powered applications, optimize user experience (UX) design, and build robust personalized content delivery systems.
- Task media agencies with driving widespread adoption of these new Canadian media resources. This involves implementing targeted digital advertising and promotional campaigns to ensure new Canadians not only discover but actively utilize these essential platforms.



THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

STRATEGY #5

BUILD A TWO-WAY DIALOGUE, NOT A ONE-WAY BROADCAST

- Shift from a traditional broadcast model to one of genuine conversation and community building. This means actively soliciting feedback, hosting virtual town halls, and creating interactive spaces where newcomers can ask questions, share experiences, and feel heard.
- PR and social media teams can design and execute community engagement strategies, facilitate online and offline events, and ensure that newcomer voices are actively integrated into content creation and editorial processes.



THE NEW CANADIAN MEDIA BLUEPRINT

STRATEGY #6

SHOWCASE THE NEW FACE OF CANADA IN ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

- Advertisers and media owners must reflect Canada's true diversity in their visual representations and storytelling. This means moving beyond tokenism to authentic representation that shows newcomers participating fully in Canadian life.
- Develop inclusive advertising campaigns that resonate with diverse audiences and ensure campaigns reach newcomers effectively through culturally relevant placements across various channels.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REMAINING CANADIAN MEDIA FOR A DIVERSE FUTURE

The dynamic media landscape, shaped by global digital platforms, offers a compelling opportunity for Canadian media to redefine its role and impact. The "Canadian Media Gap," highlights a pivotal chance to truly integrate and empower a rapidly growing and vital segment of our population. This proactive engagement holds immense potential to strengthen civic participation, deepen social cohesion, and enrich the very fabric of Canadian identity.

By understanding the nuanced media habits and preferences of newcomers, Canadian media can transform this critical area into a powerful opportunity. By embracing authentic content, championing diverse voices, leveraging the power of influencers, and adopting cutting-edge digital platforms, media owners, content creators, and advertisers can build profound connections that foster belonging, trust, and active participation.

Bridging this gap means investing in media that truly reflects and serves all Canadians. It means ensuring that every newcomer finds their voice, their stories, and their community within the rich tapestry of Canadian media.



NEXT STEPS

FOR MEDIA OWNER & CONTENT CREATORS

INVEST IN MULTILINGUAL & CULTURALLY RELEVANT CONTENT

Develop dedicated editorial streams, podcasts, and video series that address newcomer-specific needs and interests in their preferred languages.

Platform Diverse Voices

Actively recruit and empower newcomer journalists, creators, and community leaders to produce content and share their perspectives, avoiding tokenism.

Innovate with Digital-Frist Experiences.

Design and implement user-friendly, AI-powered digital platforms that personalize news delivery and foster interactive community features.



WPP

CANADA'S NEW VOICES

PART 3.

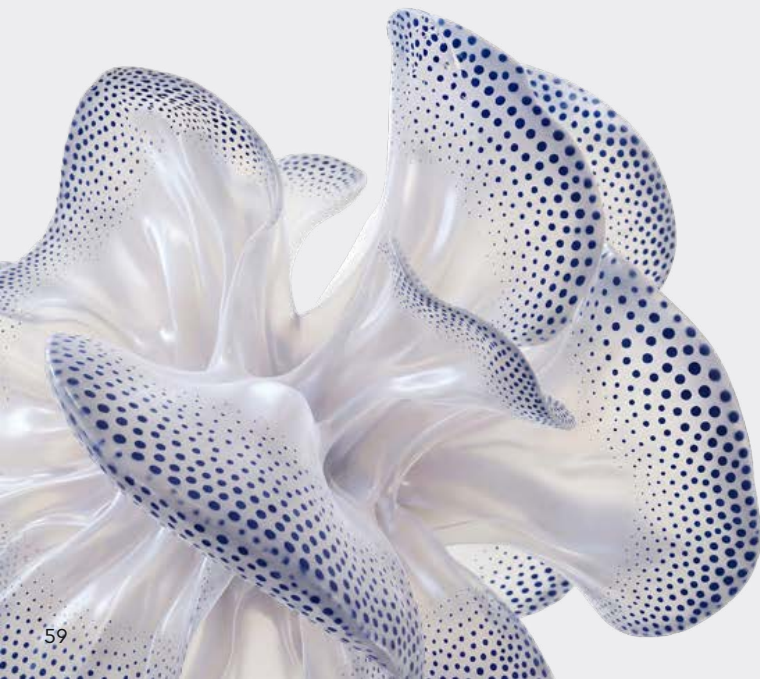
FROM FIRST IMPRESSION
TO LASTING LOYALTY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For brands operating in Canada, newcomers represent a dynamic and rapidly growing consumer segment with unique needs and purchasing behaviors. WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" series uncovers critical insights into the brand journey of new Canadians, from their earliest pre-arrival research to their long-term loyalty decisions. Our findings highlight a "golden window" of opportunity for initial acquisition but also reveal a significant challenge: initial brand choices are often temporary, leading to high churn as newcomers rapidly evolve their understanding of the Canadian market and seek optimal value. Furthermore, the substantial and often overlooked segment of temporary residents presents an untapped opportunity for brands willing to innovate.

This white paper, the third in our series, provides a strategic guide for consumer brands — particularly in sectors like banking, telecom, and retail — to move beyond transactional interactions to build enduring relationships with new Canadians. We analyze the critical role of pre-arrival visibility, the drivers behind evolving customer needs, and the "temporary trap" that limits engagement with a significant portion of this audience. WPP Canada outlines integrated strategies focusing on personalized experiences, flexible offerings, and continuous value-driven engagement, leveraging data, AI, and creative communications to transform fleeting first impressions into lasting loyalty and unlock the full potential of the New Canadian consumer.



INTRODUCTION

THE NEW CANADIAN CONSUMER

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND DISCRETION

Canada's sustained immigration growth presents an unparalleled opportunity for brands. Each year, hundreds of thousands of individuals arrive, ready to establish new lives, build new homes, and become active participants in the Canadian economy. These newcomers aren't just new residents; they are a sophisticated and discerning consumer segment, making crucial foundational decisions about banking, mobile services, retail, and more, often even before they set foot on Canadian soil.

However, WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" research reveals that while the initial window for brand acquisition is significant, retaining these customers presents a distinct challenge. Their needs evolve rapidly, their market knowledge deepens quickly, and their loyalty is not a given. Furthermore, a substantial segment of temporary residents remains underserved, representing a massive untapped potential.

This white paper dissects the unique consumer journey of new Canadians, offering brands a deep dive into the "First Contact" phase, the reasons behind high churn, and the overlooked opportunities with temporary immigrants. We will explore how brands can strategically engage this audience, not just at the point of arrival, but throughout their multi-year journey, leveraging WPP Canada's expertise in consumer insights, digital marketing, CX, and loyalty programs to build relationships that truly last.



CHAPTER 1

THE GOLDEN WINDOW: DOMINATING PRE-ARRIVAL RESEARCH FOR INITIAL CHOICES

The journey to becoming Canadian begins long before arrival, and with it, a critical phase of brand engagement. Newcomers are proactive researchers, and brands that secure "first notice" during this period gain a significant, albeit potentially fleeting, advantage.



KEY FINDINGS

RESEARCH STARTS LONG BEFORE THE PLANE LANDS IN CANADA

A remarkable 90% of newcomers conduct pre-arrival research before arrival, and one-third among them begin even before their immigration application is approved. This highlights an active, motivated consumer base seeking information, thus becoming a potential target audience for Canadian brands much earlier than traditionally anticipated.

PRIORITIZING ESSENTIALS

In their pre-arrival search, newcomers are prioritizing essential topics like finance (cost of living, expenses, salaries) (68%), housing (65%), and jobs (62%). Presumably, their searches generate signals, triggering targeted ads based on their search inquiries and behavior. Beyond these critical areas, they also explore life in Canada in general, including setting up routines and chores upon arrival, weather, healthcare, etc. The opportunity for brands lies in both capturing these early signals and also creating relevant content or being present within relevant content.

TWO-FOLD RESEARCH APPROACH

Two-thirds (68%) start their research with more formal data gathering through search, AI and wikis. This is followed by a "reality check" through social channels: newcomers tap into personal connections (62%), communities on social platforms (46%), and YouTube and online forums (30%). Remarkably, only 27% use Canadian Government/public websites. Consultants were used by only 8%. Brands that are recommended by friends, family, or other immigrants in social settings often become the initial choice, highlighting the value of trust and peer knowledge.

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Before arriving to Canada, we did some basic research on the neighborhoods where we want to live... also the shops with the national products and housing and hospitals near."

- Female, 35, India



KEY FINDINGS

THE "FIRST NOTICED" ADVANTAGE

A staggering 80% of newcomers choose among those brands they encountered first in their research, and three-quarters of them are still with these brands — these become a benchmark for their ongoing learning journey. This is unsurprising: in 40% of cases, the first impression was positive, and only in 10% was it negative. This underscores the immense power of early visibility.

INITIAL LOYALTY IS FRAGILE

A quarter of those first choices don't last long. Even large brands that have bigger budgets to build visibility through paid media, don't always retain acquired newcomers, who quickly learn about the marketplace and switch after more thorough research. A retention strategy must be implemented.

UNDERPERFORMING PAID CHANNELS

Notably, only 25% discovered brands through paid ads and 22% through encountering brands' presence. Most brands were proactively discovered through their own research (66%) and word of mouth (34%). This suggests a disconnect between how brands are currently reaching this audience and their preferred information channels during the critical pre-arrival phase.



WHY THIS MATTERS

This pre-arrival period is a "golden window" for acquisition. Brands that successfully own this research phase establish the crucial "first choice" that can lead to significant market share. However, the underperformance of traditional advertising and social media signals that brands may not be optimizing their channel strategies for this highly motivated and digitally savvy audience. Missed opportunities here directly translate to lost customers from the outset.



INSIGHTS IN ACTION

STRATEGIES FOR PRE-ARRIVAL

Optimize Online Presence & SEO: Ensure comprehensive, accessible information about essential services (banking, mobile plans, utilities) is easily discoverable through search engines. Digital marketing experts can optimize content for relevant keywords and ensure high search rankings.

Leverage Trusted Digital Ecosystems: Invest in content and presence on platforms where newcomers are actively seeking information and community. This includes specialized immigration forums, relevant online communities, and partnerships with trusted newcomer-focused websites.

Amplify Personal Networks Digitally: Create shareable content and referral programs that empower newcomers to recommend brands within their digital and social networks, tapping into the power of personal referrals.

Strategic Content for Pre-Arrival Needs: Develop informative content that addresses key newcomer concerns (e.g., "How to open a bank account in Canada," "Understanding Canadian mobile plans"). Content marketing teams can create valuable guides, videos, and articles tailored to these early-stage needs.

Seamless Welcoming Journey: Ensure that the transition from research to initial sign-up or contact is as smooth and intuitive as possible. Think where the newcomers are at the moment — don't force phone line as the key channel among those who are in market for their first mobile plan in Canada. Our CX and digital transformation teams can help design frictionless online onboarding processes.

CHAPTER 2

THE PERIL OF INITIAL CHOICES: HIGH CHURN AND RAPIDLY EVOLVING NEEDS

While being the "first noticed" offers a significant advantage, this initial brand loyalty is often fragile. Newcomers are not static consumers; their needs, market knowledge, and value perceptions evolve rapidly, creating a dynamic environment characterized by high churn rates within the first few years.



KEY FINDINGS

FRAGILE LOYALTY

Newcomers are enthusiastic about getting their first bank account, their first mobile plan, etc. in Canada, but soon, as they learn more, start treating their initial choices as temporary or interim. Post-arrival, just 51% remain exclusively with their first bank, and 14% have moved or plan to move to another bank. While most will stay with their first-choice banks, many will add other financial organizations, diminishing the lifetime value of the customer for the bank of their initial choice. More so among mobile operators: a mere 44% are still with their mobile provider, one-third of newcomers have already changed their primary operator, and an additional 17% have that on their radar. This indicates a significant "learning platform" phase where initial choices are re-evaluated, particularly as newcomers mention the process of learning about new brands within their first year.

