

EcoA Tips

Notes & news from EcoAnalytics Research

Bienvenue à la quatrième édition de notre bulletin. Scroll on for the following flowers of our shared intelligence.

Four tips for engaging key audiences this summer, in the run-up to a possible federal election this fall, and beyond:

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Competitors: Groups campaigning in run-up to election would do well to focus on competitive ridings. Photo: Canadian Olympic Committee

Four tips for engaging key audiences in the run up to a possible election and beyond:

Tip 1: Get competitive

Planning to engage voters in the next federal election? If so, review the recommendations of Erick Lachapelle's brief *Which Canadians support a green (and just) recovery?* (Feb. 2021). These include focussing on competitive swing ridings, receptive demographic segments and topics that give you maximum political leverage. His analysis finds nearly half of respondents supported a green recovery in the midst of COVID's scary second wave and suggests you focus on a few highly competitive ridings (where the margin in the 2019 federal election was less than 5%), mostly in BC, ON, and QC (an appendix lists them). Here Lachapelle finds lower levels of support for a green recovery, but good engagement on this topic could tip the balance: persuading those in the so-called Moveable Middle and many women, including Conservative women, to vote for parties that promise to invest significantly in a green recovery. Frames and messages?: try bundling. For example, among Conservative women talk about the virtues of a green economic recovery and nature-based solutions (choose your words, however, so as not to trigger scepticism about government redistribution programs and the ability of governments to decarbonize the economy, which depresses support). Among left-leaning voters (and those who are university educated and/or women) work with inclusive language: a "green and just recovery for all," for example.

Tip 2: Teach resilience

EcoAnalytics' Climate of Change Survey (2020) found that, for fighting climate change, 86% of Canadians strongly, or somewhat, supported "preparing our communities to be more resilient to climate change impacts." With this in mind prepare now to engage your audiences around floods, wildfires, and droughts. Youth, for example, who are particularly receptive, as they view climate change as a greater personal risk than do older generations. In doing so, five suggestions: 1) Link these events to climate change using powerful local images featuring people, where possible; 2) Emphasize resilience (i.e., preparedness, which many Conservatives prioritize); but 3) Talk mitigation, too — discussions of resiliency can open into conversations about pricing pollution, restoring wetlands, etc.; 4) Highlight effective actions ordinary people can take: build people's sense of personal efficacy; and 5) Proceed with caution: your tone, timing and choice of messengers should avoid the sort of backlash felt by "outside" environmental groups that blamed climate change as flames enveloped Fort McMurray, in 2016. Evidence and details? See the cross-tabulated results for the 2020 Climate of Change survey question: How important do you think each of the following are in terms of fighting climate change?; and the executive summary and recommendations of *Is bad weather good? How extreme weather may provide an opportunity to engage Canadians on climate change* (EcoAnalytics, May 2019)."

Tip 3: Talk about colonialism, often

Engage audiences regularly on how colonialism, or environmental injustice — resource extractivism, water pollution, cultural and political oppression, unjust land use and distribution — is at the root of climate change and biodiversity loss. Highlighting colonialism as one of the root causes is a recommendation put forth by Indigenous Climate Action as a key element to underscore when designing policy solutions to climate change. In your work year-round, talk about how the dual emergencies are tied to the use of violence to uproot Indigenous peoples from their lands. For example, point to colonialism when discussing pipeline construction on Indigenous territories, environmental racism, logging old growth, mining, or access to clean water. If you are looking to discuss issues related to environmental injustice or colonialism with non-Indigenous or settler communities in Ontario and Quebec, target Radicals. This demographic cluster, identified in EcoAnalytics analytical brief *Who do Canadians blame for climate change?*, tends to be urban, university educated, left-leaning, and women in safe electoral districts. Standing up to racial injustice because it is wrong and inhumane is the first piece. "Be prepared for push-back, however, even from supporters," warns Marie-Christine Fiset, Greenpeace Canada's Media Director. "That might mean preparing a Q&A and talking points about why we are talking about this rather than "sticking to the environment, and why this is not reverse racism, singling out white people."



- Don't vote.

"Dear young people, don't vote": [Video](#) for US campaign, 2018.

