

PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES



Does Advertising Reflect Reality for Canadians?

November 2018, Issue 86



WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

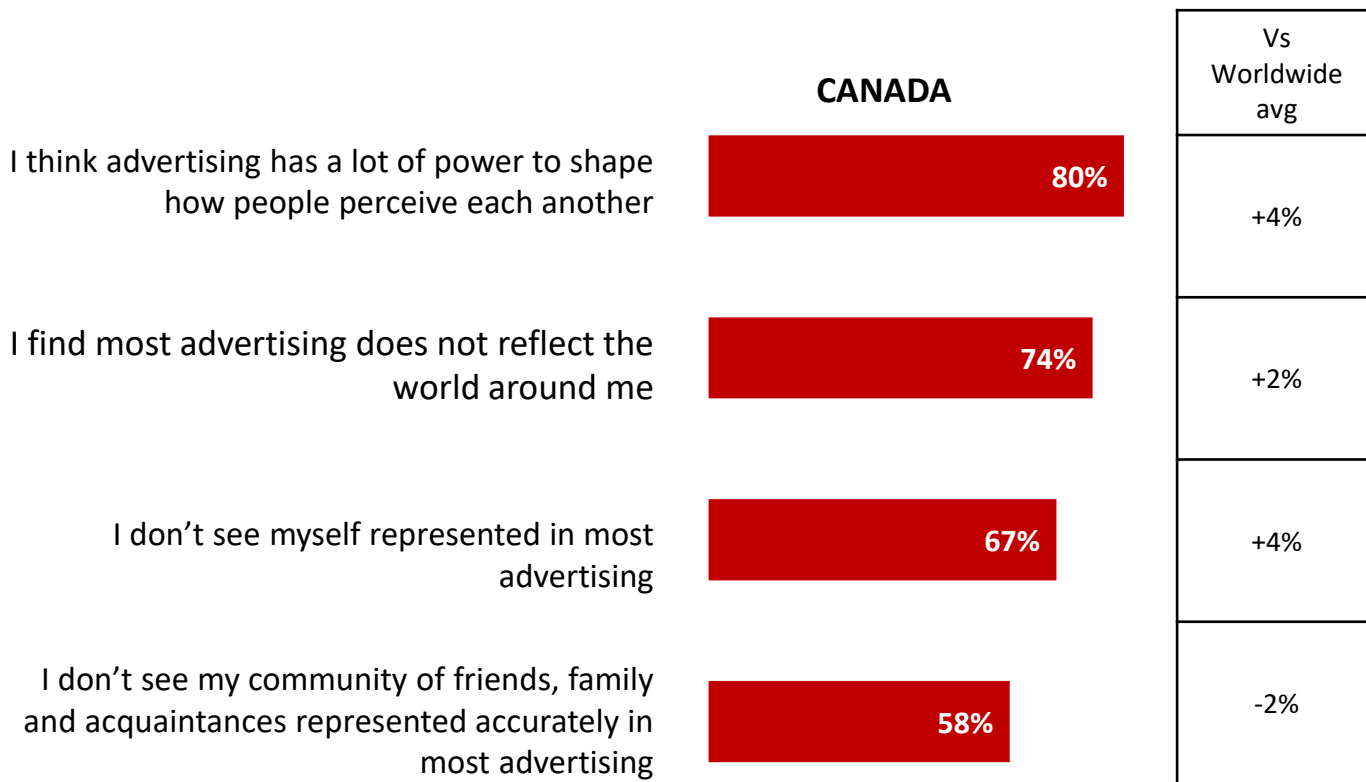
- Canadians overwhelmingly believe that advertising has a lot of influence in how people perceive each other. But, most do not believe that advertising reflects their reality or see themselves or their immediate social circle represented in most advertising.
- Additionally, Canadians are convinced that advertising impacts how women and girls perceive themselves and sets unrealistic expectations, significantly higher than the worldwide average. Women and Millennials are driving this opinion.
- While not as high, Canadians also believe that advertising impacts how men and boys perceive themselves. But they are much less likely to say that it sets unrealistic expectations than they did for girls and women.
- Skepticism about some advertising is based on the negative impact it is seen to have on people's perceptions of themselves by a sizeable minority of Canadians.
- In the end, many Canadians say that gender equality and diversity in advertising increases their purchase behaviour and company opinions.

