

MEDIA RELEASE

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If Sex Sells, Humour Sells Way More

For Canada's first-ever Advertising Week, Canadians get candid about what works and what doesn't in revealing survey

Toronto, ON – Canadians have called it – humour trumps sex, and by a surprisingly wide margin. A full 67 per cent of Canadians say humour is the secret ingredient that makes an advertisement most persuasive, compared to only seven per cent who feel that ultimately, sex sells. Moreover, 65 per cent of Canadians believe this country should veer away from European-style commercials that are considered risqué. This is according to the latest research conducted by the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) and Leger Marketing in a revealing survey released for Canada's upcoming, inaugural Advertising Week (January 26-30, 2009).

Inspired by the blogosphere, this survey, entitled the *Adosphere Report*, asked Canadians to have their say in advertising. The findings reveal a lot about who Canadians are and how they see themselves.

Want to know more about Canadian culture? Consider analyzing Canadian advertising. A large majority of Canadians (73 per cent) believe this country's unique culture shapes Canadian advertising and reflects it. Sixty per cent of Canadians also say that patriotic advertisements have them brimming with national pride, inspiring them to cheer for Canada either loudly and proudly, or quietly in true Canadian style.

"Our survey findings indicate that Canadians have a real personal interactivity with this country's advertising," said Gillian Graham, CEO of the ICA. "Canada's first-ever Advertising Week was designed to recognize and celebrate that relationship on a platform that brings the advertising industry and the public together."

Indeed, according to the *Adosphere Report*, nearly six in 10 Canadians (59 per cent) admit looking forward to their brands' favourite advertising. That statistic jumps to 76 per cent among the Generation Y group. Canadians do not appear to be a star-struck bunch however. More than half of the survey respondents (53 per cent) think celebrity endorsements in advertising do not work.

The survey results also suggest this country is headed for an *Advertising 2.0* world. Almost three out of four respondents (71 per cent) believe advertising will become increasingly interactive, reflecting the new Web 2.0 world.

As well it should, considering the fact that advertising touches just about every person across the country. The advertising industry contributes more than \$24 billion to the Canadian economy, generates \$1.5 billion for programming, and donates more than \$500 million in charity and non-profit work each year.

Canada is now in the company of France, the US and other countries around the world that host their own Advertising Weeks. With special guest appearances from key international figures such as marketing mogul Sir Richard Branson, and brain scientist and best-selling author Dr. Jill Bolte-Taylor, Canada's Advertising Week is poised to inspire Canadians from coast to coast.

Various public and industry events including keynote and panel presentations, thought-leadership conferences, student mentoring initiatives and agency open-houses will be held across Canada in cities such as Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver. Many of Canada's top advertising gurus such as Frank Palmer, Paul Lavoie, Miles Nadal and Sunni Boot will also take part in Advertising Week.

Tickets for the various must-attend events across Canada are on sale at www.advertisingweek.ca. Seating is limited for various events and will sell out quickly.

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1,504 Canadians, 18 years of age or older. The interviews were conducted from October 28 to November 3, 2008. The study has a margin of error of ± 2.53 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Advertising Week is made possible by the generous volunteer contributions of several leading agencies who are 'Founding Partners', including: DDB Canada (public relations services), Bos (graphic and web design, advertising, interactive and guerilla marketing services), Marketel (public service announcements), Publicis (Youth Day events), Cossette Communications (communications services and leadership of a luncheon for the financial community), PHD Canada (media buying services) and Bensimon Byrne (Ad Women of Toronto initiative).

Advertising Week is being spearheaded by the ICA with support from the following "Founding Contributors": Association of Canadian Advertisers, Advertising Standards Canada, Canadian Marketing Association, Canadian Newspaper Association, Canadian Community Newspapers Association, Association Marketing de Montreal/PCM, National Advertising Benevolent Society, Radio Marketing Bureau, Association of Quebec Advertising Agencies, Interactive Advertising Bureau of Canada, Out-of-Home Marketing Association of Canada, Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, Canadian Media Directors' Council, and the Ad Club of Toronto.

Key media sponsors of Advertising Week include: Corus Entertainment, CTV, Canwest, CBC and Torstar. *Marketing Magazine* is a silver sponsor. Additional bronze sponsors include: Leger Marketing, *The Globe and Mail*, Puma, Transcontinental PLM, Yahoo! Canada, Colour Innovations, Pollination, Cinélande, 4WS, Studio Apollo, Sonart, AICE and Stealing Time. Several others are pending.

About Advertising Week

Canada's inaugural Advertising Week (www.advertisingweek.ca) is taking place from January 26 to 30, 2009. The week is designed to celebrate the advertising industry's social and economic impact to the Canadian landscape, create a dedicated public platform to showcase the industry's creativity in business communication, and to inspire and develop the next generation of talent for this industry.

About the ICA

The Institute of Communication Agencies or the ICA (www.icacanada.ca) is the professional business association which represents Canada's communication and advertising agencies. ICA promotes thought leadership, higher standards and best practices. It serves as the largest source of information, advice, education and training for Canada's communication and advertising industry. ICA's member agencies and subsidiaries account for over 75 per cent of all national advertising in Canada, with an economic impact worth more than \$18 billion annually.

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