

# REACHING DIVERSITY

**9 Million Customers Your Brand  
Might be Forgetting**

A B2B Guide for Multicultural Marketing Success in  
Canada.

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# Introduction

When most people think of language in Canada, they think of Canada's official languages: English and French. But did you know that Canadians speak [over 200 languages](#)? Aside from our two official languages, the top five language groups are Mandarin and Cantonese speakers, Punjabi and Hindi, Tagalog, Arabic, and Spanish.

Those languages reflect the mosaic of diverse cultures that make Canada unique. Culturally adapted marketing in Canada can build lasting brand loyalty – yet diverse communities are often overlooked by marketers.

Promoting your brand with the right language can go a long way to reaching the right audience. But culturally sensitive marketing goes beyond language to target cultural groups on the most relevant social media channels, with culturally sensitive messaging that resonates with them.

By targeting the 9 million customers your brand might be forgetting, you can reach all Canadians – not just those who speak Canada's “official languages.”

This guide aims to provide valuable and actionable insights, from socio-economic and geographic data to help you plan your campaigns to marketing nuances that can help appeal to each group.

We'll also list major holidays that you should keep in mind, popular media platforms, and examples of successfully executed campaigns.



# Five largest language groups in Canada

Just over 55% of Canadians are native English speakers and [21% are native French speakers](#). That leaves 25% of the population – approximately 9 million people – that speaks a language other than English. These groups are on the rise as Canada continues to welcome record numbers of newcomers into the country each year.

After English and French, Canada's next five largest language groups are:

## 1. Mandarin & Cantonese

Mandarin is the third most popular language after English and French, spoken by more than half a million people in Canada. After facing exclusionary immigration policies in the middle of the 20th century, Mandarin and Cantonese speakers are thriving in Canada.

More recent immigration policies have brought more Chinese Canadians into the country, and they now make up [4.7% of the national population](#), most of whom were born outside of Canada.

Popular Chinese holidays include the [Lunar New Year](#) in February and the [Mid-Autumn Festival](#) in September, which are excellent opportunities to celebrate with Chinese consumers.



*Our client Mission Hill Family Estate Winery engages with Chinese customers on popular Chinese social media platforms, WeChat and RED on the occasion of the Mid-Autumn Festival.*

## 2. Punjabi & Hindi

Canada's South Asian community makes up [7% of the country's population](#), but it's a diverse group, including people from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Among South Asians in Canada, the largest language groups are Punjabi and Hindi.



This group is also growing quickly; from 2016 to 2021, the growth rate of Canadians who spoke a South Asian language grew [eight times faster](#) than the overall Canadian population.

[Diwali](#) is a popular festival that's celebrated widely in Canada, with festivals in major cities like Vancouver and Toronto. It's a five-day festival featuring gift-giving, decorations and parties.

## 3. Tagalog

There are 280,000 Tagalog speakers in Canada. In 2023, the federal government launched a Philippines-Canada friendship week and launched a pilot program to [streamline work permit processing](#) for Filipino workers coming to Canada.

Filipinos celebrate Lunar New Year, and many Christian holidays.



#### 4. Arabic

In Montreal, Arabic and Spanish are equally popular as the mother tongue of 220,000 speakers, representing the largest concentration of the [629,000 Arabic speakers](#) across Canada.

Most Arabic-speaking newcomers came to Canada after the Second World War, hailing from many countries including Syria, Lebanon, Somalia, Egypt, and more. It's a young and educated community; 56% of Arab Canadians are [under 24 years old](#) and 62% have post-secondary schooling.

Many Muslims in Canada observe Ramadan, a month of fasting in March and early April, ending in the celebration of Eid al-Fitr. Eid al-Adha, in June, is another popular holiday featuring family meals and gifts.

#### 5. Spanish

Although the 2021 Canadian Census identified 580,000 Canadians from Latin America, a custom report requested by the Canadian Hispanic Congress showed the number was [actually 1,193,880](#). It's a diverse community representing Spanish speakers from 21 countries.