- These are selected findings from Ipsos Global Advisor, a monthly online study among 15,000 respondents across 28 countries worldwide (n=500 in Canada). Data are weighted to reflect the actual population in each country.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISERS

- Advertising has influence and can be seen as a reflection of society. Prior to creating advertising, it is important for brands/companies to come up with an engaging and relevant insight for their target.
- It is also important to keep this in-mind when developing a creative way to bring your big idea or insight to life. Sometimes, insights can resonate, but the way they are brought to life does not.
- Boomers, who represent a large chunk of the Canadian population (and who also spend the most), struggle to relate to current advertising. Understanding your target and ensuring your advertising speaks to them is key to ensuring impact.
- Women in particular believe that advertising has the power to shape perceptions – campaigns like Dove’s Real Beauty have walked a fine line between genuinely trying to change perceptions or being seen as another marketing ploy.
- Brands like Dove, Aerie, Modcloth, Old Navy have been moving in new directions – they are advertising to the masses by showcasing models that are in-line with reality. Brands are realizing that showcasing diverse and real people helps to drive relevance and credibility.
- In general, the younger cohort are more easily impressed upon, resulting in advertising having positive or negative affect on them. Ensuring that products/brands targeted to the Millennials have a positive and uplifting message is key.

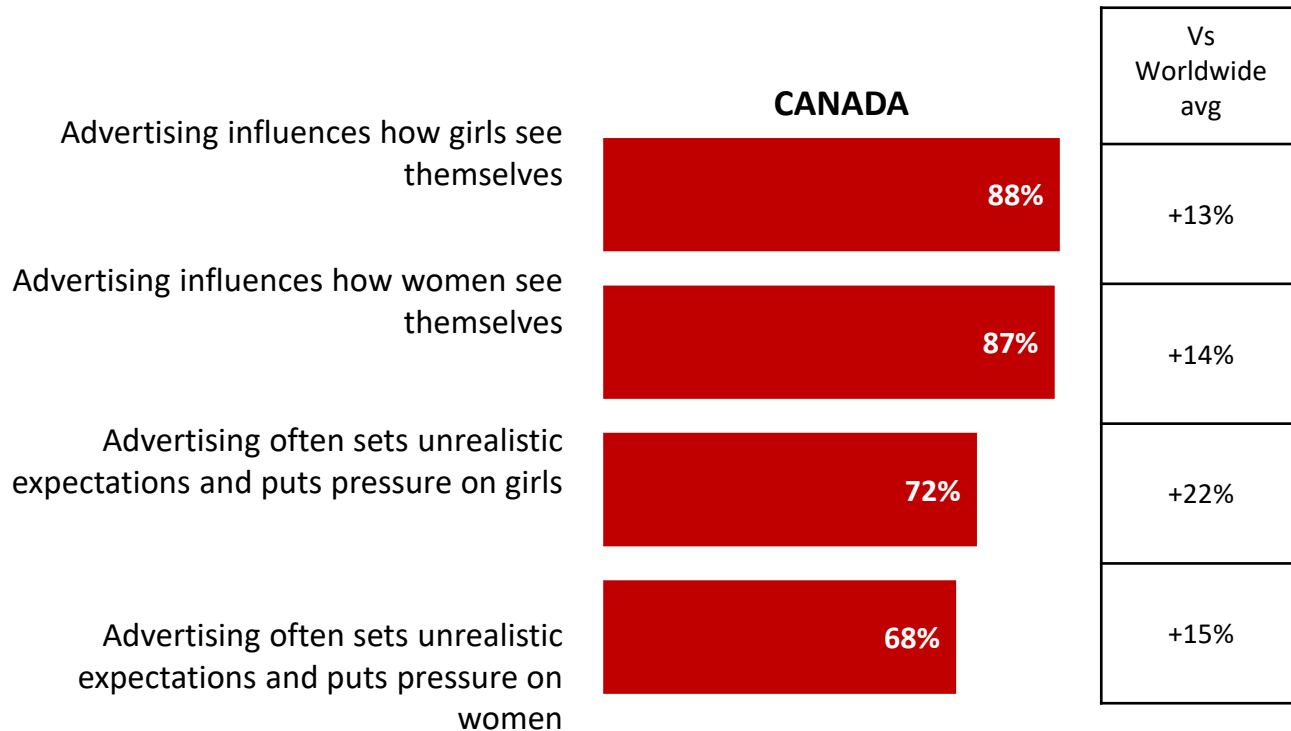
Canadians overwhelmingly believe that advertising has a lot of influence in how people perceive each other. But, most do not believe that advertising reflects their reality or see themselves or their immediate social circle represented.



