

HOM Speech
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What is the Canada Brand?

Thank you to Ron Livingston, the President of CanCham, for the kind words and introduction and to Chairman Stanley Kang, as well as the members of the Presidents' Council of the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce for the opportunity to speak at your meeting today.

What is the Canada Brand?

Some people would say it's the second largest country in the world, home to Inuit, maple syrup, beer and cold winters. I hear a lot about cold winters here in Thailand. It's a simple question, but the answer may surprise you.

There's a saying in Canada that we can distinguish ourselves by of our love for "the 3 H's": Hockey, Health Care, and Tim Horton's Restaurants. Personally, I think we are a bit more complex than that, but I will warn you now that you should never stand between a Canadian and his cup of Tim Horton's coffee.

Since I've spent a large part of my adult life abroad, I've come to realize that certain values and aspects of my home country stand out as core pillars that represent the Canadian identity, and so I would like to share these with you today.

To be fair, much of our strength as a nation comes from circumstance. We have a history of both political stability and external security. Out of these conditions, Canadians have developed a unique set of values that make me proud, but also privileged, to stand before you today. For me, the Canadian identity stripped down is about three core concepts:

Diversity and Inclusion; Transparency and Honesty; & Innovation and the desire to bring our innovations to other parts of the world.

Diversity & Inclusion

The first aspect of the Canadian identity is our unique blend of diversity and inclusion.

We are a nation of immigrants. With the exception of our indigenous peoples, everyone in Canada has roots elsewhere, at most a few hundred years back. This makes for a very diverse country. We didn't always celebrate this diversity nor welcome new immigrants. But I believe we have transcended some dark chapters in our past—Chinese exclusion, and internment of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War—to recognise that our diversity is the source of our strength. And inclusiveness is shown to all who step out of the ship, train, boat or plane that brings them.

Indeed, one-fifth of Canadians were born elsewhere and chose to immigrate to Canada. In our largest city of Toronto, more than half were born outside Canada. And in my home province of BC, over 50 percent of Vancouver's population can trace heritage back to Asia.

This has allowed each of us to bring our identities from all corners of the globe and adapt at our own pace. Our belief that cultural diversity is what makes us strong and constantly renews our society has been the basis of Canada's policies supporting multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver are massive and ever-evolving cultural mosaics, filled with hundreds of communities for immigrants to settle and begin their new lives as Canadians. In Canada, the definition of being Canadian can often come with a hyphen "I'm

French-Canadian, I'm Brazilian-Canadian, I'm Thai-Canadian." These forms of identification strengthen, not weaken, one's fundamental Canadian-ness. I believe this also makes us open to welcoming people from abroad. Openness extends beyond our borders. The past year has seen a horrific migration crisis in parts of the Middle East & Europe. Canada has stepped up and more than doubled its intake of refugees over the course of one year,. We don't see migrants, we see future Canadians looking to come home. And this is shown by our business community's support for these efforts too, which has contributed over \$30 million in the first quarter of this year alone for the housing of new refugees.

Helping these refugees adjust into our society is no small feat, but Canada offers a wide range of resources to help them adjust. In most retail banks in our major cities, it is not uncommon to see banking services offered in thirty, even fifty languages. This is not a luxury; this is a necessity to accommodate our truly diverse population in Canada.

We also know that inclusion benefits us in the long term. Take for example one particular young girl who, in 1996, escaped hostilities in Afghanistan and sought refugee status in Canada. Arriving with truly nothing, she was determined to grow up and give back to the country that took her in. This particular refugee grew up to become the Honorable Maryam Monsef, appointed last year as our Minister for Democratic Institutions.

Our sense of inclusion, however, is not static, and doesn't stop with ethnicity and language. Canada was the second nation to institutionalize same-sex marriage and continues to support LGBTI rights abroad. In fact, in just the past two weeks, the Embassy of Canada has been working with Queer Mango and the French Embassy to celebrate Pride Month, and I'm proud to say that the award winning Canadian movie "Closet Monster" was included in the Bangkok Gay & Lesbian Film

Festival at Emquartier and will be playing this Thursday and Friday Night. In the wake of the recent mass shooting in the Orlando nightclub, it becomes clear to all of us how important our fight against eliminating these forms of discrimination truly are. This is why our support for LGBTI human rights is strong in Canada and here in Thailand, where we've also held seminars on the legal aspects of Canada's approach to same-sex marriage, as Thailand contemplates its own laws in this regard.

