

Diverse Ethnic Origins

In addition to its impact on mother tongues, changing demographics has affected the ethnic make-up of Canada. While nearly 12 million Canadians consider themselves "Canadian," there are sizeable groups of people with different or additional ethnic origins, such as over 1 million Germans, Italians, Chinese and Ukrainians, in addition to large segments identifying themselves as of English, French, Scottish and Irish ethnic origin. As suggested by Chart 5, specific market segments may merit focused marketing plans and giftware businesses should be sensitive to the ethnic differences and the associated purchase preferences of retailers and end-customers. For example, many cultures pay attention to luck (or its lack) when choosing gifts but the manifestations vary. For reasons considered unlucky, Chinese Canadians prefer not to wrap gifts in black and white paper, and avoid giving clocks as gifts. Chinese Canadians pay attention to feng shui when buying decorations and other items that are thought to improve positive energy. Russian Canadians do not typically give cutlery as gifts, especially not knives. And some Jamaican Canadians perceive that bad luck comes in threes and consider this in gift giving. (See Chart 5)

Major Growth Expected

It is likely that Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal will continue to be the preferred locations for most minorities, and their numbers will grow significantly. According to Statistics Canada, 62% of the increased number of visible minorities between now and 2017 will be located in these three cities. Chinese and South Asian minorities (people who have origins in countries such as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) will comprise the majority of the increased number of visible minorities in Toronto and Vancouver, as described in the following charts. In Montreal, the growth in visible minorities between

now and 2017 will be comprised mostly Arabs, blacks, South Asians and Chinese. (See Chart 6)

Concluding Comments

Demography, it is often said, is destiny. That is, while the future for businesses is generally uncertain, one aspect of the future can be assumed: today's population will assuredly be tomorrow's customers and immigrants will swell these numbers. Opportunities remain for many businesses to think about this country not as a mass market to be served in aggregate but as regions and cities where customers reside who are distinct from one another. Then suppliers can plan to cater more effectively to each market place. For giftware suppliers, this means thinking about customers' customers – the end-customers who buy from retailers – and developing specific regional product, marketing and sales plans to help retailers be more successful in their local markets. With over half the Canadian population in just ten cities, regional marketing initiatives need not be overly complex or difficult to implement. If demography is destiny, the future will belong to businesses that effectively address demographic opportunities. The alternative is for Canadian companies to use yesterday's plans to serve tomorrow's customers, and the result may be predictably bad.

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1) In 2001, the most recent year for which Statistics Canada census data are available, 18.4% of the Canadian population were born outside of Canada, compared to 16.1% in 1991.
2) Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2001

CHART 4: MOTHER TONGUE OF CANADIANS, BY PROVINCE

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CENSUS OF THE POPULATION, 2001.

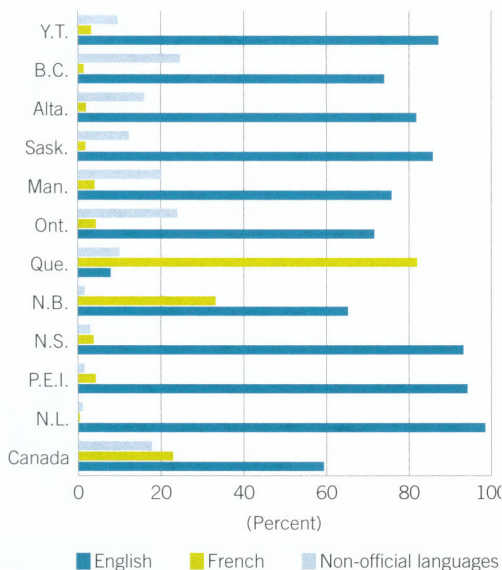


CHART 5: ETHNIC ORIGINS OF CANADIANS

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CENSUS OF THE POPULATION, 2001.

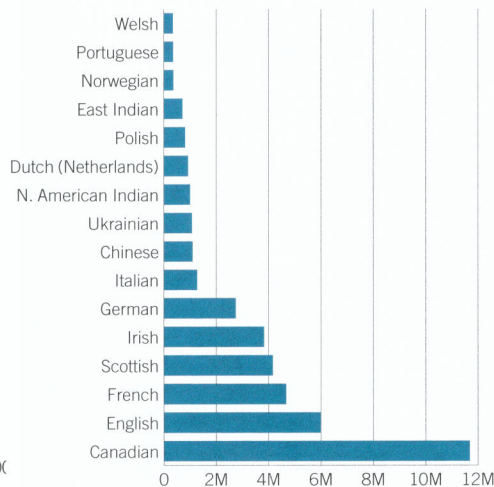


CHART 6: PROJECTED POPULATIONS OF TORONTO, VANCOUVER AND MONTREAL – 2017

SOURCE FOR BELOW THREE CHARTS: STATISTICS CANADA CATALOGUE 91-541-XIE; SCENARIO C.

