

Public Relations in Canada

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Part 1: Background information

Official Name: Canada

Capital City: Ottawa



Provinces of Canada: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Major Cities: Toronto, Montréal, Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Québec City, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Kitchener-Waterloo, Abbotsford

Official Language: English and French are the languages for national, political and commercial communication in Canada.

Type of Government: Constitutional monarchy that is also a parliamentary democracy and a federation.

Location: Northern North America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean on the east, North Pacific Ocean on the west, Arctic Ocean on the north and United States on the south.

Currency: Canadian dollar (CAD)

Culture:

One of seven countries in the Geert Hofstede research that has Individualism (IDV) as their highest Dimension, Canadian society has a more individualistic attitude and relatively loose bonds with others. The populace is generally self-reliant and looks out for themselves and close family members. Privacy is considered the cultural norm, and attempts at personal ingratiating may meet with rebuff.

Among high IDV countries, success is measured by personal achievement. Canadians tend to be self-confident and open to discussions on general topics; however, they hold their personal privacy off limits to all but closest friends.

Canadians' lowest ranking Dimension is Long-Term Orientation. This low LTO ranking is indicative of the society's belief in meeting its obligations and tends to reflect an appreciation for cultural traditions.

Canada's Power Distance (PDI) is relatively low, which is indicative of a greater equality between societal levels, including government, organizations and even within families. This orientation reinforces a cooperative interaction across power levels and creates a more stable cultural environment.

Canada enjoys a society that is open and relatively free of class distinctions. Most Canadians take pride in the fact that all people deserve the same rights and respect, regardless of their gender, race, religion or cultural background. People in Canada usually resent comments that seem disrespectful to anyone from a particular background.

It should be noted there is tension between the French province of Québec and other Canadian provinces. Citizens of Québec tend to be more private and reserved.

Part 2: Overview of the public relations industry

Public relations in Canada is practiced according to the principles of strategic management, public responsibility and two-way symmetrical communication. Communication helps build relationships among organizations and publics, developing policies that are aligned with the public's interest.

Canadian corporate leaders are searching for communications practitioners who can think strategically, are well-versed in media, have a thorough understanding of communication and business theory and can be effective members of the senior management team.

Because of the dual culture of the country, national public relations campaigns include special considerations for communications with the Québec market. These considerations go beyond simple translation of the messages. Quite often, advertising campaigns will offer a distinctly different delivery of the core message. The same is true for other public relations tactics.

The dominant public relations society in Canada is the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS). CPRS was founded in 1948 from two original groups — the first in Montréal and the second in Toronto.

In 1953, these became joined to form the Canadian Public Relations Society and, in 1957, the organization was incorporated as a national society. The organization now has 17 member societies located throughout Canada and approximately 2,000 members, an estimated 10 percent of all public relations practitioners in Canada. All members adhere to the constitution of the national society.

CPRS dedicates itself to the establishment and maintenance of high professional, educational and ethical standards in public relations. It also offers workshops, seminars and special events catered to the needs of members.

CPRS has approximately 650 members from Québec who are part of la Société des relationnistes du Québec, the French Public Relations organization, which services public relations professionals from the province of Québec. Members from both the CPRS and la Société des

relationnistes du Québec follow codes of conduct that are aligned with the Global Alliance Universal code of ethics. Members pledge to maintain the spirit and ideals of several principles of conduct, including professionalism, honesty, fairness and advocacy, among others.

Canada has a robust independently owned and operated newspaper industry. Many small and rural communities have weekly newspapers. The major urban centers have one and often two daily papers.

In terms of broadcast journalism, there are numerous national, regional and local television and radio stations. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is an independent state-owned broadcast network and a primary source of both news and cultural programming reaching Canadians from coast to coast.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulates the television sector.

Part 3: Overview of public relations as it relates to students

Formal education in public relations is a growth market in Canada. Increasingly, students graduate from programs that include a major or minor in public relations. Many community colleges offer certificate programs and adult education courses in public relations. Innovations in education, like the online component along with real life case studies, are important tools used by schools.

There are 45 colleges and universities in Canada that offer education in public relations. Students are encouraged to join CPRS as student members. Benefits include scholarships and awards, seminars and workshops, conferences, employment and internships and networking opportunities.

Work experience for students is highly encouraged by the CPRS. Internships, both paid and unpaid, are common for students in Canada as is working while pursuing a postgraduate degree.

Resources Used:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

CIA World Factbook

<http://www.geert-hofstede.com/>

Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

<http://www.globalpr.org/>

Global Alliance for Public Relations

<http://www.vec.ca/>

Vancouver English Center

<http://www.cprs.ca>

Canadian Public Relations Society

<http://www.srq.qc.ca>

la Société des relationnistes du Québec