WHAT COMPELS THE RE-EVALUATION

- **Active Pursuit of Optimal Value:** This churn is not due to complacency; only a slim 10% forgo post-landing research. Instead, an impressive 46% actively monitor bank promotions and 34% track mobile offers, revealing a dynamic cohort in continuous pursuit of optimal value: cost-effectiveness is usually the major reason (80%) for switching.
- **Evolving & Unique Needs:** While value-for-money reigns supreme initially, both quality (42%), e.g., convenience of mobile banking and connectivity within their mobile network, and niche needs like spam call filtering, family bundles, and international features significantly influence newcomers' service switches as their lives stabilize. As market knowledge and requirements rapidly evolve over their first years, these consumers proactively research competitive solutions elsewhere, often bypassing existing providers for new options.
- **Subtle deal-breakers:** Bad experience is not the major reason to ditch the initial choice, but a consistently positive experience is the key reason to stay (39%). Concerningly, 8% had to make a move, particularly in the financial area, due to poor treatment, including discrimination. For another 8%, not speaking their language or the far location of the branch was a deal-breaker.

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I switched to another mobile operator because I got a better deal with the phone and plan."

- Female, 35, Nigeria



KEY FINDINGS

PERCEIVED VALUE DETERIORATION

Initial brand advantage is highly fragile, as perceived value deteriorates swiftly once the convenience of initial choice wears off. Most newcomers (71%) reported revising their initial choices of banks, mobile providers, and other brands or services overall. In fact, almost half (46%) of newcomers expressed dissatisfaction or deteriorated value when discussing their initial brand choices. Perceived value often has to do with cost-effectiveness, but also with pragmatic factors like proximity or customer service quality.

FIRST TWO YEARS ARE THE REVISION WINDOW

a strong initial positive impression and convenience often lead to selection, but nearly 60% of newcomers switch a primary service (mobile or banking) within their initial years, indicating that initial brand loyalty is highly conditional and fragile. Most changes occur after the "honeymoon" period of initial settlement, typically within the first year or two as newcomers gain market knowledge and their needs evolve.



WHY THIS MATTERS

Brands that focus solely on acquisition without a robust retention strategy are missing a critical piece of the newcomer puzzle. The cost of acquiring a new customer is significantly higher than retaining an existing one. High churn among newcomers represents a massive loss of potential lifetime value and indicates a fundamental disconnect between initial offerings and evolving customer needs.



INSIGHTS IN ACTION

ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES FOR DRIVING LASTING LOYALTY

Integrate Retention as a Post-Acquisition 'Must-have': Retention planning must be an integral part of any acquisition strategy, viewing the first chosen brand as a temporary learning platform.

Reinforce Initial Choice: Despite an overflow on information, the first choice is always made with a feeling of a blindfold on their eyes. Newcomers' initial choices often involve a degree of guesstimation. They need continuous reassurance from the brands that they chose that they made the right decision.

Personalized 'Check-in' Journeys: Implement proactive, personalized communication strategies that "check in" with newcomers at key milestones (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, 2 years post-arrival). These check-ins should anticipate evolving needs and offer relevant upgrades, bundles, or loyalty rewards before they explore competitors.

Shift to Relationship-Driven Engagement: Brands must evolve from transactional interactions to building enduring, value-driven relationships. Experts can help design comprehensive CRM strategies.

Leverage AI for Predictive Personalization: Utilize AI and data analytics to understand and predict individual newcomer needs based on their time in Canada, family structure, and previous interactions. WPP Canada's data science and marketing technology experts can build and implement these intelligent systems.

Proactive Value Communication: Continuously highlight the value proposition of existing services and introduce new benefits. Don't wait for churn to react; proactively demonstrate ongoing value.

Address Niche Needs: Develop and communicate offerings that cater to specific newcomer pain points, such as international calling bundles, family plans, credit-building tools, or fraud protection.

CHAPTER 3

UNLOCKING THE "TEMPORARY TRAP": OPPORTUNITIES WITH TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

Beyond permanent residents and citizens, Canada hosts a significant and growing population of temporary residents (TRs) — a segment often overlooked by brands yet representing a substantial and largely untapped market opportunity.



KEY FINDINGS

STATUS SHAPES SERVICE ADOPTION

Newcomers' engagement with Canadian financial, telecom, and long-term commitment services directly correlates with their immigration status: Newcomers who are already Canadian citizens acquire almost double the number of services compared to temporary residents, with permanent residents also holding a significantly broader portfolio.

THE 'TEMPORARY TRAP'

While foundational banking and mobile services are universally adopted, temporary residents either deliberately avoid significant long-term commitments like mortgages and multi-year contracts or find them inaccessible due to their uncertain status. All temporary residents reported difficulties acquiring credit cards or loans, particularly due to a lack of Canadian credit history. Misconceptions about temporary residents' eligibility for other services (e.g., healthcare) also hinder access and may remain unchecked.

PERMANENT STATUS IS NOT IMMUNITY

Despite having longer-term views, permanent residents and citizens have also experienced issues with accessing banking services and understanding eligibility requirements upon arrival, in addition to being surprised by high or unexpected fees. A general lack of information and guidance made this even more difficult. Despite being able to engage with long-term options, these Newcomers arrive with similar needs for guidance as temporary residents.

KEY FINDINGS

HINDERED INTEGRATION

While among those who avoid certain products, 86% do that to deliberately mitigate financial and other risks, 46% avoid them due to inaccessibility. This cautious approach, intensified by access inequality to crucial financial products like credit-building tools and long-term savings plans, creates a "temporary trap." Temporary residents, even those intending to stay, cannot fully participate in the economy or integrate financially. They are either choosing to defer wealth-building or are actively blocked from essential services, directly reducing their connection to Canada and limiting individual growth and contribution.

GUIDANCE COMES FROM THIRD PARTIES

Temporary residents all mentioned having support in accessing financial services from settlement agencies or community organizations, while permanent residents and citizens more often relied on their personal networks. Many temporary residents also mentioned being supported by clear guidance from financial institutions themselves. This suggests that temporary residents have less established personal networks and look to formal support instead. Further, institutions that provide accessible, tailored information are critical for building trust with temporary newcomers and facilitating their financial integration.