And of course, we can't talk about inclusion without addressing gender equality. Looking around the predominantly male room, I see that there is much left to overcome in this area. As a father of three bright, articulate young women, this is a value that is not only a part of my professional life, but it is deeply personal.

I am proud to say that our new government, headed by the young and popular Justin Trudeau, has chosen an executive cabinet that is 50% female. Not to mention the fact that three out of Canada's four largest provinces—our main economic powerhouses-- are headed by women.

Strong female leadership can even be found at the local level, where former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion comes to mind.

"Hurricane" Hazel, as she's been aptly named, led Canada's sixth largest city for 36 years. She was so well-respected by her constituents that she would regularly receive 95% of the vote without even campaigning. Last year she stepped down, yet remains active in business and politics, at the young age of 95.

The desire for female empowerment doesn't stop in Canada, but is a major priority in our missions across the world. For the past five years, Global Affairs Canada has funded a 10 million dollar project, in conjunction with the United Nations, to improve the rights of women in Southeast Asia. The results of this project are expected to be felt over

time, but immediate successes have included legislation in several countries improving the status of women, and a greatly increased use of the Convention Eliminating Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in local court systems.

You will also witness increasing diversity and gender equality in our diplomatic appointments abroad—Canada will finally be represented by a group of people who are not only talented, but who represent the face of Canada.

Canada is welcoming to people of all races, genders, and ages. Its education system is regularly ranked near the top of global surveys. One of its great strengths lies in the fact that its students come from all over the world and feel comfortable expressing their views and opinions in our open society. Canada's largest university, the University of Toronto, plays host to 85 000 students, of which 24% are international.

So as I wrap-up my part on diversity and inclusion, I hope I have left you with the sense that you can always feel welcome in Canada, for business or otherwise.

Transparency & Honesty

Next, I want to talk to you about another core aspect of the Canadian identity: transparency and honesty in our business and political interactions.

Canadian businesses and governments are considered amongst the cleanest and most transparent in the world. Citizens of Canada make this a top priority when they elect politicians and invest in corporate organizations. Our public review processes ensure bring stability and community support to investments.

For this reason, Canada ranks high each year in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, beating out countries such as the US, UK, France, Germany, and Australia.

Having faith in our public and private institutions is a cornerstone for Canadians. We expect our businesses to be transparent and to use sustainable practices both at home and abroad.

One Canadian that embodies this spirit is the former Governor of the Canadian Central Bank, Mark Carney. Mr. Carney's steadfast approach to monetary policy helped the Canadian banking system recover from the 2008 financial crisis faster than any other country in the G8.

Today the Canadian banking system is considered the "soundest in the world" by the World Bank. As for Mr. Carney, he now heads the Central Bank of England—the first non-Brit to do so—and sits as the chairman of the G20's financial stability board.

Our striving for openness and transparency of course isn't limited to Mr. Carney. One uniquely Canadian organization, called "The Toronto Centre", trains financial sector regulators in emerging markets. To date, The Toronto Centre has trained over 7 000 regulators in 170 countries.

But did you know that over 250 Thai regulators and supervisors from both the Bank of Thailand and the Thai Securities Exchange Commission have received training and support from the Toronto Centre? I've met with Thai alumni of the Toronto Centre, and it was amazing to me that even though one alumnus was trained 10 years ago, he could describe the training as if it happened yesterday. He spoke passionately about the 72-hour simulation that took participants through a financial crisis that was tailored to fit the regional economy, and he, as well as other Thai regulators, have gone on to train their own teams and take them through similar, equally stressful simulations to avoid another

Asian financial flu. Activities like this show the true strength of Canada's financial sector, and our country's willingness to strengthen the global community through collaborations.

Honest and equitable business partnerships are also a Canadian export. Take, for instance, the Doi Chaang coffee company; which was founded through a joint partnership between farmers from the northern Akha hill tribe and a Vancouver-based financier. The farmers of the Akha hill tribe were seeking fair market prices for their Arabica coffee beans and required international support and financing to do so. In 2006, a prominent Canadian businessman named John Darch met Thai entrepreneur Wicha Promyong, and the two founded a company with 100% Canadian financing and 100% Thai production. The beautiful part of this story is that Mr. Darch donated 50% of his equity in Doi Chaang back to the Akha hill tribe, and now 50% of the company's profits—including profits from the chain of coffee shops-- go directly into the Akha community for development. The impact of this creative partnership has been incredible and inspirational.

So in conclusion of this second point, transparency and honesty are pillars of Canadian culture, and therefore, of Canadian business. This is how we have conducted our business in Thailand because this is how we do business as Canadians and we hope that this aspect of our business culture generates more partnerships in the future with your respective members.

