

Certificate for Not-for-Profit

ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation

Scott Dickson
Director of Communications, ABC Canada

**Agency - Harrod & Mirlin
LEARN**

Brian Harrod
Creative Director

Kathy Thom
Account Director

Katie Zemla
Account Supervisor

Bill Daniels, Brent Peterson
Writers

Bob Goulart, Mike Dietrich
Art Directors

Angela Carroll
Producer

Eric Blais
VP Director of Client Services &
Strategic Planning

**Agency - Harrod & Mirlin
and Hubert Nadeau
APPRENDRE**

Ann Connolly
Creative Director

**TV, Radio, Print Production
LEARN**

Eugene Beck
Director

Alex Eaton
Editor

Doug Riley
Composer

Julie Schwartz
Research

Peter Mazzota
Print Production

Louie Pallu
Photographer

Jeff O'Neil
Announcer

**TV, Radio, Print Production
APPRENDRE**

Michel David
Director

Sylvie Dubé
Producer

Elizabeth Hèon
Research

Richard Seguin
Composer

ABC CANADA—Bus Shelter



Executive Summary

ABC CANADA is a national non-government organization established to raise awareness of adult literacy issues. However, in the early 90s there was a huge gap between the hundreds of organizations providing literacy services, and the people who needed their help.

There were two problems. First, literacy organizations - e.g. school boards, colleges, non-profit and volunteer groups - were working independently of each other, with no coordinated message. Second, the people needing help had no easy-to-find place for information. It was all very confusing.

ABC CANADA believed that the way to solve both problems was to treat literacy training as a product, and *brand* it. The result was the LEARN campaign. LEARN became the brand name for the one place to look for literacy help and information.

The campaign launched in 1993, with 400 ads across Canada in the Yellow Pages™. Each ad had the LEARN (or APPRENDRE) branding, with information about regional or local literacy organizations. With these ads in place, we launched a “call to action” campaign in TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, bus shelters and poster sites. This campaign started in 1994, and encouraged people to “Look under LEARN in the Yellow Pages™”, with the theme “Helping People Learn to Learn”.

How well this worked can be seen in the numbers, but also in comments like this:

“It took me a long time to get help, but I saw this ad on TV. This man said he couldn’t read very well, but he goes to school and he feels very good. So I looked it up in the Yellow Pages. This system is very good.”

Crossover Notes

1. Breaking conventions. Treating a service organization as a brand.
2. Digging for Insight. Reaching people with reading difficulties.
3. Integration. Using branding to create focus.
4. Noteworthy media. Handling a significant PSA schedule.
5. Creating a long-running campaign.

ABC CANADA—Print

Getting through these economic times is tough. Getting through them with limited reading skills is even tougher. Today, the workplace is an evolving place, and employers are demanding advanced skills from all their employees. If you know someone who is finding it hard to keep up, there is something you can do to help. Together, open up your Yellow Pages™ directories to LEARN. That's where you'll find the names of people in your community who can help with reading, writing or math.

Imagine facing each day with limited reading skills.



ABC
CANADA
LOOK UNDER LEARN.

Situation Analysis

There is a great need for literacy training in Canada. Stats Canada reports that 38% of Canadians are either non-readers, poor readers or reluctant readers.

Consequently, Canada has a widespread infrastructure of literacy groups. However, by the early 90s, they were operating independently of each other. Phone numbers were specific to individual groups, and not widely known. There was no universal “call to action”. Few of the people needing literacy help and training knew who to call, or where to go.

Many people with literacy problems were being left behind. The stigma made it hard for them to reach out. This was made worse by employers. Even when they were concerned about low literacy skills in the workplace, they did little about it. Then there was the public. A study commissioned by ABC CANADA showed that few Canadians considered low literacy an economic issue, and few understood its social consequences. We needed to bring literacy groups together - with each other, and with the people needing help.

Strategy and Execution

ABC CANADA believed that the solution was a common signature - in essence, to treat literacy training as a product, and to brand it.¹ Given the target’s reading difficulties, that branding would need certain characteristics:²

- Easy to remember
- Ready to find in the Yellow Pages™
- Easy to read
- Relevant to literacy skills
- Captured in a call to action

The answer was LEARN, with the call to action: “Look under LEARN in the Yellow Pages™”. People didn’t have to struggle with different phone numbers. They just had to remember LEARN, and where to find it. This had many advantages:³

- It’s easy for people with limited literacy skills
- The calls go to the organizations in the local directory area
- Newly formed agencies get immediate recognition under the LEARN umbrella

Crossover notes

1. Breaking conventions. Treating a public service organization as a brand.
2. Digging for Insight. Reaching people with reading difficulties.
3. Integration. Using a call to action to create focus. Compare Richmond Savings.

The Yellow Pages™ Campaign

First, we launched LEARN ads in the Yellow Pages™ across Canada through 1993, with Tele-Direct and other publishers donating the space. There are thousands of literacy partners represented in these ads, using “Helping People Learn to Learn” as the common theme. When people respond - and they do - there is someone there to answer the phone and deliver services.

