



WORTH READING

**SURVEY SAYS**

## Ontario consumers losing confidence

Consumer confidence in Ontario was down 5.5 points in February, in a month that otherwise saw confidence levels fairly stable across the country, according to a survey released by the Conference Board of Canada.

"Consumers in Ontario are getting to be less confident," said Conference Board deputy chief economist Paul Darby.

The Ontario findings stood in contrast to those from the rest of the country, which showed only a slight decline—which the board's economists say is not significantly changed. The national index of consumer sentiment shed 2.8 points to 121.4, largely reversing January's gain of 3.2 points.

"In fact, the Ontario economy is weakening off. It will be one of the weaker growing economies this year," said Darby. "Ontario manufacturing is hurting because of the high dollar and there's also concern about the size of the Ontario deficit. There's a sense that Ontario, in general, is getting into deeper trouble."

Of all Canadians surveyed, 22.3% said they were better off than six months earlier, up 1.3 percentage points. The proportion of those indicating conditions had worsened rose by 2.8 percentage points.

"These results are broadly consistent with our forecast of slower economic growth in 2005," Darby said.

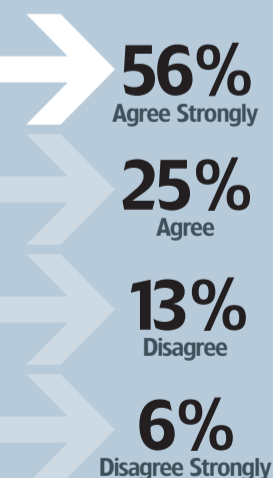
One fifth of those surveyed expected the employment situation to improve, down slightly from January.

The share of respondents saying it was a good time for a large purchase fell 3.1 percentage points.

—MICHELLE HALPERN/WITH FILES FROM CANADIAN PRESS

**ONLINE POLL**

**Last week's poll:** Retail in this country is hopelessly operationally driven.



**This week:** Would storytelling be an effective marketing tool for your company?

Read "The Inside Story," on p. 12, then log onto [marketingmag.ca](http://marketingmag.ca) and take the Marketing Online poll.

**IN CONTEXT: CONSUMER INSIGHT**

## Ethnic approaches

Not every multicultural niche should be treated the same BY REBECCA HARRIS

**D**o your research, find the right partners and don't get lost in translation. These were just some of the tips on ethnic marketing given by Kamaldi Badlu, national language sales executive, OMNI Television and Chris Bhang, VP group account director, Allard Johnson Direct, at the Canadian Marketing Association's Diversity Conference, held recently in Toronto.

As the ethnic population continues to grow, many marketers want to target multicultural communities, which have significant purchasing power. According to the 2001 Census, 18% of Canada's population is foreign-born. There's been a noticeable increase in Asian immigrants over the last few decades. From 1991 to 2001, 58% of immigrants were Asian, while only 19% were European. A decade earlier, 47% were Asian and 25% were European.

Of the 5.4 million immigrants, 43% currently live in Toronto, 37% in Vancouver and 18% in Montreal. The four largest foreign-born groups in the greater Toronto area alone—South Asian, Chinese, Italian and Portuguese—account for more than \$36 billion in annual expenditures, or 24% of the total market dollars, according to 2004 MapInfo Canada data.

"It's an untapped market," Badlu said in an interview. Many South Asians, for example, are starting families and they need to buy homes, furnishings and cars. "They have strong loyalty to brands that are familiar to them but at the same time, they are receptive to change. If advertisers talk to them in their language, it's a comfort. Once you start communicating with them, they'll stick with that brand for a very long time," said Badlu.

Ethnic marketing is a complex process, and many companies simply don't know where to start or are fearful of making mistakes. It can also be confusing because there are so many different sub-groups, says Badlu, particularly with South Asians. However, Bhang outlined key demographics and psychographics that may help marketers: South Asians are multilingual with English as a second language, are highly educated, white-collar trained and have international job experience. They are "culturally strong but not stubborn," meaning they are eager to integrate into the mainstream.

Chinese immigrants, on the other hand, are "culturally stubborn," meaning they tend to do business within

their own community. They are described as affluent, educated, white collar, entrepreneurial and very mobile. They have strong allegiance to "home" brands and prefer ethnic media, while mainstream media likely has some penetration with South Asians. "You need to think beyond conventional media," says Badlu. By addressing an audience in their "language of comfort," they will likely build an emotional connection to the brand.

According to a 2000 OMNI TV survey, 66% of the Chinese market learn about brands and services from Chinese television; 35% are more likely to buy products and services if they saw it advertised in Chinese; and 54% watch less than seven hours of English TV per week. Fifty percent of South Asians say their opinion of



RECENT IKEA ad efforts spoke to South Asians with Hindi expressions

a company would improve if they saw the ads on South Asian TV and 62% stated they would look more positively on companies that sponsored community events.