Women are more likely to believe that advertising influences how people perceive each other, and Boomers are less likely to see advertising reflecting their reality. But opinions are generally consistent on other attitudes towards advertising.

	Men	Women		Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
I think advertising has a lot of power to shape how people perceive each another	71%	89%		84%	76%	80%
I find most advertising does not reflect the world around me	77%	71%		65%	75%	81%
I don't see myself represented in most advertising	68%	66%		71%	63%	66%
I don't see my community of friends, family and acquaintances represented accurately in most advertising	59%	58%		59%	57%	58%

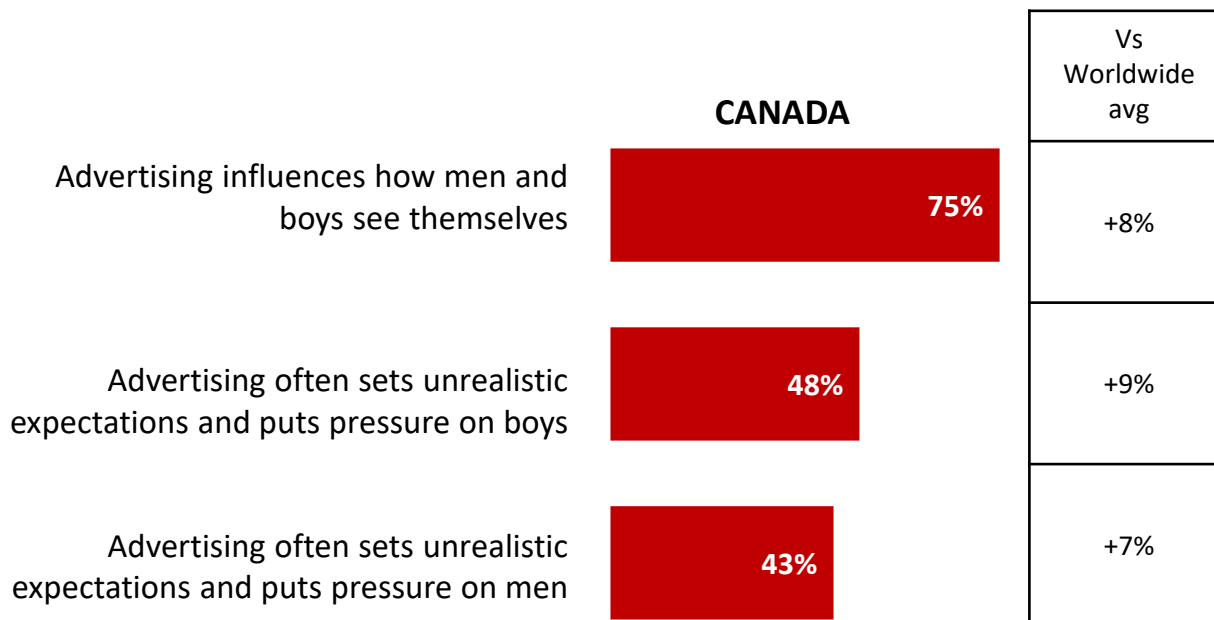
Additionally, Canadians are convinced that advertising impacts how women and girls perceive themselves and sets unrealistic expectations, at significantly higher levels than the worldwide average.