The Call to Action Campaign

In 1994, with most Yellow Pages™ ads in place, we launched LEARN in TV, radio, magazines, transit shelters, and posters. The ads tell people to “Look under LEARN in the Yellow Pages™”. They are all public service announcements, and the media weight ebbs and flows according to the time and space provided. All creative and media service is donated.^{4,5}

Television

Research and adult literacy classes made it clear that the most powerful way to reach our target was to show personal experiences. We filmed two dozen spontaneous testimonials from people in literacy classes, and cut together 9 spots, in 60, 30 and 15 second formats. The ads have been distributed to every national broadcaster and cable network, and to regional and local media. English ads went out in January 1994, and French (to the same format) were ready six months later.

Radio

Radio was adapted from the TV. People describe how they could not read or communicate as they would like. They tell us how literacy training helped them - in work, self-esteem and confidence. Advertising began in early 1994 and four 30 second spots on 400 English-language stations.

Magazine, Newspaper, and Outdoor

Magazine and newspaper primarily targets the friends and family of people with reading and writing difficulties. (With a halo value against the general public.) Ads were ready for distribution in December 1994.

We repeated the message “Look under LEARN in the Yellow Pages™” to maintain branding. Note that we did not put phone numbers in these ads - to reinforce that LEARN is easy to remember and find. This also had a valuable side benefit: it let us place ads in national magazines, even though there is no national phone number for literacy training. We introduced easy-to-read transit shelter posters in 1995 - aimed primarily at adult learners. These has been very successful at generating calls.

Crossover notes

4. Noteworthy media. Handling a significant PSA schedule.

5. Creating a long-running campaign.

English TV

Key frames from 4 commercials



Dave: "I could read but I couldn't understand what I was reading".



Candy: "I can make my dream come true now".



Eubert: "I never knew the sweetness of reading and writing".



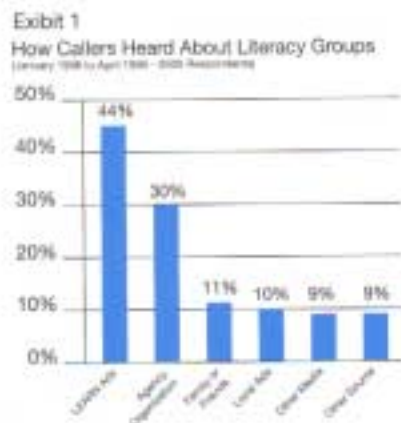
LOOK UNDER LEARN: super
Announcer VO: For help, look under
LEARN in the new Yellow Pages.

Results

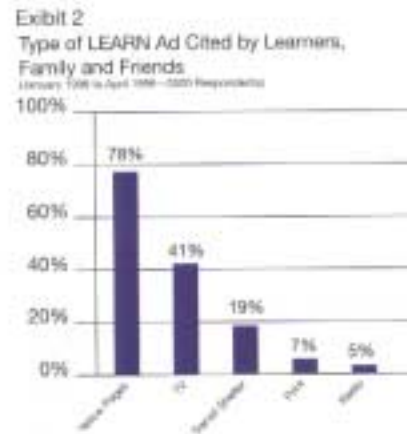
Over 90 English literacy groups participated in a national study across January - April 1996 to see if the LEARN campaign was working. (*The Impact of ABC CANADA's LEARN Campaign* by Research Ink, with 3500 respondents.) The results were splendid. LEARN was having a profound impact on literacy learners and literacy groups in every part of Canada.

The research showed that 44% of calls to literacy organizations were associated with LEARN - Exhibit 1. "Look under LEARN in your Yellow Pages™" was highly memorable, with Yellow Pages™ ads cited by 78% of respondents - Exhibit 2. Furthermore, 95% of potential learners who had seen a LEARN ad said it had helped them decide to call.

The high measured response was especially encouraging, taking into account that it came when the PSA schedule was delivering a low level of LEARN media - about 20% of the launch weight.



Source: The Impact of ABC CANADA's LEARN Campaign



Direct reporting from literacy groups shows that the LEARN campaign is having a strong influence in every province and territory in Canada. Depending on the time and region, anywhere from 25% to 100% of calls to regional organizations can be attributed to LEARN. (Editor's note: the submission supplied detailed back-up). And sample quotations put a human face to the dry statistics:

"They threw the thought into my head and gave it a push."
Unemployed, Winnipeg.

***"It you have a problem and you see that ad, it'll wake you up.
It'll make you think twice - Oh my God, there is help!"***
Learner in upgrading program, Toronto

Isolating Advertising as the Variable

Because of the nature of the campaign, with no other sources of the LEARN message, it is clear that advertising has caused the results.

Conclusion

It must have been fascinating to write ads to people who have trouble reading. It's reassuring that the principles of good branding - a clear relevant message carried by an *idea* - apply as well in this case as they do to big budget brands.

It's also worth noting how a unifying idea brought a multi-faceted project together. Richmond Savings used "We're not a Bank. We're Better" to get a complex organization focused on the goal. ABC CANADA used "Look under LEARN" to give hundreds of organizations a shared focus.