Tip 4: Clear barriers to mobilize youth vote

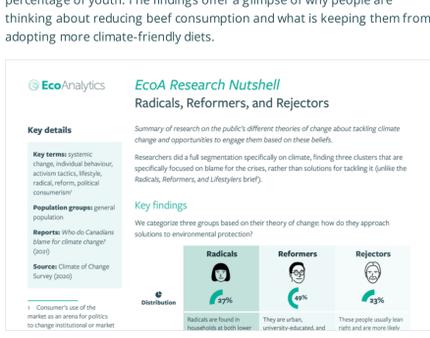
It is no secret that youth are inclined to skip elections: just 54% of 18–24 year olds voted in the 2019 federal election, compared to 79% of 65–74 year olds, according to StatsCan. The 2015 [National Youth Survey](#) found that accessibility and motivation were the main barriers preventing youth from casting a ballot. EcoAnalytics research from 2018 suggests that while youth may be less likely to vote than other age groups, they are more likely to vote for candidates based on their environmental stance and more likely to engage in other forms of civic action (signing petitions, protesting, etc.). To address motivation — the perception that their votes don't matter or that the government is indifferent — emphasize the outcomes we need on environmental issues that matter most to youth and how these could be achieved through elections. The key is avoid further political alienation. So explore opportunities in peer-to-peer education and engagement: the habit to vote is [reinforced by our peers](#), so use peer-pressure to your advantage. To [address](#) the knowledge gaps in how to register and vote, especially during a pandemic year, include information about this in your GOTV campaigns. For more ideas, see the new [EcoA Research Nutshell on engaging youth](#).

Other research

Tactics to fight climate misinformation and denial: Environmental organizations are no strangers to the fossil-fuel-funded misinformation campaigns that erode public understanding of climate change. To address evolving misinformation tactics, researchers Sander van der Linden and John Cook work on myth-busting and have developed a *prebunking* approach to stay one step ahead of fake news. Read more in this article from [Science News](#) or try their [Bad News](#) interactive game, which allows you to play at being a fake news producer.

COVID remains top concern, but the environment is gaining ground: Nanos has been tracking unprompted issues of concern since the pandemic began. Jobs and the economy has been the second most cited issue while the environment fell to fourth or fifth place throughout the year. In the latest poll, the environment (8.9%) is now close behind jobs and the economy (9.6%). [View the trends](#).

What are beefeaters thinking?: The Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University in partnership with Angus Reid conducted a [survey on beef consumption](#) in Canada. This found that the vast majority of respondents continue to eat beef regularly (92%); however, 25% said they had considered cutting beef out of their diets, including a higher percentage of youth. The findings offer a glimpse of why people are thinking about reducing beef consumption and what is keeping them from adopting more climate-friendly diets.



EcoA News

Launch of new research: EcoAnalytics has hired the Environics to embark on a new wave of mixed mode research. This will identify bundles of policies and measures to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss that could win the support of key segments of the Canadian electorate. The research begins this month with qualitative online "customer journeys", to be followed by a large national survey in August informed by the qualitative findings. This will examine specific measures in bundles — for social justice and job creation as well as reducing emissions, etc. — to assess how Canadians feel about different combinations. Members will have opportunities shape the design of the customer journey, this month, and the survey questionnaire, next month.

New translation tools: This week, we're sharing the first four *EcoA Research Nutshells*, concise summaries of main findings and recommendations of our research, reaching back to 2016, along with references to other sources. These focus on our Members' most relevant issues (nature-based solutions, systemic change, framing of climate change, etc) and sought-after demographic segments (by political affiliation, age, region, etc.). The summaries, each no more than three pages, are the work of Project Manager Emilia Patiño Anaya, with input from Dr. Erick Lachapelle, and design by Erika Rathje. The first *Nutshells* summarize what we have learned about engaging youth and clusters of so-called Radicals, Reformers, and Rejectors, and how to communicate about climate change. Interested in a particular segment or topic? [Pitch it to us!](#)

Fall Plan-a-palooza: Get ready to be convened for an inspiring strategic planning session this fall, informed by distinguished new researchers joining EcoA. The video-conferences will focus on a strategic research plan that addresses your priorities, and sheds new light on ways of engaging a limited number of key audiences. It will also include a theory of change. New researchers joining us include Drs. David Tindall, Professor of Sociology, UBC, who studies social networks underpinning environmental activism; Melanee Thomas, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Calgary, an expert on engaging women; and Lori Thorlakson, Professor of Political Science at the University of Alberta, who is interested in federal systems and voting behaviour. Emerging researchers from Quebec and elsewhere may also contribute.

Comin' up

As Canada's *one-dose* summer fast approaches, here are some dates to keep mind:

June
7 week Environics shares draft of qualitative "customer journey" script for comment by Members
First *EcoA Research Nutshells* shared with Members and Subscribers
14–28 Environics conducts "customer journey" research

July
5 week Environics shares results of qualitative research, and consults Members & Subscribers on quantitative survey content
12 week Environics consults Members and Subscribers about content of national survey questionnaire

August
4 EcoA *Tips* newsletter #5 shared
30 Environics shares first results of national survey

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