

C. Ad#9 -- "Free Trade: We Should Know What It's All About"

This ad was correctly perceived by many group participants as more advocacy oriented than informational, in contrast to the two ads discussed above. In Decima's view, this advertisement is preferable to the business third-party spokesman advertisement as a more advocacy-oriented message or advertisement.

It emerges from the testing as having the effect of "drawing in the reader" and was described by one Vancouver group participant as "a great teaser." It also conveys through the headline a message that most people concur with and find credible. On the other hand, some Montreal and Halifax participants found it to have a political ring to it. With some modifications, it would likely constitute an effective, more advocacy-oriented compliment to the other ads recommended above that are more informational.

In addition to a credible and attractive headline, the ad was positively perceived as somewhat balanced in light of the reference to the fact that "Sure, there will be some problems, some adjustments to be made. That's why the agreement is being phased in over 10 years."

Where some revisions may be required is in generalizing the message about how free trade will affect each province, beyond the single, major industries highlighted in the ad. A number of people said they were attracted by the headline, but were left disappointed by the body of the text of the ad. In each city in which groups were conducted, people felt that there was excessive emphasis on one industry.

For instance, in Ontario, people felt that the ad proceeded too quickly from the general statement in the headline to an exclusive focus on one industry. An indication should be provided as to a broader range of industry benefits and effects besides that of the major, individual sectors emphasized. Benefits for small and medium sized businesses, and not just the benefits for large scale businesses, were also considered important to emphasize. For instance, it was recognized in Halifax that while free trade may be good for National Sea Products, they also wondered, "What does it mean for the small, inshore fisherman?"