Popular Latin American holidays include Mardi Gras, also known as 'Fat Tuesday'. It is celebrated with feasts and festivals, and Día de los Muertos in November, a time to honour the dead with family gatherings and gifts.

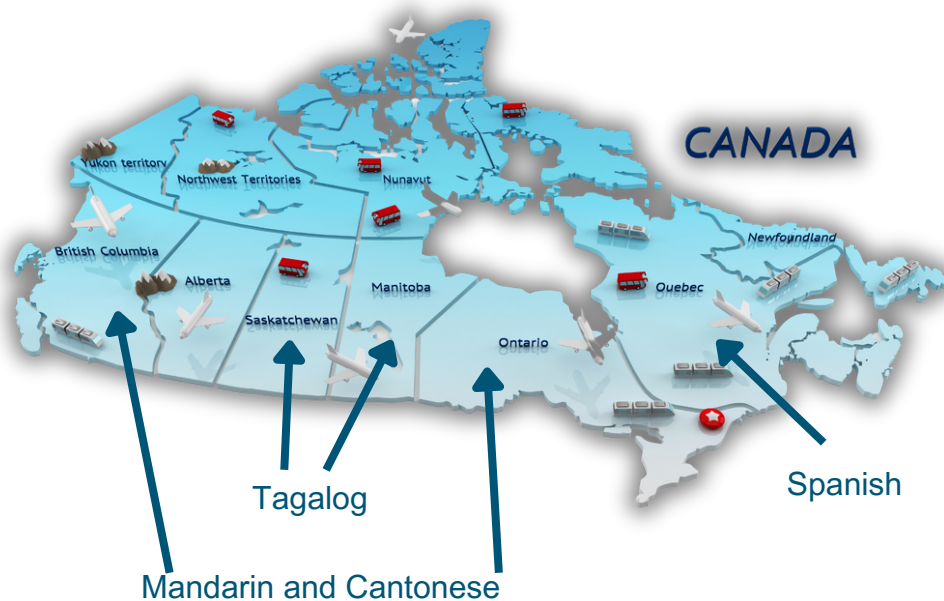


*Source: by Megan Gallant for Streets Of Toronto*

## Regional distribution

Canada's linguistic groups are distributed unevenly across the country. Marketers looking to target specific Canadian provinces should take note of the different language groups most present in specific cities:

- Mandarin and Cantonese speakers thrive in larger cities like Toronto and Vancouver where Chinese is the [main non-official language](#) spoken at home.
- British Columbia and Alberta, as well as Ontario, have a significant South Asian population, especially in cities like Abbotsford, Kamloops, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, and Brampton.
- Manitoba has the highest percentage of people who have emigrated from the Philippines. Filipinos make up [8.7% of the population in Winnipeg](#), which has the longest history of Filipino immigration in the country. There are also strong Filipino communities in Saskatchewan, especially in Saskatoon and Regina.
- Latin American and Hispanic communities are growing quickly, especially in cities like [Québec City and Montreal](#).



# Marketing to diversity

Reaching out to diverse language groups requires more than just translation and geotargeting. Each community has its own cultural preferences when it comes to purchasing, social platforms, news media and online (or offline!) engagement with brands.

Here's a more focused look at the five largest language groups and what marketers should know when reaching out to them:

