
- THE PUBLIC'S ESTEEM FOR SELECTED PROFESSIONS -



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This Angus Reid Group/Globe and Mail/CTV poll was conducted by telephone between October 27th and November 1st, 1998 among a representative cross-section of 1,500 Canadian adults.

These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,500, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 2.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

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Small entrepreneurs enjoy high public esteem in Canada. Of 13 selected professions, small-business owners earn the highest level of respect among Canadians, followed by doctors, police officers and teachers. Ranking at the bottom of this list are politicians and labour union leaders – a majority of Canadians say they have little respect for these two professions.

Significantly, of the eight professions that were also assessed in an Angus Reid Group benchmark sounding five years ago, all but one have experienced some improvement in their public esteem. The lone exception: journalists.

These findings emerged from a National Angus Reid Poll conducted among a random and representative cross-section of 1,500 Canadians between October 27th and November 1st, 1998.

SMALL ENTREPRENEURS EARN HIGHEST PUBLIC RESPECT, POLITICIANS AND LABOUR UNION LEADERS THE LEAST

Canadians participating in this National Angus Reid Poll were asked to indicate the level of respect they have for each of 13 different professions or jobs, eight of which were included in a benchmark survey conducted in December 1993. The survey findings can be grouped into four distinct tiers based on the percentage of survey respondents who said they have “a great deal” or “a fair amount” of respect for these professions.

Four of the 13 assessed professions enjoy significant respect from at least nine in ten surveyed Canadians:

- ♦ **Small-Business Owners** – Two-thirds (67%) reported having “a great deal” of respect for owners of small businesses (peaking at 76% of surveyed Québécois),

while another one in three (30%) opted for “a fair amount” of respect. (Table 1)

- ◆ **Doctors** – A solid majority (59%) of surveyed Canadians said they have a great deal of respect for doctors. This represents an increase of 11 percentage points since the benchmark sounding taken almost five years ago. An additional one-third (35%) indicated a fair amount of respect. The proportion saying they have a great deal of respect for medical doctors tends to increase as one travels eastward across the country (from 53% in B.C. and Alberta to 70% in Atlantic Canada).
- ◆ **Police Officers** – A comparable number (55%) of surveyed Canadians said they have a great deal of respect for police officers and a further one-third (36%) held a fair amount of respect. Since 1993, there has been a 7-point increase in the proportion expressing a great deal of respect for police. This profession enjoys a great deal of respect from a majority of respondents from all regions except Québec (45%, though still a large increase from the 24% recorded in the previous survey).
- ◆ **Teachers** – A clear majority (54%) also expressed a great deal of respect for teachers – representing a 9-point increase compared to five years ago – while another 36 percent said they have a fair amount of respect for the teaching profession. High respect for teachers surpasses the majority mark in all regions except recently strikebound Ontario (42% a great deal, unchanged from 1993).

The second tier is comprised of three professions which engender at least a fair amount of respect from roughly four in five of those polled:

- ◆ **Priests and Ministers** – A great deal of respect for the clergy was voiced by two in five (42%) surveyed Canadians, an increase of 12 percentage points since five years ago. Just as many (43%) said they have a fair amount of respect for this profession. The public esteem for priests/ministers is highest among Atlantic Canadians (51% a great deal).
- ◆ **Judges** – One in three (34%) reported having a lot of respect for judges – 7 points

higher than recorded in 1993 – and one-half (49%) voiced a moderate level of respect. Residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan and Canadians 55-plus were the least likely to display a great deal of respect for judges (26% each).

- ◆ **Actors, Singers and Artists** – The artistic profession received a great deal of respect from fully one in four (28%) surveyed Canadians, and this figure nearly doubles among Québécois (51%). More than half (54%) of the total survey sample said they have a fair amount of respect for actors, singers and artists.

Four professions can be found in a third tier as they are viewed with respect by roughly two-thirds of polled Canadians:

- ◆ **Corporate Executives** – About one in five (18%) respondents voiced a great deal of respect for corporate executives, and another one-half (51%) had moderate esteem for these individuals. Québécois, however, have especially high regard for corporate executives – fully 41 percent opted for “a great deal” of respect.
- ◆ **Journalists** – Fifteen percent of those surveyed said they have much respect for journalists, with an additional 55 percent opting for a fair amount. These figures are essentially unchanged since five years ago, unlike the increased levels of respect recorded for the other seven professions assessed in both soundings. This profession garners most respect from Québécois (24% a great deal).
- ◆ **Lawyers** – The legal profession elicited a great deal of respect from 14 percent of respondents (up 3 points from 1993) and a fair amount of respect from one-half (49%). However, one in three (35%) Canadians surveyed said they have either “not much” or “very little” respect for lawyers.
- ◆ **Federal Government Employees** – A majority indicated they have respect for federal government employees (13% a great deal, 56% a fair amount), but more than one in four (29%) said they do not. Québécois were the most inclined to say they have a great deal of respect for federal government employees (23%).

The fourth and final tier contains two professions, each of which has a positive image among fewer than one-half of surveyed Canadians:

- ◆ **Labour Union Leaders** – Just less than half (47%) of those polled voiced significant degree of respect for labour union leaders (10% a great deal, 37% a fair amount). This compares to a majority (52%) who had little regard for labour union leaders (27% not much, 25% very little). This latter figure was highest among Albertans (61%) and lowest among Atlantic Canadians (39%).
- ◆ **Politicians** – Of the 13 professions included in this assessment, politicians ranked at the bottom of the list, although there has been some improvement since five years ago. Only 6 percent said they have a great deal of respect for politicians (a marginal 2-point increase since 1993), while 40 percent opted for a fair amount of respect (up 7 points). Meanwhile, over half (54%) indicated little respect for politicians, a figure which peaked at 61 percent in British Columbia.

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