

# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CANADA GAP EXISTS BETWEEN WHAT CANADIAN BUSINESSES DO ON CSR AND WHAT CANADIAN CONSUMERS KNOW ABOUT

*Seven-in-ten Canadians (68%) Say They Pay Attention to Issues  
Related to Corporate Social Responsibility*

*Three-Quarters of Canadian Businesses say they are Engaged in  
Key CSR Initiatives...But, Comparatively Few Canadians Are  
Aware*



CANADIAN BUSINESS FOR  
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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*Seven-in-ten Canadians (68%) Pay Attention to Issues Related to Corporate Social Responsibility*

*Three-Quarters of Canadian Businesses say they are Engaged in Key CSR Initiatives...But, Comparatively Few Canadians Are Aware*

**Vancouver, BC**— A new Ipsos Reid / CBSR poll of Canadian businesses and the Canadian public shows that 68% of Canadians pay attention to issues related to corporate social responsibility (CSR). The poll also shows that three-quarters of leading Canadian companies are actively engaged in key CSR activities. What's interesting, however, is that while corporate Canada invests time and money in developing CSR policies and programs, Canadian consumers, despite their claim to be paying attention to these issues, are somewhat in the dark about the specific practices companies adopt.

*These are some of the findings of a much larger Ipsos Reid/CBSR series of articles highlighting New Dimensions in CSR. Research for this poll was conducted online with 141 CSR leaders in major Canadian businesses from December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005 to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Respondents are members of a CSR Business Leader Forum set up and run by Ipsos Reid. Research was also conducted with the Canadian public from March 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006 with a sample of 1,003 adult Canadians who are part of Ipsos-Reid's Canadian Online Panel. The overall results for the general public are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire Canadian adult population been polled. The margin of error for the 141 CSR business leaders is  $\pm 7.8$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The general population data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 2001 Census.*

## ***Seven-in-ten Canadians (68%) Pay Attention to Issues Related to Corporate Social Responsibility***

Overall, a solid majority of the Canadian population pay attention to issues related to corporate social responsibility (CSR). This includes 15% who say they pay a “great deal” of attention to these issues, and another 53% who pay “some” attention. To contrast, CSR issues are not really on the radar screen of 30% of Canadians.

Regionally, Atlantic Canadians (74%), Quebecers (75%), and British Columbians (65%) are more likely to pay attention to CSR issues than those living in other provinces, particularly in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (49%).

From a socio-demographic perspective, age and level of education appear to be a good predictor of behaviour when it comes to being attentive to CSR issues. While 79% of older Canadians (55+) pay a great deal or some attention to these issues, the proportion drops to 67% of those 35-54 years of age, and further to 59% of those 18-34.

Similarly, 78% of university graduates say they pay attention to CSR issues. The proportion drops to 65% of Canadians with credentials from a college or trade school or people who have some other post-secondary experience, and to 63% of those with a high school diploma or less.

## ***Three-Quarters of Canadian Businesses are Engaged in Key CSR Initiatives...But, Comparatively Few Canadians Are Aware***

Three-quarters of business leaders (76%) surveyed say their firms have “made an explicit commitment to CSR”. Almost the same proportion asserts that their companies have “developed formalized policies for CSR activities” (72%); this includes 50% whose policies are fully developed. And, 75% have “created and implemented programs related to CSR” (75%), with 56% saying implementation is fully underway.

Canadian consumers, however, remain considerably unaware of companies’ practices and initiatives. Only a third (33%) say they know of any companies in Canada who’ve “made an explicit commitment to CSR”. A similarly low number (31%) are aware of any companies who’ve got “formal policies in place that require companies to take on socially responsible activities and initiatives”, and 38% know of companies who’ve

“created and carried out socially responsible activities and initiatives based on their policies”.

This general pattern is prevalent with Canadians from all regions, and among all socio-demographic groups. The only real exception is that Albertans appear to be more aware of companies engaged in CSR activities than people in other provinces, notably in Quebec. Just under half the Alberta population knows of companies engaged in each of the three types of initiatives, compared to a quarter to a third of Quebec residents.

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