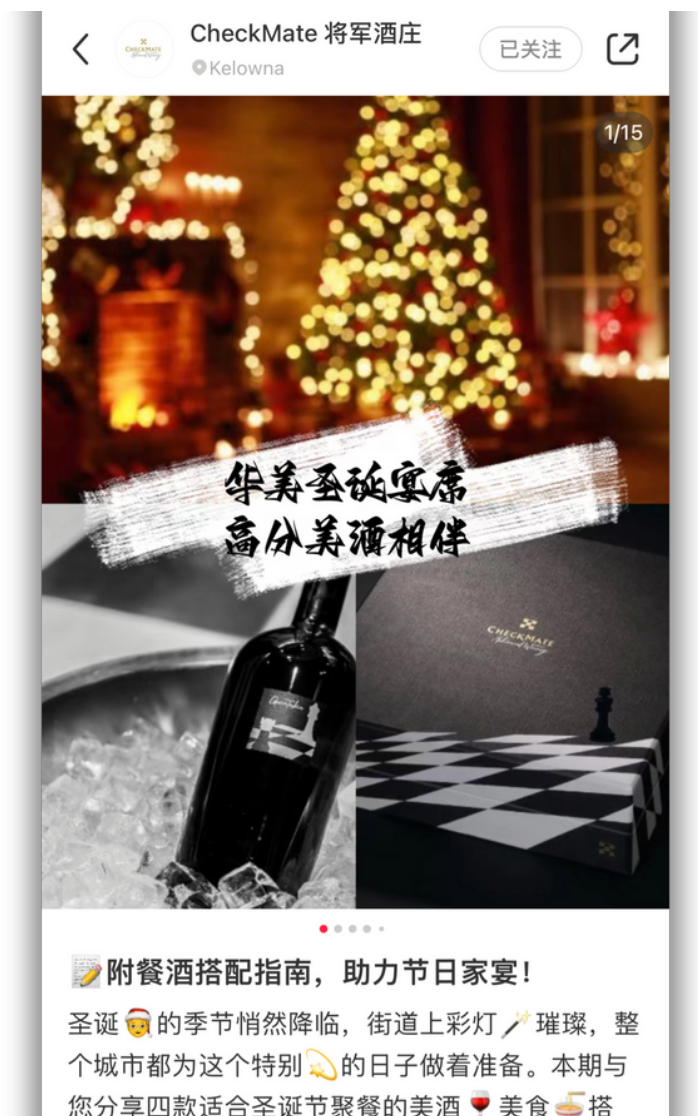
**Punjabi-speaking audiences** often appreciate radio ads, and Facebook ads do well with this audience. Punjabi OTT networks like [KaroStream](#) and ad marketplaces like [PTC Punjabi](#) can help brands target Punjabi-speaking audiences with ads embedded in Punjabi media.



**Hindi-speaking audiences** are used to seeing ads in English or [Hinglish](#), which is the Hindi language written in English alphabets, and lots of English words. Hindi speakers are digitally savvy, so brands can target this group on popular social channels like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. WhatsApp is also very popular in India with [535.8 million users](#).

**Tagalog-speaking audiences** have a strong presence on Facebook, which had over [80 million users](#) in the Philippines in early 2023. Although its popularity is slowly declining, it's still the most popular social media platform among this audience. Canadian brands can also turn to local publications like the Philippine Canadian Inquirer, or reach an international audience with PhilStar. Other popular digital tools for this audience include TikTok and YouTube.





**Chinese speakers** tend to favour social platforms like WeChat, Weibo, RED, and TikTok. This is because common platforms like Facebook and Google have language and cybersecurity barriers that prevent users in China from accessing them.

[WeChat](#), with over a billion users, and [RED](#), with over 100 million monthly users and rapidly growing, offer particularly lucrative opportunities to target Chinese consumers.

**Arabic-speaking audiences** are young, educated and digitally savvy – so reaching them on mobile and popular social media platforms is a must. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat are popular with this community; however, older generations can also be reached on Arabic TV and print media.

**Spanish-speaking audiences** come from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures, so it's important to understand what subset of this audience you're targeting. WhatsApp is the most popular social app.

