

To test for regional differences in orientation to trade, a question asking "how important trade is to our country" was posed. Significant differences persist. Residents of Ontario and the West continue to be more likely to say that it is important, while Quebec residents are significantly less inclined to consider that the issue is salient. Interpolating positions on the importance of trade and assessments of the benefits of trade confirm the central finding of the first wave of this study: there must be three regionally sensitive communications themes.

British Columbia and Alberta residents share the view that trade is critical and that Canada would benefit from freer trade with the United States. Any communications strategy must thus continue to emphasize the value of freer trade to these provincial economies. In Quebec and the Maritimes, where awareness of the importance of trade is comparatively low, but conviction of the benefits from freer trade with the United States high, the central thrust needs to enhance the importance of trade. The relevance of the current talks to the larger trade strategy continues to seem the appropriate course for Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, where there is dubious assessment of the net benefits from any free trade agreement with the United States.

To further test regional views on free trade, one question was replicated from the first wave of this study. Respondents were asked to indicate the intensity of their agreement or disagreement with the proposition that "freer trade with the United States would help Ontario industry more than industry in other provinces."