

# PRAGMATISM OVER PATRIOTISM?

**Canadians Recalibrate Their Relationship With America**

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# CANADIANS RECALIBRATE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH AMERICA

It's been six months since Donald Trump returned to the White House, and Canadians' trust in the United States remains fractured. In fact, it has now reached its lowest point since Ipsos began tracking public attitudes on Canada-U.S. relations through our [Trump, Tariffs and Turmoil](#) (TTT) syndicated study in February 2025. But something else is changing, too. While trust has eroded, raw emotion is giving way to a more pragmatic way of looking at the relationship between our countries.

This might best be described as economic realism, as Canadians' reactions shift from emotionally driven anger at the president to a calmer, firmer resolve. This approach mirrors that of newly elected prime minister Mark Carney, who appears to have resisted the urge to panic and retaliate to the President's every utterance.

Since February, when the threat of tariffs resulted in widespread calls to "Buy Canadian," we've seen a subtle shift. While the political tension is still running high—and a solid majority of Canadians say they don't expect to fully trust the U.S. again—there's also a growing willingness to make trade-offs when it comes to day-to-day decisions. Especially at the checkout counter.

Ipsos polling from our sixth wave of TTT in June shows the mood is stabilizing. Canadians are still wary of American influence, but they are also adjusting their expectations. A majority say they remain committed to supporting Canadian businesses, even if it means spending more. But underneath that, we see an important nuance: price is re-emerging as a deciding factor, and younger generations are balancing patriotic instincts with practical constraints. We call this group the price-first consumer.





This latest wave of data captures a more mature posture. The early months of 2025 were marked by calls for hardline responses: retaliatory tariffs, boycotts of U.S. goods, calls for provincial trade barriers to fall, and an emotional turn toward Europe. The anger hasn't vanished, but it's being filtered through economic caution, especially among Millennials and Gen Z.

Just over half (55%) of Canadians say they are willing to make personal sacrifices to support Canadian businesses, despite four in 10 (41%) agreeing that boycotting U.S. products is mostly symbolic and will have little economic impact on the U.S.

But as with our [earlier findings](#), the generational spread is significant. Boomers remain the most firmly committed – because largely, they can afford to be – but younger Canadians are showing more hesitation. Gen Z and Millennials are still concerned about Canadian independence, but they're also more likely to pull back when prices rise.

At the same time, buying habits are evolving. While patriotic shopping continues—especially among older Canadians—the surge in support for “Buy Canadian / Avoid American” appears to be plateauing. More Canadians are now saying

they're open to supporting American-owned companies, provided they're producing in Canada and creating Canadian jobs. That number has been steadily increasing and now just over half of Canadians express that view, and in Ontario, support for it is even higher.

That might sound like a contradiction, but it's not. Canadians aren't abandoning their preference for Canadian-made goods. What they are doing is refining it. The definition of “supporting local” is shifting—from a rigid sense of national ownership to a more layered understanding of contribution. Where is it made? Who does it employ? Is the company genuinely part of the Canadian economy?

For many, these questions now matter more than the flag on the label.

Interestingly, generational differences run deep here, too. Gen Z are more likely to give American firms the benefit of the doubt—especially if those firms can demonstrate real investment in Canadian manufacturing and employment. Boomers, by contrast, remain far more skeptical. They're also less likely to accept American companies claiming Canadian status without meaningful local content.

On that point, Canadians have set a high bar. On average, they expect a product to be roughly three-quarters Canadian-made before they'll pay a premium for it. That standard has held steady since earlier in the year—and it reflects a deeper demand for authenticity. Branding alone won't cut it.

So, what's driving this new posture?

For one, economic anxiety remains high. The cost of living continues to dominate the national mood, and a growing number of Canadians report tightening their budgets. That financial caution is blunting some of the emotional edge that defined earlier waves. Where once consumers may have made symbolic choices to avoid American products, they're now weighing other factors: availability, quality, and—most importantly—price.

And three in ten Canadians say they're not paying attention to country of origin at all. For them, the Buy Canadian debate isn't a rallying cry—it's background noise. And for many others, it's conditional: they'll choose Canadian when they can, but not at any cost.

And this tension—between ideals and economic reality—is likely to be tested again soon.

On July 10, President Trump [raised the prospect](#) of new 35% tariffs on Canadian goods, once again invoking threats to North American manufacturing stability. While many see this as political theatre, or expect the president to back down once more, the economic implications are real. If these tariffs materialize, they will almost certainly cause economic damage.

Five days later, Prime Minister Carney [dampened](#) expectations of a deal avoiding tariffs entirely. If the president follows through with the threatened 35% tariffs, it will be a significant test of this new pragmatism.

Will Canadians maintain this measured approach, or will we see another surge anger and desire for economic retaliation?

What we're witnessing is not a hard break from earlier nationalist sentiment, but rather the evolution of it. Canadians remain skeptical of America's intentions and continue to prioritize homegrown industry. But the sharp lines are softening, at least for some Canadians.

Emotional reaction is giving way to economic calibration. Canadians are learning to navigate our relationship with our southern neighbours in more nuanced terms—where loyalty matters, but so does logic. We're no longer panicked and angry; rather, angry with a dose of realism.

In other words, the flag on the label still counts. But it's no longer the only thing that does.



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