WHY THIS MATTERS

The "temporary trap" is not just a societal issue; it's a massive missed market opportunity for brands. By failing to cater to the unique needs and constraints of temporary residents, businesses are leaving significant revenue on the table and foregoing the chance to build loyalty with individuals who may eventually become permanent residents and long-term customers. Innovating for this segment can foster goodwill and competitive advantage.

INSIGHTS IN ACTION

ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES FOR INNOVATING FOR TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

Develop Flexible & Short-Term Offerings: Create mobile and internet plans with flexible, short-term contracts. Introduce financial products (e.g., savings accounts, pre-paid credit cards) tailored to temporary residents (TRs) that don't require long-term commitments or established credit history. WPP Canada's product development and creative teams can help conceptualize and market these.

Specialized Credit-Building Pathways: Innovate with credit-building tools that recognize international history or temporary status. This could involve partnerships or unique product structures that allow TRs to establish a Canadian credit footprint.

Clear & Accessible Eligibility Information: Provide clear, jargon-free information on service eligibility for TRs. Dispel common misconceptions and highlight available products through targeted communication campaigns.

Bridge the Gap with Long-Term Aspirations: Recognize that many TRs aspire to permanent residency. Brands can offer tiered services or pathways that seamlessly transition as their immigration status evolves, building trust and continuity.

Proactive Community Engagement: Engage with TR communities and organizations to understand their specific pain points and needs, co-creating solutions that genuinely serve them.

CONCLUSION

FROM TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL LOYALTY

The journey of newcomers in Canada is a complex tapestry of discovery, adaptation, and evolving needs. For brands, this represents not just a market segment, but an opportunity to be a true partner in building new lives. The insights from WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" reveal that successful engagement requires a sophisticated, integrated approach that extends far beyond initial acquisition.

The "golden window" of pre-arrival research demands strategic digital presence and seamless onboarding. The "peril of initial choices" underscores the necessity of continuous, personalized value delivery to combat high churn. And the "temporary trap" highlights a significant, underserved segment ripe for innovative, flexible solutions.

By understanding these nuances, brands can move beyond transactional interactions to foster profound, long-term loyalty. WPP Canada is uniquely equipped to guide brands through this journey, transforming fleeting first impressions into lasting relationships that benefit both the newcomer and the brand, ultimately enriching the Canadian marketplace.



RECOMMENDATIONS & CALL TO ACTION

TO EFFECTIVELY ACQUIRE AND RETAIN NEW CANADIAN CONSUMERS, WPP CANADA URGES BRANDS TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

FOR CONSUMER BRANDS (ESPECIALLY BANKING, TELECOM, RETAIL)

- Invest in Pre-Arrival Digital Dominance: Partner with WPP Canada's digital marketing and content teams to optimize online visibility, create essential pre-arrival resources, and streamline digital onboarding processes.
- Implement AI-Powered Retention Strategies: Leverage WPP Canada's data science and marketing technology expertise to develop personalized "check-in" journeys, anticipate evolving needs, and deliver tailored offers that build continuous value and combat churn.
- Innovate Products & Communications for Temporary Residents: Collaborate with WPP Canada's consulting, product development, and creative teams to design flexible, accessible products (e.g., short-term contracts, credit-building pathways) and communicate their benefits clearly to temporary residents.

FOR MARKETING DIRECTORS & CRM MANAGERS:

- Integrate Acquisition & Retention Strategies: Work with WPP Canada to create end-to-end customer journey maps for newcomers, ensuring that retention is considered from the very first touchpoint, and that CRM systems are designed to track and respond to their evolving needs.
- Prioritize Cultural Intelligence in Personalization: Move beyond demographic data to incorporate cultural insights into personalized messaging and offers. WPP Canada can provide these deep insights to ensure relevance and authenticity.
- Develop Brand Ambassadors from Newcomers: Cultivate loyalty programs and communities that empower satisfied newcomers to become brand advocates, leveraging the power of personal networks for acquisition and retention.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CALL TO ACTION

FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TEAMS:

- **Design for Evolving Needs:** Partner with WPP Canada's consumer insights and innovation teams to identify and develop products and services that address the rapidly changing and niche needs of newcomers at different stages of their Canadian journey.
- **Embrace Flexibility & Accessibility:** Develop flexible product structures and clear eligibility criteria that cater to diverse immigration statuses, particularly for temporary residents, ensuring offerings are accessible and understood.
- **Simplify Complexity:** Focus on user-friendly design and clear communication in product features and benefits, alleviating the "hidden costs" of adaptation and making brand interactions easy and intuitive.



WPP

CANADA'S NEW VOICES

PART 4

The Authenticity Imperative:
How Brands Can Connect with
Canada's New Voices



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a multicultural nation like Canada, brands face an imperative to move beyond superficial gestures and engage with newcomers on a deeper, more authentic level. WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" series reveals that while visual diversity is appreciated, generic or stereotypical communications often fall short, missing the profound cultural nuances and real needs of new Canadians. Furthermore, the concept of "Made in Canada" holds significant symbolic weight for newcomers, but their definition prioritizes genuine economic and societal contributions over mere historical heritage, coupled with a strong expectation of value.

This white paper, the final in our series, argues that true connection with Canada's new voices requires brands to embrace an "authenticity imperative." We dissect the pitfalls of superficial diversity, unpack the nuanced expectations behind "buying Canadian," and expose critical disconnects in communication and customer service expectations. WPP Canada's deep experience makes it the cultural intelligence partner of choice, offering brands the strategic guidance and integrated solutions needed to invest in deep consumer insights, deliver targeted and culturally sensitive communications, demonstrate genuine community contributions, and balance value with local identity. By doing so, brands can build profound loyalty, avoid alienation, and truly integrate themselves into the lives of new Canadians.