Innovation

The third and final aspect of the Canadian identity I wish to talk to you about today is the tradition of Canadian innovation and our desire to bring our innovations to the rest of the world. From its early days as both

a French and British colony, Canada has been a nation of exporters and innovators long before its Confederation as a modern state.

To me, innovation means to *not accept* the status quo, and to improve products and processes to be in line with future demands.

Innovation means creativity. One such example is the world-renown Cirque du Soleil—the largest theatrical company in the world – a circus without the traditional animals. I’m sure most of you have heard of these high-flying acrobats, but did you know this troupe is based out of Montreal, Quebec?

Canadians have long been innovators and inventors of globally recognized products such as the telephone, the lightbulb, the jet-ski (another Bombardier innovation), the pacemaker, the zipper, the walkie-talkie, not to mention insulin and standard time. Canadian computer scientists invented java script, while Canadian sports enthusiasts invented basketball, hockey, and the instant replay.

Oh yes, and the selfie stick. Sorry about that one.

Has anyone here every seen a movie in an IMAX cinema? They are generally twice the size and have greater resolution than a conventional movie screen. This is another Canadian invention, and there are now over 1000 IMAX theatres across 67 countries, including several in Thailand, such as the EmQuartier and Siam Paragon here in Bangkok.

Sure we have a long list of success stories in our rear-view mirror, but what about going forward? What have we done lately? Well, quite a bit...

Let me tell you about Rolls Batteries, a company based out of Nova Scotia. Rolls has been innovating the battery for over fifty years in order

to adapt it to market demands. It has pioneered a new technology that is able to capture solar energy and store it in batteries that last up to a week. The impact on off-grid and brown-out prone areas has been tremendous. Rolls batteries can be found across North and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and have recently begun seeking distributors in Southeast Asia.

Having such a large country means that Canada has unique challenges to face when it seeks equality for its citizens. This includes both the right to free health care and the right to education. Some communities are thousands of kilometers away from the nearest hospital or university, and servicing these populations has required special innovation.

Canadian telemedicine and telehealth services are becoming world-renown, as rural patients are increasingly able to receive specialist treatment through new ICT technologies. The solutions we are finding in Canada to fix our disconnected population are actually well-suited for the Southeast Asian market, particularly in Thailand. Currently there are over 5 000 telehealth systems in Canada serving 1100 rural communities. It is in this area we look forward to collaborating further within ASEAN to promote equality in health care.

As for educating rural communities, this is another challenge that Canadians and Thais both face. It is in this area that we have actually seen some recent success. Braincloud, a Canadian-based education company, has expanded rapidly to 200 schools across the South of Thailand, bringing a cutting-edge English curriculum to over four thousand rural students. This platform combines tablet-based learning with a specialized curriculum for primary-aged students. Well-qualified teachers are able to interact with classrooms across Thailand using broadcast studios based in Bangkok. The potential for this type of

educational product is endless and shows the truth strength of Canadian innovation.

To reiterate, Canadians have a long history of innovation and exporting those innovations to the world. Whether you know it or not, this room is filled with Canadian inventions. This is what I want you to remember the next time you see the Canadian brand on a product or service. Think quality, think competitive, think innovation.

Conclusion

It is here that I wish to wrap up my speech for you today on what the Canadian brand truly is. We are open and inclusive, we are honest and transparent, and we are always looking to improve the world whether at home or abroad. Canadians make for great business partners at all levels of the global value chain. Our diversity and inclusiveness means that we promote the best talent our country has to offer, and your investment in Canada gives you access to a workforce with over 200 languages and an unparalleled global network. Our transparency and honesty means that your business dealings are stable and safe. And our commitment to innovation means that when you work with Canada, you will continue to be on the cutting edge of your endeavours.

I have made a career of speaking on the virtues of Canadian business and I have never run out of positive things to say. I will be happy to discuss any opportunities you may wish to pursue in or with Canadian businesses. With me today are members of the Trade Commission: our Commercial Counsellor Yvonne Chin, four of our trade commissioners: Khun Pisite who specializes in the ICT sector, Khun Surin who is an expert on agriculture and all things food, Khun Knack—our clean energy, oil and mining representative, Khun Ekasit who is responsible

for infrastructure projects, as well as Darcy Drury, who is our intern joining us for the summer. Any of the commercial team will be pleased to expand on the points I've made today.

The Canadian brand is strong and CanCham is happy to be a member of the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce and host to this event. I will now leave you with two short videos promoting Canadian business.

Thank you for your time today.