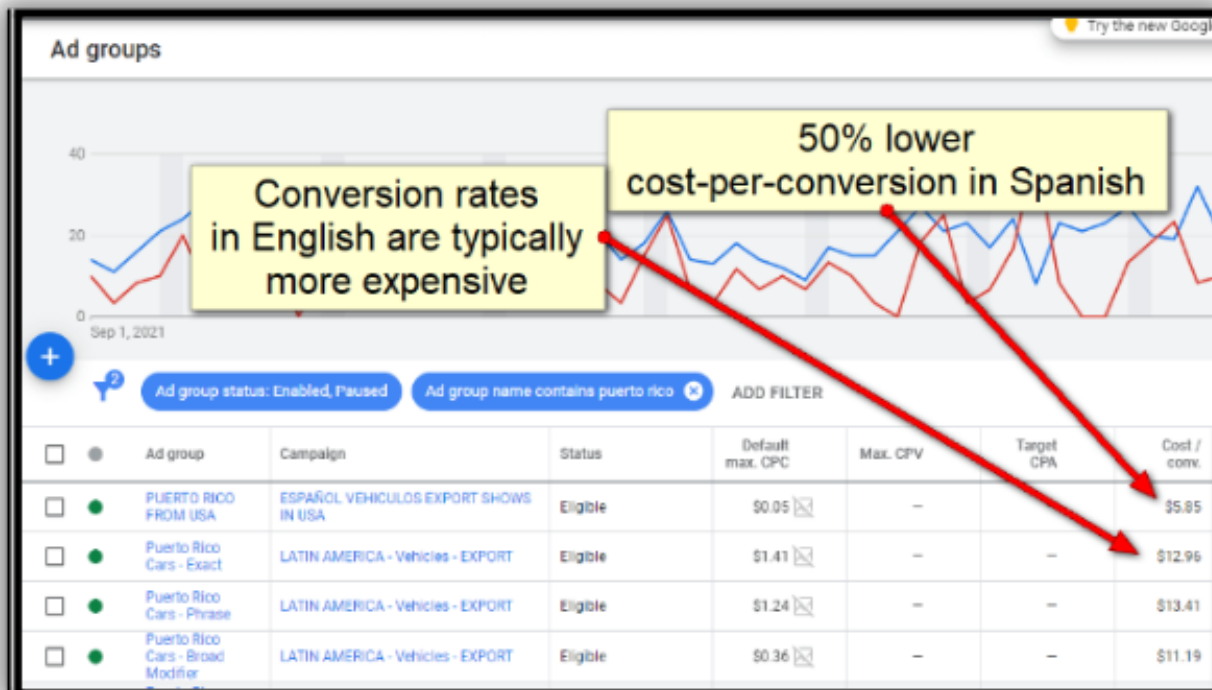
# Should you translate Google Ads?

When you create a Google ad campaign, you might not think about language targeting – but it's a powerful way to reach different customer segments. Google's default setting is to target all languages, but you can change this setting using language targeting to ensure your message reaches customers in their preferred language.

For example, if you create an ad in Spanish, you can select “Spanish” in your Google Ads settings to ensure that it shows up only for Spanish speakers.

This helps:

- **Save on ads** that target keywords with less competition. Non-English ads can be significantly less expensive than English ads because the price for targeting non-English keywords is lower.



- Increase relevance with ads tailored to a specific cultural group. And as mentioned above, you'll also save money with more precise targeting since you're not spending money reaching an overly broad audience.

If you're targeting multiple languages (for example, you want to advertise to customers in English and Mandarin) create multiple versions of the same ad and tailor each to the specific demographic you want to reach. That way your ad will be more relevant to each target audience.

### **5 tips for running successful multilingual Google Ad campaigns:**

Creating a successful multilingual campaign is about way more than basic translation; it's about truly understanding the target market you're hoping to reach. Here are 5 important factors to consider for your next multilingual campaign:

1. **Keyword relevance:** Just as English campaigns depend on keywords for relevance, your multilingual campaigns will depend on keywords in their target language. That means it's important to understand what keywords your audience is using in their native language to search for your products and services.
2. **Geographic targeting:** If you're a Canadian company selling locally, you may want to target Hindi speakers in Canada rather than Hindi speakers globally. With Google Ads, you can target geographical locations within one language group to make sure you're showing ads to the relevant target audience.
3. **Transcreation and localization:** Translation isn't just about text; it's also about crafting messages that resonate with the cultural group you're targeting. Tailoring ads can involve things like reconsidering images, slogans, and ad formatting so that they appeal culturally to your audience.
4. **Clickthrough destination:** Just because you have one multilingual ad doesn't mean your campaign will generate returns. In order to make clickthroughs count, make sure your landing pages also have culturally relevant messaging in the same language as your ad.