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This research unveils the nuanced journey of newcomers, revealing insights that demand more than broad gestures; they require precision, empathy, and strategic action from brands. At VML Enterprise Solutions, we work with our clients to translate these critical understandings into authentic communications that drive growth. We aim to dismantle barriers, build trust, and ensure every new Canadian truly sees themselves reflected and valued by the brands they choose.

- Emma Toth, Chief Client Officer, VML Canada



INTRODUCTION

THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF BRAND CONNECTION IN A DIVERSE CANADA

As Canada continues to welcome newcomers, the dynamics of brand loyalty and engagement are evolving rapidly. In an era where authenticity is paramount, the simple act of featuring diverse faces in advertising is no longer enough to forge deep connections. New Canadians are a discerning audience, actively seeking brands that understand their unique journey, respect their cultural background, and genuinely contribute to their new home.

WPP Canada's "Canada's New Voices" research has consistently illuminated the profound impact of the newcomer experience on everything from media consumption to purchasing decisions. In this final white paper of our series, we confront a critical "tug of war": should newcomers adjust to brands, or must brands adapt to truly resonate with new Canadians? Our findings strongly advocate for the latter, emphasizing that genuine connection is built on understanding, respect, and tangible value.

This paper delves into the "authenticity imperative" that brands must embrace. We will explore why superficial diversity is failing, how the "Made in Canada" ethos is being redefined by newcomers, and the crucial cultural nuances that can make or break brand relationships. WPP Canada, with its deep cultural intelligence, creative expertise, and integrated marketing solutions, offers a pathway for brands to move beyond generic inclusivity to build lasting trust and loyalty with Canada's newest and most dynamic consumers.



CHAPTER 1

BEYOND VISUALS: THE PITFALLS OF STEREOTYPICAL DIVERSITY IN COMMUNICATIONS

In an attempt to be inclusive, many brands have adopted visual diversity in their communications. While well-intentioned, our research indicates that this often falls short, creating a perception of tokenism rather than genuine understanding, and risking alienation rather than connection.



KEY FINDINGS

IN GENERAL, BRANDS CAN — AND ARE — UNDERSTANDING NEWCOMERS

Over half (55%) of newcomers said that brands have at least a "good" understanding of their needs, values, and expectations. However, almost half (42%) only felt that understanding to be moderate or average. While only 3% said that brands didn't understand them "at all," there is still room overall for brands to improve their approaches to this audience.

DIVERSITY EFFORTS FALL SHORT

Brands Land with Stereotypes: Newcomers often find Canadian brands' communications only moderately aligned with their values. While brands gain credit for visual diversity and inclusive efforts, this often feels generic or stereotypical, missing deeper cultural nuances and real needs.

THE GAP BETWEEN EFFORT AND UNDERSTANDING

The critical insight is that while basic visual diversity is appreciated, its superficiality means brands fail to connect with the deeper needs and values of newcomers. This is the difference between seeing diversity and understanding it.

RISKS OF INAUTHENTICITY

This missed opportunity can lead to distrust and a lack of loyalty, especially when initial convenience wears off. Brands risk being seen as opportunistic rather than truly understanding, potentially alienating a segment seeking genuine connection and clarity in their new environment.

KEY FINDINGS

EXAMPLES OF DISCONNECTS:
MAJOR DISCONNECTS ARISE FROM

OPEN CANNABIS ADVERTISING
(unfamiliar or culturally sensitive for some)

UNEXPECTED PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF SENSITIVE TOPICS
(differing social norms)

CONFUSING SATIRICAL ADS
(cultural references or humour lost in translation)

OPAQUE PRODUCT INFORMATION
(lack of clarity in crucial details)



KEY FINDINGS

This gap between average and good understanding may appear subtle, but when brands compete to build strong emotional ties with newcomers, it's a dealbreaker. Respondents described "average" brands as "generic," "safe," "vanilla," "adequate," and "follows trends." While these words have different meanings for different people, they don't help brands become the ultimate, #1 choice. Newcomers don't appreciate half-measures and expect brands to walk the walk. Among the learnings we derived from the collected insights, the most important are:

- Brands are doing well with visible diversity but must push into subtle cultural understanding: language tone, community celebrations, and product relevance.
- Inclusivity is a double-edged sword — appreciated but forced or tokenistic when lacking cultural depth.
- Product assortment matters — ethnic product availability affects perceived "understanding" as much as ad messaging.
- Messaging clarity counts — overly broad slogans or promotional claims (e.g., "buy Canadian" for imported goods) undermine trust.
- Targeting sometimes lacks nuance — indirect focus on groups can cause misinterpretation and can feel adequate but not special.
- Perfect scores come from emotional and functional recognition — brands win when they both deliver inclusive messaging and meet daily needs effortlessly.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Superficial diversity is a double-edged sword. While it might tick a box for inclusivity, it fails to engage meaningfully and can even backfire, creating a perception of insincerity. Brands that treat diversity as a checkbox rather than an embedded value miss the opportunity to build authentic relationships. This undermines trust, impacts brand reputation, and ultimately stifles market growth within the newcomer segment.

WPP Canada understands that genuine connection requires profound cultural intelligence woven into every aspect of a brand's presence.



CHAPTER 2

THE "MADE IN CANADA" EQUATION: CONTRIBUTION OVER HERITAGE (AND PRICE)

The concept of "Made in Canada" holds significant emotional and practical weight for newcomers, offering a powerful avenue for brand connection. However, their interpretation of this ethos is distinct and profoundly linked to their journey of integration.



KEY FINDINGS

BUYING CANADIAN HELPS INTEGRATION

Newcomers genuinely embrace buying Canadian (over 55% find it important), driven by a desire to "give back" and actively "become Canadian." In fact, one in five view it as very important, while only 8% do not consider it important at all. This is a powerful signal of their commitment to their new home. For younger newcomers (under age 35), buying Canadian is seen as a way to participate in their communities and as part of their immigration journey, helping them build a sense of belonging and identity. As one respondent expressed, it helps them understand their new home: it is very important to learn how Canadians live and work, making *buying* Canadian a social act tied to *being* Canadian.