Companies that reach out to ethnic communities have the benefit of a new and constantly growing market (200,000 new immigrants come to Canada each year). They are receptive to change, brand loyal and have money to spend. But how do you communicate with them? "Be colloquial, be creative but be relevant," said Bhang. A recent IKEA ad targeting South Asians is a good example. Created by Toronto-based Fat Free Communications, the print ads use the Hindi expressions "Yeh Kea" (meaning "done this") and "Woh Kea" (meaning "done that"), followed by Ikea and "Fit Hoi," or "it fits."

Badlu adds that there's no need to reinvent the wheel. For example, Wal-Mart's mainstream strategy of using real people telling their own stories also works with its ethnic marketing, who tell stories in their own languages. The key is to have a long-term strategy. "You can't target an ethnic group and do it for four weeks and walk away and expect to see results," she says. "You have to be there, just as much as you would to build awareness for the English- or French-speaking markets."

**TV WATCH**

## Noticed, liked, hated

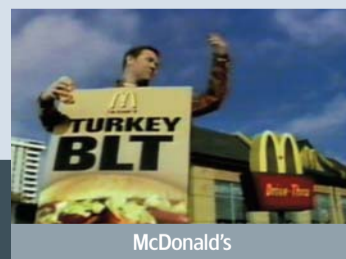
Rick Mercer, Wayne Gretzky grab viewers' attention



Ford



One-Tonne Challenge



McDonald's

**NATIONAL TOP-OF-MIND**  
Ads most noticed by Canadians in February

One-Tonne Challenge	61%
Familiprix	18%
Anti-tobacco ads	17%
Bell (Benoit Brière)	14%
Ford (Wayne Gretzky)	14%

**NATIONAL-LIKED**  
Ads most liked by Canadians in February

One-Tonne Challenge	49%
Anti-tobacco ads	3.6%
Bell (Benoit Brière)	2.6%
Budweiser/Bud Light	2.5%
Jean-Coutu	2.1%

**NATIONAL-HATED**  
Ads least liked by Canadians in February

Bell (Benoit Brière)	17%
McDonald's/I'm Loving It	14%
Lakota	13%
Anti-tobacco ads	12%

SOURCE: LEGER MARKETING SCREENSHOTS: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, CREATIVE SERVICES

## How Atkins diet kicked Unilever

According to the newest issue of *European Business*, the "path to growth" strategy initiated by Anglo-Dutch consumer goods giant Unilever five years ago has been more of a road to mediocrity. Unveiled in 2000, the strategy plotted for growth of between 5% and 6% each year by, among other initiatives, reducing its global workforce and paring its brand portfolio from 1,500 to a core of 400. While Jason Nisse's article "Unilever: breaking up is hard to do" (January/February issue p. 72) would have benefited from more scrupulous editing—Unilever acquired the Ben & Jerry's and Slim-Fast brands on the same day in 2000, not 1990 as the article states—the examination of the company's current malaise and whether it should abandon its "archaic" Anglo-Dutch partnership, or even sell off underperforming businesses, is an interesting read. According to Nisse, the acquisition of the Slim-Fast brand proved a key factor in Unilever's current woes. Slim-Fast had been growing at 20% per year until about two years ago, when it was blindsided by the hugely popular Atkins diet. The company, writes Nisse, "has worked hard to revive Slim-Fast, but it is proving difficult to dislodge Dr. Atkins as the king of dieting." The tight financial controls put in place by its ambitious growth targets have also prevented Unilever from responding to marketing and price pushes by arch-rival Procter & Gamble writes Nisse, and the company has also been hard hit by the rise of cheap "no brand" products in Europe.

## A creative director's Levi's confession

While he can't take credit for inventing the denim blue jean, writer Mike Salisbury reveals his personal circumstances around the creation of the Levi's 501 brand for women in the most recent issue of *Forbes FYI*. In "By the seat of our pants" (March 2005, p. 88) Salisbury recounts his assignment as a "precocious but obedient" creative director at New York's Foote Cone & Belding advertising agency in 1981, handed the Levi Strauss & Co. account to market its new, shrink-to-fit, button-fly blue jean. Oh, and by the way, the 30-second TV commercial was to sell jeans to women—a relatively untapped market at the time. His ploy was to borrow a scene right of the James Dean film *Giant*, casting the Jett Rink role as a female—"with long hair and chilling confidence." For those who may recall the ad's enigmatic punchline, "Travis, you're a year too late," here's the spoiler: "People ask me all the time...even *The Wall Street Journal* ran a story speculating on its hidden meaning," says Salisbury. The truth, he finally reveals: "It didn't mean a thing. Nothing at all. But it sounded cool."