

# CANADIANS CHAMPION GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENS

*Canadian companies get good, but not great, marks for corporate social responsibility*

*Majority of Canadians have made a purchase decision based on a company's social responsibility*

*Public believes companies motivated more by bottom-line than by social conscience*

*Good news story more likely to grab attention than bad news story*



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## CANADIANS CHAMPION GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENS

*Canadian companies get good, but not great, marks for corporate social responsibility*

*Majority of Canadians have made a purchase decision based on a company's social responsibility record*

*Public believes companies motivated more by bottom-line than by social conscience*

*Good news story more likely to grab attention than bad news story*

**Vancouver, BC** – The public gives Canadian companies good, but not great, marks for doing business in a socially responsible way, according to a new Ipsos-Reid poll. Three-quarters of Canadians (76%) think that Canadian companies are doing a good job in terms of doing business in a socially responsible way, but only 14% say companies are doing a “very good” job (62% say companies are doing a “somewhat good” job).

The importance of corporate social responsibility is underlined by the finding that a majority of Canadians have rewarded or punished a company for their corporate citizenship in the last year. More than half (55%) say they have consciously decided to buy a product or service from one company over another because they felt the company was a good corporate citizen. About the same number (52%) have consciously refused to buy a product or a service from a company not conducting business in a socially responsible way.

While Canadians clearly want to see companies operate in a socially responsible manner, this doesn't prevent them from questioning the motives of companies who undertake these socially responsible activities. The public thinks these companies are motivated more by their bottom line (68%) than because they care about being socially responsible (29%).

Perhaps because of this cynicism, stories about good corporate behaviour are more interesting than stories about bad corporate behavior. More than two-thirds (68%) of Canadians say that a corporate social responsibility news story about a company that has been singled out for a very positive action is more likely to grab their attention than a story about a company that has been singled out for a very negative action (29%).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between August 19 and 21, 2003 among a representative cross-section of 1,000 Canadian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to 2001 Census data. With national sample of 1000, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for population sub-groups.*

## ***Canadian Companies Get Good, but not Great, Marks for Corporate Social Responsibility***

Three-quarters of Canadians (76%) think that Canadian companies are doing a good job in terms of doing business in a socially responsible way. However, only 14% say companies are doing a “very good” job; the majority (62%) believes companies are doing a “somewhat good” job. In contrast, one-quarter (23%) give Canadian companies poor marks (16% say companies are doing a “somewhat poor” job and 6% say they are doing a “very poor” job).

- ◆ Younger residents (18–34 years old) are more likely to say Canadian companies are doing a good job of doing business in a socially responsible way than are their older counterparts (81% compared to 74% of those between 35–54 and 77% of those over 55).

## ***Majority of Canadians Have Made a Purchase Decision Based on a Company's Social Responsibility***

In the past 12 months, more than half (55%) of Canadians have consciously decided to buy a product or service from one company over another because they felt the company does business in a socially responsible way. Moreover, in the past 12 months, slightly

more than half (52%) have consciously refused to buy a product or service from a company because they felt the company does not do business in a socially responsible way.

- ◆ Younger Canadians are more likely to choose to do business with good corporate citizens: 59% of those between 18–54 have consciously decided to buy a good or service from a company who does business in a socially responsible way compared to 48% of those over the age of 55. Further, 58% have consciously refused to buy a product or service from a company that does not do business in a socially responsible way (compared to 40% of those over 55).

### ***Public Believes Companies Motivated More by Bottom-Line than by Social Conscience***

Canadians are more likely to say that the bottom line is driving companies' socially responsible actions than they are to say companies are acting on their social conscience. Two-thirds (68%) of Canadians believe companies are engaging in socially responsible activities more because they care about their bottom line. The remainder (29%) have a less cynical outlook and believe that companies are engaging in corporate citizenship more because they care about being socially responsible.

## ***Good News Story More Likely to Grab Attention than Bad News Story***

More than two-thirds (68%) of Canadians say that a corporate social responsibility news story about a company that has been singled out for a very positive action is more likely to grab their attention than a story about a company that has been singled out for a very negative action. Just under 3-in-10 (29%) would prefer to read the news story about the negative action and two percent say they would be equally likely to read both stories.

- ◆ Quebec residents are especially likely to say they would want to read the good news story (81% compared to 66% in BC, 65% in Alberta, 55% in Saskatchewan/Manitoba and 62% in Ontario).
- ◆ Women are more likely than men to want to read about a company's positive action (71% versus 64%).
- ◆ Older residents are more likely than younger residents to choose the good news story (72% of those over the age of 35 choose the good news story compared to 58% of those between 18-34).

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