
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

In March 2003, Criterion Research Corp. (Alberta) conducted a survey of the Alberta general public for Calder Bateman on behalf of Alberta Health and Wellness. The survey followed a promotional campaign intended to positively affect Albertans' behaviour and attitudes about healthy eating and being physically active. The purpose of the survey was to determine the level of awareness and recall of promotional materials and to identify any changes in attitudes about healthy eating and being physically active since the launch of the campaign.

A total of 1600 general population interviews were conducted. The sample was designed to include 400 respondents in the Edmonton census metropolitan area, 400 in the Calgary census metropolitan area, 400 in other cities and 400 in towns and rural areas.

Telephone interviews were randomized across and within households for each geographic region. The survey was completed by the adult (18 years of age or older) in the household who had the most recent birthday.

The margin of error for 1600 interviews is ± 2.45 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error for the sample size of 400 respondents within each of the four geographic regions is accurate to within ± 4.90 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

SUMMARY

Awareness of Advertising

- A strong majority of respondents (86%) indicate they can recall at least one advertisement about healthy eating and being physically active.
- On a first mention basis, 43% of respondents recall, unaided, advertising or information about healthy eating, 42% refer to the media source of the advertising, and 25% refer to the importance of fitness and activities. One quarter (25%) of the respondents mention specific information content and 12% refer to general health.
- On a total mention basis, 49% of respondents refer to healthy eating. Half (49%) the respondents mention the media source of the advertising and 30% stress the importance of fitness and activities. Thirty-two (32%) percent refer to specific information content and 16% mention general health.
- Prior to being presented with any description of the Healthy Alberta advertising or sponsor, 4% of respondents identify Government advertisements regarding healthy eating and exercise, on a first mention and total mention basis.

- When respondents aware of advertising about healthy eating and physical fitness are asked to recall, unaided, any messages from advertisements they are aware of, 38% mention healthy eating and 33% mention fitness and activities. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents mention general health. Six percent (6%) of respondents suggest that getting healthy does not have to be hard and another 6% mention the message “It’s your choice.”
- When respondents are asked to recall slogans or taglines of the advertisements 10% of respondents mention slogans related to general health, 7% note healthy eating, 6% note Healthy Alberta slogans and 4% mention fitness and activities. Four in ten respondents (41%) do not know or volunteer a slogan or tagline.
- When prompted with advertising slogans, few respondents can identify the sponsor of the Healthy Alberta advertising and information. Respondents most frequently the sponsor as the Government of Alberta (3%) or Alberta Health and Wellness (2%).
- Seven in ten respondents (71%) recognize at least one of the Healthy Alberta campaign components when they are described. Recognition of specific individual components ranges from 6% to 26%.
- Radio advertisements (49%) are recalled most frequently, followed by television (41%)
- One in five respondents (22%) recall the newspaper insert and 6% recall the full-page advertisement promoting the newspaper insert.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents recall the Healthy Alberta Web site.
- Few respondents visited the Healthy Alberta Web site (4%). Among the reasons to visit or not visit the Web site, respondents most frequently (10%) indicate they visit to “check out the site.” Those respondents not visiting the site do not have the time (20%), do not have a household computer (17%) or already have the information (15%). Another 11% have not “gotten around to it”.
- Of those respondents who recognize any of the Healthy Alberta campaign components, half (49%) indicate they discuss the messages with other people such as family members, friends and co-workers. A higher proportion of respondents in other cities (54%) discuss the messages than respondents in Edmonton (47%) and Calgary 47%).

Perceptions of the Government of Alberta

- The Government of Alberta is in a strong position for undertaking promotional communication campaigns on healthy eating and physical activity with the majority of respondents viewing Government of Alberta with high regard. Three-quarters (78%) of respondents agree (4,5,6,7 ratings) that the Alberta Government is **a trustworthy and reliable source of information** on healthy eating and being physically active. Specifically, 27% of respondents strongly agree (6,7 ratings) and 51% moderately agree (4,5 ratings) that the ministry is a trustworthy and credible source. There is potential for increasing the level of agreement given the larger proportion of “don’t know” responses (18%) and the possibility that those expressing moderate agreement could be moved to an attitude of strong agreement.
- Almost as strongly, respondents view the Alberta Government as providing **useful and relevant information**. Three quarters (75%) of respondents agree that the Alberta Government provides useful and relevant information on healthy eating and being physically active. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents strongly agree and 47% moderately agree.

Attitudes About Information on Physical Activity

- A high proportion of post-campaign survey respondents (89%), in total, agree they have enough information about **achieving and maintaining physical fitness**, including 55% who strongly agree. Nine of ten (93%) respondents, in total, agree they feel **well informed about increasing their activity**, including 62% who strongly agree. Fewer respondents (80%) agree in total that **the information that is available is useful to them personally**, including 38% who strongly agree. While most respondents (56%) agree in total with 19% strongly agreeing that recommendations about physical health are **often contradictory**, a substantial number (42%) do not agree.
- A comparison indicates some changes in responses from the pre-campaign survey to the post-campaign survey. The proportion of respondents providing strong agreement with the statement that **there is enough information available about achieving and maintaining physical fitness** decreased to 55% in post-campaign results from 58% in pre-campaign results. At the same time, the proportion of respondents providing strongly agree ratings for the statement that respondents **feel well informed about increasing their physical activity** increased to 62% from 55% and the proportion of respondents who moderately agree decreased to 31% from 37%.
- The proportion of respondents providing strongly agree ratings for the statement **information generally available to them on being physically active is useful to them, personally** increased to 38% from 32% while the proportion of respondents who moderately agree declined to 41% from 47%.