VALUE OF CLEAR TAGGING

Crucially, 84% highly value clear brand tagging like "Made in Canada," as it provides essential transparency and a decision shortcut in an often-unfamiliar market. Clear, recognizable icons and messaging help newcomers identify which brands to choose to support the economy (32%) or express their developing identities (18%). This is especially important given that the maple leaf was the only symbol participants consistently referenced when recognizing Canadian brands, highlighting the need for quick and effective identifiers.

REDEFINING "CANADIAN"

Newcomers' definition of "Canadian" prioritizes a brand's ownership, as well as active economic and societal contributions today, over mere historical heritage. They quickly discern and dismiss inauthentic claims. A legacy brand that is owned by non-Canadian entities and doesn't actively contribute may be seen as less Canadian than a brand with visible community initiatives or clear local ownership. As some newcomers observe, well-known Canadian brand imagery is not always truly Canadian, as many brands are owned by larger international companies, though they are still widely perceived as local. This view is shared by others who prefer brands that actively remain Canadian, noting that many lose that identity after being acquired by U.S. companies. Alongside the 18% who already associate Canadian brands with trustworthiness, quality, and freshness — especially in food — these consumers emphasize the importance of genuine and visible Canadian ties.

KEY FINDINGS

CANADIAN BRANDS & THE FACE OF CANADA

Newcomers actively seek connections with Canadian brands, viewing them as direct representatives of Canada itself — a unique opportunity for forging deep emotional ties. Motivations for prioritizing Canadian brands are largely social and value-driven, including economic solidarity and cultural integration, alongside perceived associations with quality, sustainability, and community.

THE AFFORDABILITY IMPERATIVE

Importantly, "Made in Canada" cannot solely justify significant price premiums. Newcomers, often navigating financial strain (as highlighted in part 1), prioritize affordability. Brands must share the economic burden of buying local, ensuring value balances with support. Pragmatic concerns — such as perceptions of better quality, lower cost, or greater variety among non-Canadian options — often lead newcomers to choose them. While Canadian brands are preferred when all else is equal, 1 in 10 respondents said quality and/or cost would outweigh nationality. Geopolitical and economic factors also shape decisions, with 16% referencing Canada-U.S. tensions and sometimes viewing Canadian goods as cheaper due to tariffs. Overall, while higher costs are understood, there is a clear expectation that brands "split the bill" with consumers.

RISKS OF INAUTHENTICITY

Brands failing to communicate genuine contributions, or making inauthentic claims, risk eroding the associations that 18% of newcomers already have with Canadian brands: trustworthiness, quality, and integrity. This not only damages their own brand loyalty but also chips away at the broader perception of Canada itself. A further 16% are indifferent or negative toward Canadian identity in branding, often due to cost and quality concerns, meaning origin is not a deciding factor. Overtly patriotic messaging can also feel exclusionary to some newcomers, reducing their sense of inclusivity and comfort with these brands.

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"Honestly, I would rather choose the brands that actively choose to be Canadian...because I feel like not a lot of Canadian brands are proud to be Canadian. Also, some of the brands end up getting bought by the US."

- Female, 19, Syria



WHY THIS MATTERS

"Made in Canada" is a potent symbol for newcomers, signifying their desire to participate and contribute. Brands that genuinely embody this ethos, by demonstrating tangible contributions to communities and upholding value, can build profound loyalty. However, those that rely on heritage alone or fail to justify price points risk losing a highly motivated and discerning consumer base. It's a call for transparency, tangible impact, and a clear value proposition.

To achieve this, brands must showcase Canadian identity with pride, authenticity, and inclusivity, considering how messaging can make all segments feel included — potentially by focusing less on identity and more on shared values. It is also crucial to define "Canadian quality" specifically by category and audience (e.g., craftsmanship, durability, sustainability), rather than assuming a universal understanding. Optimizing communication strategies to address diverse motivations — from cultural solidarity to economic value — will be key to connecting with this consumer group.

CHAPTER 3

NAVIGATING CULTURAL NUANCES: COMMUNICATION, ADVERTISING, AND CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Beyond the visual and symbolic, the everyday interactions newcomers have with brands — through advertising, product information, and customer service — are profoundly shaped by cultural expectations. Ignoring these nuances leads to frustration, confusion, and a significant erosion of trust.



KEY FINDINGS

2 out of 3 New Canadians have at least one example of advertising that was confusing or unclear to them. Among recent newcomers who landed in the last two years, this rises to a striking 3 out of 4. While the reasons vary, the most commonly mentioned are outlined below.

CULTURAL OR VALUES MISMATCH

This is twofold. First, brands sometimes communicate messages that newcomers find inappropriate or unfamiliar — most often references to regulated substances (including store signage and window displays), as well as political statements. While newcomers appreciate brands that reflect shared Canadian values, they generally expect for-profit companies to avoid controversial topics. Second, confusion arises when brands rely on culturally embedded language and cues — such as shared humor, references, and idioms—that primarily resonate with long-established residents.

BRANDS TO MATCH EXPECTATIONS

Newcomers are expecting brands to match their expectations, personal values, and preferred tone when communicating with them. 71% mentioned that it is at least moderately important, and 42% at least very important. On the importance of matching values, the study revealed three segments among newcomers:

