



ASC Poll Shows Canadians have Higher Expectations for Advertising than Americans

(Toronto – November 16, 2011) Canadians have higher expectations for advertising than their neighbours to the south, according to an in-depth consumer poll conducted for Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) by The Gandalf Group, and released today. Americans are not only more tolerant of advertising they perceive as untruthful or inaccurate, but are more likely to say advertising was helpful to them as consumers as well.

Most Canadians (79%) believe advertising offers them value, and the majority agree that most advertising is acceptable. In terms of acceptability, Canadians place the highest priority on truth and accuracy. As many as 89% of Canadians are willing to vote with their wallets if their standards around “acceptability” are not met.

“When it comes to advertising, Canadians are healthy skeptics,” said Linda Nagel, President and CEO of Advertising Standards Canada, “Canadians place a high value on advertising. But their support is contingent upon it meeting their expectations about truth and accuracy.”

“Canadians are more likely than Americans to want standards for advertising,” said David Herle of The Gandalf Group. “The research shows a different cultural mindset in Canada, with a more strongly held view that advertising shapes society, as well as a greater belief in the need for standards around such activity.”

Among the key differences between the US and Canada:

- 52% of Canadians agree that advertising **shapes society** compared with 36% of Americans.
- 86% of Canadians said it was very **important to have standards** for advertising compared with 64% of Americans.
- 72% of Canadians said that advertising is very or somewhat **truthful** compared with 84% of Americans, while 30% of Canadians said that **political advertising** is very or somewhat **truthful** compared with 44% of Americans.

Other Findings

In addition to the sharp distinctions between US and Canadian audiences, ASC’s poll also showed some interesting differences within Canada.

Canadian men and women have a similar assessment of whether advertising meets standards for truth and accuracy. But men were somewhat less likely than women to say advertising is offensive, and far less likely to say it’s very important to have standards to ensure advertising is not offensive.

Quebecers (at 67%) were less likely than other Canadians (at 83%) to say advertising provides them with value, and slightly less likely to say advertising helps them with their decision making as consumers. In terms of political advertising, a majority of Quebecers said political parties or candidates should never criticize opponents and should focus on promoting their own candidacies. Outside of Quebec, less than half shared this view (60% to 43%).

On acceptability and truthfulness, Canadians have the most faith in traditional media – newspapers more than electronic, and far more than online ads. This is an area that ASC has identified for further study.

Advertising Standards Canada

Founded in 1957, ASC is the national independent advertising industry self-regulatory body committed to creating and maintaining community confidence in advertising. ASC members – leading advertisers, advertising agencies, media and suppliers to the advertising industry – are committed to supporting responsible and effective advertising self-regulation. A not-for-profit organization, ASC administers the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*, the principal instrument of advertising self-regulation in Canada, and a national mechanism for accepting and responding to consumers’ complaints about advertising.

The Gandalf Group

The Gandalf Group is a provider of public opinion research, strategic communications advice and issues management. The company combines expertise in advanced statistical research, law, branding and communications strategies.

The ASC 2011 Survey: Canadian Perspectives on Advertising can be downloaded at:
www.adstandards.com/research2011

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