Attitudes About Increasing Physical Activity

- A high proportion of post-campaign survey respondents (92%) indicate total agreement that *if they do only small things to increase their physical activity, it will make a difference* including a majority (62%) who strongly agree and 30% who moderately agree.
- A comparison indicates changes in response from pre-campaign survey to the post-campaign survey. The proportion of respondents providing strongly agree ratings increased to 62% from 58%. The proportion of respondents who moderately agree decreased to 30% from 34%.

Attitudes About Healthy Eating

- Nine in ten respondents (91%) agree, in total, that they are well informed about nutritional information, including 52% who strongly agree. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents agree, in total, that there is *enough information available* about healthy eating including 55% who strongly agree. Eighty-seven percent (87%) agree, in total that the information generally available is *useful to them* including 44% who strongly agree. Six in ten respondents (60%) agree overall that recommendations about healthy eating are *often contradictory*, with only one fifth (21%) expressing strong agreement.
- A comparison of the pre-campaign survey results to post-campaign results demonstrates the proportion of respondents who moderately agree they *feel well informed about nutrition information* increased to 39% from 36%. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of pre-campaign survey respondents strongly agree *there is enough information available about healthy eating* compared to 55% of post-campaign survey respondents. The proportion of respondents who strongly agree *information about healthy eating is often contradictory* decreased to 21% from 30%. The percentage of respondents who indicate total agreement ratings decreased to 60% from 70% and the proportion indicating they do not agree rose to 39% from 28%.
- A comparison of pre-campaign results to post-campaign results demonstrates no change in agreement with the statement that *information on nutrition is useful to me*.

Nutritional Eating Behaviors

- High proportions of respondents feel they make a conscious choice to eat healthier by *making better choices in size* (88%), *choosing a healthier food over a less healthy food* (86%) and *thinking about the benefits* of healthy eating choices (89%).

- A comparison of pre-campaign and post-campaign results shows the proportion of respondents providing total agreement ratings that they *chose a healthier food over a less healthy food* decreased to 86% from 90% including a decrease in the level of strongly agree ratings to 54% from 58%. The proportion of respondents indicating they do not agree rose to 13% from 10%.

CONCLUSIONS

Advertising and Awareness

- The Government of Alberta is in a strong position for undertaking communications campaigns in that Albertans consider the government's information on healthy eating and physical activity to be trustworthy, credible, useful and relevant.
- There is a high degree of awareness for advertising and information about healthy living among Albertans, reflecting the vast number of health and wellness messages in the media. Given the diversity of specific messages they are exposed to and the different sponsors of the information, Albertans find it difficult to remember specific details about the advertising and information they have been presented with.
- There is generally greater awareness of healthy eating as a communications theme than physical activity. However, many Albertans perceive that some of the messages relating to healthy living focus on both nutrition and exercise.
- While awareness of the Alberta Government as the sponsor of the Healthy Alberta campaign is low, most Albertans tend not to know who the sponsor is rather than perceiving it to be some organization other than the Alberta Government. Given the tendency for Albertans to perceive that the Alberta Government provides trustworthy, credible, useful and relevant information, low awareness of sponsor may limit the opportunity to capitalize on these perceptions.
- The majority (71%) of Albertans can recall at least one component of the Healthy Alberta campaign once provided with descriptions. Radio advertising is most easily recalled, with television being recalled by almost as many Albertans. While the number of television and radio spots that were used increase the overall effectiveness of these media in the mix, recall for the newspaper insert is similar to the most effective individual radio and television ads that were used.
- Awareness of the Alberta Health and Wellness Web site is 15%, with 4% incidence of use. The main reason to visit the Web site is to "check it out" rather than to find specific information, suggesting the campaign generated interest among Albertans in terms of their interest in becoming acquainted with the Web site and the information it provides.

- As a result of the Healthy Alberta campaign, half of Albertans discussed the information they were exposed to with others, such as their family, friends or co-workers, thereby creating the opportunity for considerable “pass-on” exposure to the communication messages. This also indicates the campaign generated considerable interest in healthy living issues among the Alberta public.

Impact of the Healthy Alberta Campaign on Attitudes and Behaviours

- In addition to the widespread awareness of the Healthy Alberta campaign, there are significant gains made in terms of Albertans’ attitudes regarding healthy eating and increasing physical activity, as well as perceptions of the information available to them on these topics. This immediate feedback is encouraging, as changes in attitudes are typically incremental over long periods of time, based on communications that build on previous messages.
- However, as might be anticipated, these changes in attitudes have not yet translated to positive changes in behaviours, which are typically even more incremental than attitudes and perceptions.

Attitudes About Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

- Very high proportions of Albertans perceive that even small steps taken to eat healthy and take part in physical activity make a difference to their health, and there is an increase in the strength of these perceptions relative to before the Healthy Alberta campaign took place.
- Albertans perceive more strongly that healthy eating makes a difference to their health relative to increasing their physical activity.

Attitudes About Information on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

- Albertans perceive that they are well informed about nutritional information and physical activity and that there is enough information available to them about nutrition and physical fitness.
- While they believe that the information about nutrition and being physically active that is available is useful to them, nutrition related information is perceived to be more useful than information about physical activity. However, the strength of perception that physical activity information is useful has increased relative to before the Healthy Alberta campaign.
- Information on healthy eating and physical health is also perceived to often be contradictory. However, for information regarding healthy eating, this perception has decreased relative to results obtained prior to the Healthy Alberta campaign.

Nutritional Eating Behaviors

- Most Albertans perceive themselves to be thinking about and making healthy food choices. However, there is a decreased perception among Albertans that they choose a healthier food over a less healthy food, relative to before the Healthy Alberta campaign.