- **Value Guardians (42%):** Highly selective shoppers who insist that brands fully match their personal values, culture, and tone. Ethics, trust, and cultural respect sit at the top of their decision-making hierarchy — they care about fair trade, environmental responsibility, inclusive representation, and avoiding any disrespectful portrayal. They are quick to disengage from brands whose values conflict with their own. Demographically, they skew older (mid-30s and up) and high-income (often \$100k+), with a strong presence among South Asian respondents who cite halal/non-halal labeling and festival recognition as important. Women are slightly more represented in this segment, and recent immigrants (≤ 2 years in Canada) show heightened alignment demands before adaptation. Value Guardians see brands not just as suppliers, but as moral partners — alignment builds loyalty, while misalignment undermines trust.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Balanced Pragmatists (29%):** They walk a middle path: they appreciate when brands match their values but are equally — or more — concerned with quality, price, and convenience. Values alignment is important only if all other factors are equal; honesty, transparency, and clear communication matter more than ideological match. This segment is diverse demographically, spanning all age groups but with moderate representation among Alberta residents and middle-income earners (\$50k–\$99k). They show a balanced male–female split and are common among East Asian respondents, who often combine appreciation for cultural nods with a pragmatic eye for product performance. Balanced Pragmatists are thoughtful shoppers — they won't actively avoid brands due to differing values unless there's a glaring conflict, preferring to weigh tangible benefits against ethical fit.
- **Open-minded Realists (29%):** Focused primarily on functional benefits: affordability, convenience, and product quality. They accept that local or global brands may not share their personal values, viewing cultural differences as a learning opportunity rather than a barrier. Cultural or ideological alignment is secondary — they'll switch brands if the offer is better, as long as messaging is not blatantly offensive or unethical. Demographically, this segment skews younger (18–24) and lower-income (<\$50k), with a higher proportion of male respondents and notable representation across Middle Eastern and Philippine origins. They are price-sensitive and deal-driven, making them responsive to promotions and practical messaging. For Realists, the brand's role is to solve their need at a good price, not to mirror their worldview — but crossing the line into disrespect risks losing them.

KEY FINDINGS

DIVERSE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Unfamiliar customer service expectations and variable pricing models create frustration. What might be considered efficient or normal in one culture (e.g., automated phone systems, self-service portals) can be perceived as impersonal or unhelpful by someone from a different background.

OPAQUE PRODUCT INFORMATION

The lack of clear, culturally contextualized product information adds to the "information overload" newcomers experience, making purchasing decisions difficult and leading to buyer's remorse.

THE 'TUG OF WAR'

The overarching theme here is a "tug of war" over who should adjust. Newcomers expect a degree of adaptation from brands, reflecting Canada's multicultural promise. When brands fail to adjust, the disconnect becomes palpable.



KEY FINDINGS

We asked newcomers what factors were most important in their initial choices in Canada across three key categories: banks, mobile carriers, and grocery stores. While broad values like trust, fairness, cultural respect, and quality are universally significant in defining an "ideal" brand, newcomers often bring specific priorities to their decisions. Their "why" behind a choice frequently reflects deeper personal values rather than just price or product specifications, sometimes prioritizing practical needs and other times alignment with core beliefs.

- **Banks:** Trustworthiness was the most cited value at 37%, often paired with convenience (32%) and low fees/affordability (24%). Newcomers seek secure, reliable institutions with transparent fees, inclusive offerings (e.g., halal/non-halal clarity), and strong customer relationships.
- **Mobile carriers:** Affordability was paramount at 40%, closely followed by good coverage/stability (37%) and reliable service (29%). This highlights a desire for fair and transparent practices, such as affordable plans and honest billing, alongside the fundamental necessity of reliable access.
- **Grocery stores:** Affordability topped the list at 42%, with variety/multicultural options at 29% and fresh produce at 24%. Newcomers value stores that demonstrate respect and connection by stocking culturally familiar foods, alongside expectations for cleanliness, quality, health, and safety.

KEY FINDINGS

Immigration recency powerfully shapes shopping priorities, reflecting how adaptation to Canada's economic and cultural environment evolves over time. Recent arrivals zone in on cost-fit and accessibility, while longer-term residents look for richer service quality and deeper brand trust.

- **Recent immigrants (≤2 years)** focus on affordability and essential access — low-fee banks, budget mobile plans with decent coverage, and grocery stores offering low prices and multicultural variety for dietary continuity.
- **Non-recent immigrants (3–5+ years)** gradually shift toward quality and service — banks with competitive rates and investment tools, carriers with strong reliability and transparent billing, and grocery stores chosen for fresh, high-quality produce and shopping convenience.

THE "TUG OF WAR"

Some newcomers expect a degree of adaptation from brands, reflecting Canada's multicultural promise, but others ultimately understand they may not be the intended audience in certain advertising or messaging. Newcomers also expect a period of adaptation of their own, by nature of having moved to a new country. When brands fail to adjust in general, however, the disconnect is deeply felt.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Every touchpoint with a brand is an opportunity to build or break trust. When communication styles, advertising content, or service delivery clashes with cultural norms or expectations, it creates friction, undermines brand promise and leads to customer dissatisfaction and churn. Brands need to actively bridge this cultural gap to ensure a smooth, positive, and trust-building experience for new Canadians.



INSIGHTS IN ACTION

1. INVEST IN DEPP CULTURAL INSIGHTS, NOT ASSUMPTIONS

STRATEGY:

Move beyond demographic data to invest in qualitative research, ethnographic studies, and partnerships with community organizations to gain a profound understanding of newcomers' cultural values, purchase drivers, media habits, and pain points.

WPP CANADA'S ROLE:

Our data and insights teams utilize advanced analytics, qualitative research methodologies, and cultural expertise to unearth nuanced consumer truths. We go beyond survey results to understand the why behind newcomer behaviours and preferences.

2. DELIVERED TARGET, CULTURALLY SENSITIVE COMMUNICATIONS BEYOND GENERIC DIVERSITY

STRATEGY

Recognize that "newcomers" are not a monolith. Develop targeted communication strategies that speak directly to specific cultural communities within the newcomer segment, avoiding cultural ambiguities or misleading claims. Campaigns should balance broad appeal with specific cultural insights.

WPP CANADA'S ROLE

Our creative and media agencies specialize in crafting campaigns that resonate authentically. This involves not just translation, but transcreation — adapting concepts, imagery, and messaging to be culturally appropriate and impactful for distinct communities, leveraging media channels where these audiences are present.

INSIGHTS IN ACTION

3. DEMONSTRATE GENUINE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION (THE NEW 'MADE IN CANADA'):

STRATEGY

Brands, whether established or aspiring Canadian, must visibly demonstrate their genuine contributions to communities and clearly define product value. This means investing in local initiatives, supporting newcomer programs, and transparently communicating this impact.

WPP CANADA'S ROLE

Our PR and CSR strategists help brands identify authentic community engagement opportunities, develop impactful programs, and communicate their genuine contributions through compelling storytelling and credible channels, aligning with the "give back" ethos newcomers value.