While both genders and all age groups believe that advertising impacts how women and girls perceive themselves and sets unrealistic expectations, this is significantly higher among women and Millennials.

	Men	Women		Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
Advertising influences how girls see themselves	83%	93%		95%	87%	82%
Advertising influences how women see themselves	83%	90%		97%	90%	75%
Advertising often sets unrealistic expectations and puts pressure on girls	64%	79%		83%	68%	65%
Advertising often sets unrealistic expectations and puts pressure on women	57%	79%		80%	70%	57%

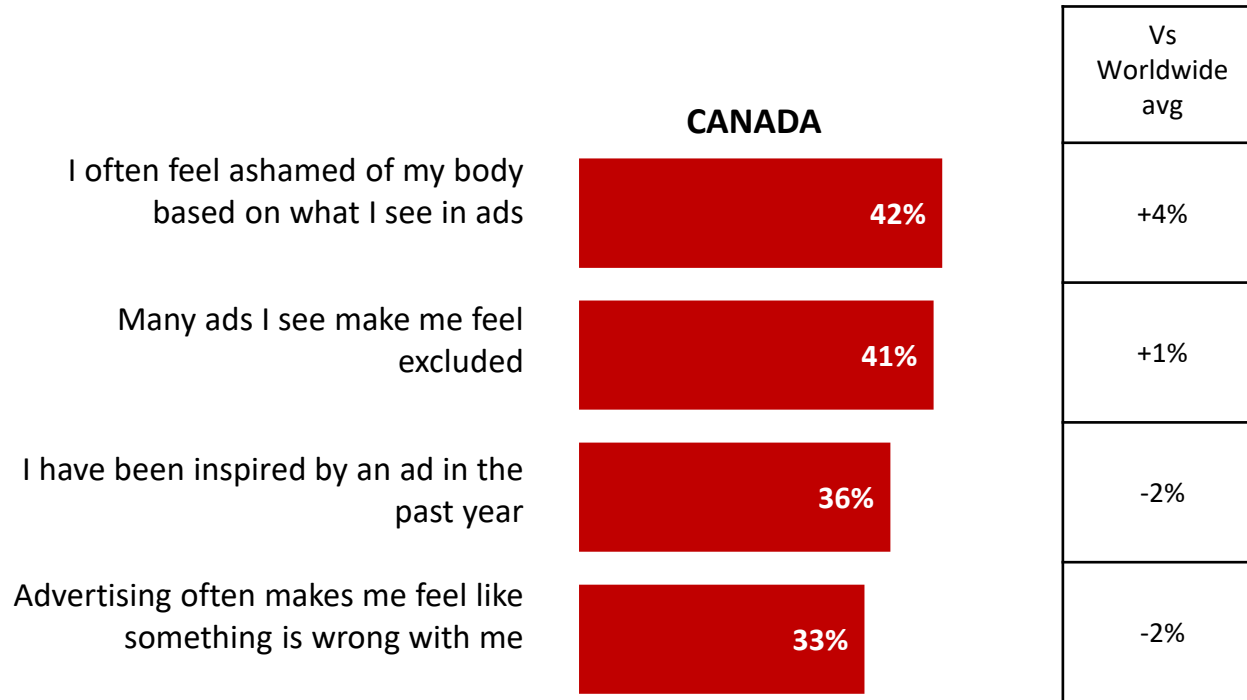
While not as high, Canadians also believe that advertising impacts how men and boys perceive themselves. But they are much less likely to say that it sets unrealistic expectations than they did for girls and women.



Interestingly, it is women more than men who believe that advertising impacts how men and boys perceive themselves and sets unrealistic expectations; again this trends higher for Millennials.

