

Consequences to Date of the Free Trade Agreement

Approximately two-thirds (67%) of respondents believed that up to today, the Free Trade Agreement has hurt Canada, rather than benefitted the country. The percentage of respondents who believe that the Agreement has hurt Canada is down slightly from May 1992 (71%), but has increased significantly from 40 percent in September 1990. While two thirds believe the Agreement has hurt Canada to date, half (49%) believe that the Free Trade Agreement will hurt Canada in the long run. This represents a decline of 10 percent from December 1991. Overall, one third of respondents (33%) felt that more jobs will be created as a result of the Agreement, while three fifths (59%) believed that jobs will be lost in the long run.

Effect of New Information on Opposition to the FTA

In general, information statements regarding the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement are more likely to change respondents' opposition to the agreement; however, almost all of the information statements tested were seen as very or somewhat unbelievable. The results also show very little differentiation among the impact of the statements on respondents, with a slightly wider range on the believability dimension. Given this distribution, it is very difficult to determine the statement that optimizes both impact and believability.

Among the statements tested, the following was the most effective:

"Several American and Canadian owned companies have closed plants and opened new or expanded facilities in Canada" (65% would be more likely to support the FTA if they heard this had occurred; 27% think this statement is "believable").

Credibility of Sources of Information on Free Trade

Trade economists and other experts in international trade and business leaders are seen as the most credible sources of information on free trade. Three quarters (75%) of respondents to the survey would "trust most" or "trust some" of the statements of trade economists and 70% would "trust most" or "trust some" of what business leaders say.