4. BALANCE VALUE WITH BRAND PROMISE FOR 'MADE IN CANADA' PRODUCTS

STRATEGY

While "Made in Canada" is important, it cannot solely justify significant price premiums. Brands must share the economic burden of "buying local," ensuring value balances with support to cultivate long-term, accessible connections. Communicate the value of "Made in Canada" beyond just origin.

WPP CANADA'S ROLE

Our brand strategists and marketing experts can help brands articulate and communicate their unique value proposition for "Made in Canada" products, ensuring it aligns with newcomer affordability expectations and their desire for genuine quality and contribution. This includes transparent pricing strategies and clear communication of benefits.

INSIGHTS IN ACTION

5. OPTIMIZE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FOR CULTURAL NUANCE

STRATEGY

Review all customer touchpoints, from product information to customer service interactions, through a cultural lens. Provide clear, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive product information. Train customer service teams on cross-cultural communication and empathy.

WPP Canada's Role

Our CX and digital transformation teams can audit customer journeys, identify friction points, and design culturally optimized service models, including multilingual support, intuitive digital tools, and communication training for front-line staff.



CONCLUSION

THE FUTURE OF BRAND LOYALTY IS AUTHENTICALLY INCLUSIVE

The journey of newcomers in Canada is a powerful narrative of resilience, aspiration, and the redefinition of identity. For brands, this represents an unparalleled opportunity to build relationships that transcend transactions and foster true loyalty. However, to succeed, brands must embrace the "authenticity imperative."

The era of superficial diversity is over. New Canadians demand and deserve genuine understanding, transparent communication, and tangible contributions. They are actively seeking brands that mirror their values, support their integration, and respect their cultural heritage while helping them build a new future.

WPP Canada believes that brands that invest in deep cultural intelligence, craft targeted and sensitive communications, actively demonstrate their commitment to Canadian communities, and deliver genuine value will not only capture the attention of new Canadians but will earn their lasting trust and loyalty. This isn't just good marketing; it's essential for building a truly inclusive and prosperous Canada for all.



RECOMMENDATIONS & CALL TO ACTION

TO TRULY CONNECT WITH CANADA'S NEW VOICES, WPP CANADA URGES BRANDS TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

FOR BRAND MANAGERS & MARKETING HEADS

- **Prioritize Cultural Intelligence Training:** Engage WPP Canada to provide bespoke cultural intelligence training for your marketing teams, ensuring a deep understanding of diverse newcomer segments.
- **Shift from Generic to Targeted Campaigns:** Collaborate with WPP Canada's creative and media agencies to develop integrated campaigns that speak directly to specific cultural communities with nuanced messaging and imagery, delivered through relevant channels.
- **Measure Authentic Engagement:** Work with WPP Canada's data and analytics teams to develop new KPIs that go beyond reach, focusing on metrics that measure genuine connection, sentiment, and perceived authenticity among newcomer audiences.

FOR DEI LEADERS & CSR DIRECTORS

- **Integrate DEI with Brand Strategy:** Partner with WPP Canada to align your DEI and CSR initiatives directly with your brand's core values and newcomer engagement strategy, ensuring authentic contributions that resonate deeply.
- **Showcase Impact, Not Just Intent:** Leverage WPP Canada's PR and content expertise to transparently communicate your brand's genuine community contributions and social impact, particularly as it relates to supporting newcomer integration.
- **Empower Newcomer Voices Internally:** Collaborate with WPP Canada's internal communications specialists to create platforms that amplify the voices and experiences of newcomer employees, fostering a truly inclusive culture that extends to external messaging.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CALL TO ACTION

FOR COMMUNICATION DIRECTORS

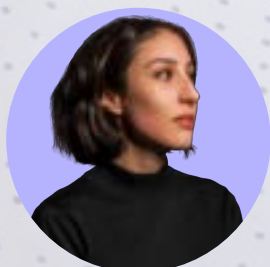
- **Audit All Brand Communications for Cultural Nuance:** Engage WPP Canada to conduct a comprehensive audit of all advertising, digital content, and customer service scripts to identify and rectify potential cultural disconnects or stereotypes.
- **Develop Cross-Cultural Communication Guidelines:** Work with WPP Canada to establish clear guidelines for all external and internal communications, ensuring sensitivity, clarity, and cultural appropriateness across diverse audiences.
- **Invest in Multilingual Content & Support:** Partner with WPP Canada's content and digital teams to provide essential information and customer support in multiple languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of Canada's newcomers.



CONTRIBUTORS



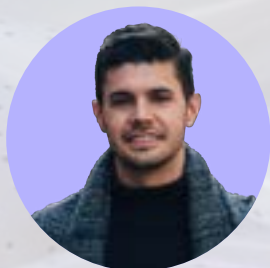
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Canada's New Voices" is built on a foundation of rigorous, human-led research designed to yield actionable insights into the nuanced newcomer experience. Over 100 in-depth interviews were conducted with new Canadians (aged 18-50, arrived post-2021, family decision-makers), carefully balanced by country of origin and gender to capture a rich and diverse range of perspectives. This extensive qualitative and quantitative data explores critical dimensions of the newcomer journey, from initial research to long-term integration, providing a holistic understanding of the challenges, aspirations, and consumer behaviours shaping their path to belonging. To further empower our research analysts and uncover deeper correlations within this vast dataset, WPP's proprietary AI platform, WPP Open, was used to identify complex patterns and accelerate thematic analysis.

ABOUT WPP

WPP is the trusted growth partner for the world's leading brands. We bring together a powerful network of leading agencies in Canada, spanning creative, media, public relations, data, technology, and specialist communications. With deep local market expertise and unparalleled global resources, WPP Canada helps brands, businesses, and governments connect with people in meaningful ways. Our "Canada's New Voices" insight series reflects our commitment to understanding evolving consumer segments, driving authentic engagement, and providing actionable, integrated strategies that foster positive societal impact and business growth within the unique Canadian context. We are uniquely positioned to help organizations navigate the complex communication and experience landscape of newcomers across Canada, ensuring messages are not just heard, but understood, felt, and acted upon, leading to lasting relationships and shared success.