	Men	Women		Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
Advertising influences how men and boys see themselves	68%	82%		89%	77%	61%
Advertising often sets unrealistic expectations and puts pressure on boys	44%	52%		97%	90%	75%
Advertising often sets unrealistic expectations and puts pressure on men	40%	46%		55%	44%	45%

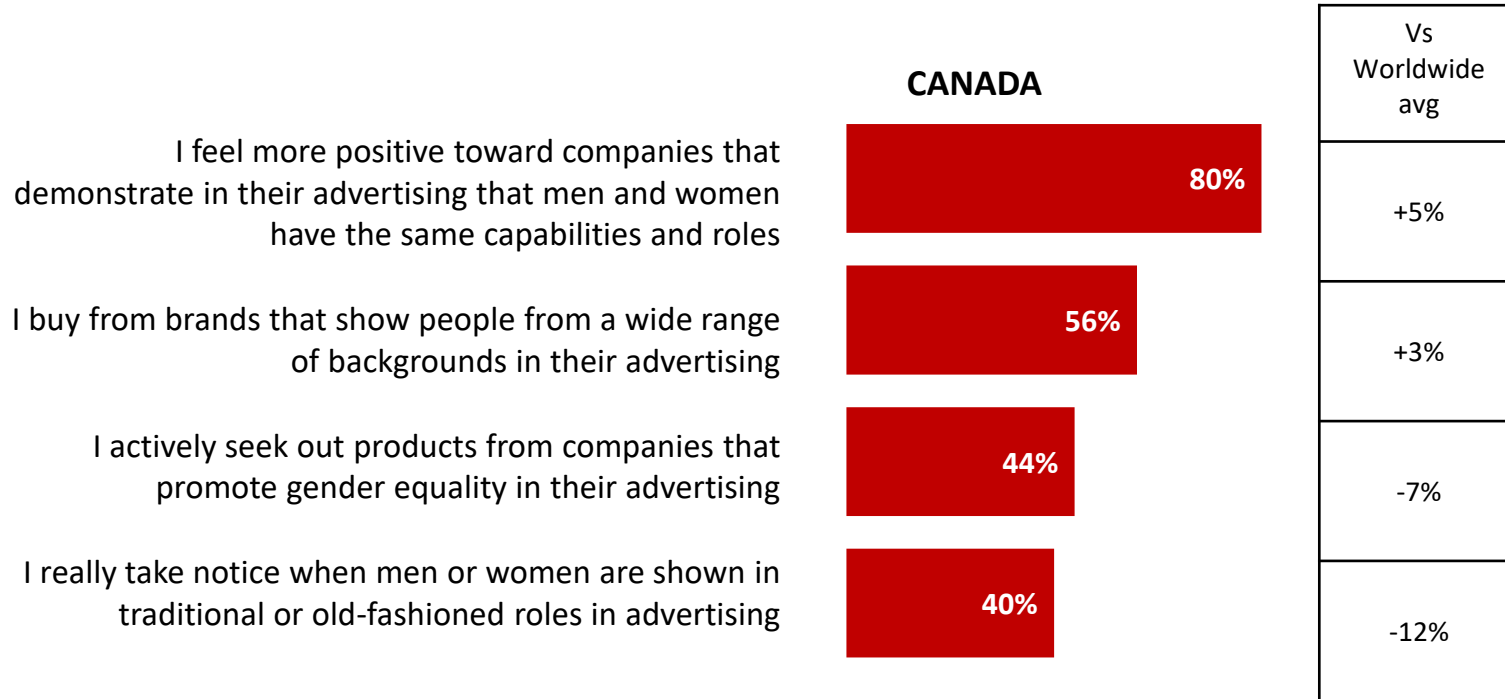
Skepticism about some advertising is based on the negative impact it is seen to have on people's perceptions of themselves by a sizeable minority of Canadians.



Women and Millennials tend to be more likely to say that advertising has a negative impact on their perceptions of themselves.

	Men	Women		Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
I often feel ashamed of my body based on what I see in ads	28%	56%		56%	40%	30%
Many ads I see make me feel excluded	40%	41%		46%	41%	36%
I have been inspired by an ad in the past year	35%	36%		33%	47%	29%
Advertising often makes me feel like something is wrong with me	22%	43%		47%	33%	20%

In the end, many Canadians say that gender equality and diversity in advertising increases their purchase behaviour and opinions of brands.



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