**5. Ad testing:** The best way to optimize Google ads is to create responsive campaigns with multiple versions of the keywords or keyword phrases you're targeting in pinned headlines. A/B testing can also help you determine what elements work best with your target audience.

Need an example? [LAT Multilingual's ads for Diageo](#) ensured that the slogans for their brand were appropriate in both English and French, which meant coming up with catchphrases that would resonate with their Quebecois audiences.



Crafting ad content that resonates culturally with the target audience will make sure your brand stands out.

# Engaging diverse audiences on social media

Beyond understanding which social channels to use for different cultural groups, it's crucial to understand how to use them effectively. Even though social media platforms have a global reach, targeting audiences always requires a local mindset and approach.

For example, Facebook Ads can now target different language groups automatically and translate ad text with AI. But it's worth noting that just like Google Ads, the success of your campaign will depend heavily on the sophistication of your translation. Facebook's tools won't translate visual content or video, and won't be able to make your content culturally relevant.

Culturally relevant social ads involve things like:

- Understanding which hashtags are trending with your target demographic
- Taking stock of cultural trends and holidays that resonate
- Liking, commenting, and interacting with social groups and posts that align with your target audience

This requires much more than just word-for-word translation. While many non-English speakers use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok, it's important to consider campaigns on other platforms, especially when designing campaigns for Chinese audiences.





# Social platforms you should include in your multilingual campaigns

## WeChat

Chinese residents in Canada and the US rely heavily on WeChat for information and recommendations about brands, restaurants, internet providers, and much more. It's an app that combines many features, including payment options. The USA has 4 million WeChat users while Canada has [1 million WeChat users](#).

WeChat's Moments feature is similar to other social media posts but with the ability to create ads with interactive elements. WeChat [Channel ads](#) are available to accepted brands, with the option to link back to a WeChat article. Mini-games are also on the rise, with brands like [Burberry and Gucci](#) experimenting with their use as a marketing tool.

LAT Multilingual's campaign for Mission Hill's Moon Festival celebration included WeChat ads and a [livestream](#) to boost engagement.

## RED (Xiaohongshu)

RED stands for "little red book," and it's often referred to as the Chinese Instagram. It has a young, urban, and predominantly female audience with 70% of whom are millennials and Gen Z. It has roots as a product review site, so success on RED relies heavily on word-of-mouth, where the voices of key opinion leaders (KOLs) are crucial for tapping into the platform's community.

There's also an emphasis on lifestyle, and it's especially lucrative for luxury, beauty, and fashion sectors, due to its high proportion of urban and overseas users with spending power. Luxury fashion brand [Lemaire](#) saw quick success on the platform with 13,000 followers in one week.

## Facebook

Facebook celebrated its 20th birthday this year, as one of the most iconic and established social media platforms with over [5 billion distinct user profiles](#). With a strong global footprint and sophisticated resources for managing localized ads, Facebook is another strong platform for engaging multilingual audiences across Canada.

LAT Multilingual works with real estate developers to help them reach specific demographics for each project. Most recently, our team adapted Korean ads for a real estate client, targeting Korean audiences looking to buy a new property in a town in BC in tandem with localized Google ads for the same service.

For retail clients, Facebook also has marketplace tools and call-to-action buttons that allow sellers to create a seamless buyer journey.



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# Creating your next multilingual campaign

Creating a successful multilingual campaign requires a tailored approach. It's not only about translating the content that you already have – it's also about tailoring your campaigns to a specific cultural context and optimizing them for your audience.

If you don't know where to start, reach out to the translation and localization experts at LAT Multilingual. With a range of diverse experts in key Canadian markets, we can help you scale a campaign that resonates much more deeply with your target audience. We go beyond simple translation to localize, design, and optimize campaigns for better performance across the channels that matter.

[Reach out today](#) to learn more about how multicultural marketing can help your brand reach 9 million customers you might be overlooking.

