

## MARKETING IN A MULTICULTURAL WORLD

Today nearly 20% of the population of Canada is a visible minority and by 2031 that number is expected to rise to over 30%. What does that mean for marketing to a highly, culturally diverse set of consumers? Does it mean that as marketers we need to build a multilingual marketing team, each focusing on a different cultural group? Does it mean that we need to become experts in a wide variety of cultural customs? The answer is no.

What we do need to do is become better marketers, using those marketing techniques that supersede language and cultural barriers and speak to human nature. Doesn't everyone coo at the sight of a beautiful baby? Most people are disgusted by the images of human suffering or devastation. While these are extreme examples there are many examples of unifying images or messages that would appeal to any individual, no matter where they came from.

It is likely of no surprise to any of you reading this that the two largest groups of ethnic minorities in Canada are Chinese and South Asians, approximately 10% of the Canadian population. Demographically there are some important differences between the Chinese and South Asian communities compared to other Canadians groups:

- 33% of visible minorities are between the ages of 24-44 compared to 27% for the non-visible minorities.
- The average household size of newcomers to Canada is 44% larger than the average Canadian household, driven primarily because of a greater number of children. This is particularly true among the South Asian communities where the average household will have 2-3+ children.
- Chinese and South Asians are nearly twice as likely to have completed a bachelors degree or higher.

Behaviourally, newcomers to Canada from China and India will be much more connected and reliant on the internet for information and e-commerce, specifically on mobile applications. Over 40% of Chinese, and 30% of Indians, use the mobile internet every day or nearly every day compared to less than 30% of Americans, over a six month period.

The facts listed above seem to highlight a need to market to the Chinese and Indian consumers differently. However, despite their cultural differences many Chinese and South Asians are engaged in mainstream media:

- 50%+ have read English/French newspapers in the past 7 days
- 45-50% have listened to English/French radio stations in the past 7 days
- 65-75% have watched English/French television in the past 7 days

While there may be some changes required to marketing strategies to accommodate the immigrant or first generation Canadian, there is nothing that will be alienating to a non-

immigrant, such as a continued focus on family or ensuring communications are speaking to a more educated and savvy consumer.

For mainstream products, using mainstream media should appeal to any average consumer whether a visible minority or not, the key will be to be much more careful in using common messages that will appeal to a broader consumer group. For this reason, careful marketing research to build marketing strategies for new or even existing products becomes crucial to success across a wide range of consumers.

