



Digital Advocacy in Canada

Insights into Paid Media as a Tool for Influence

Executive Summary



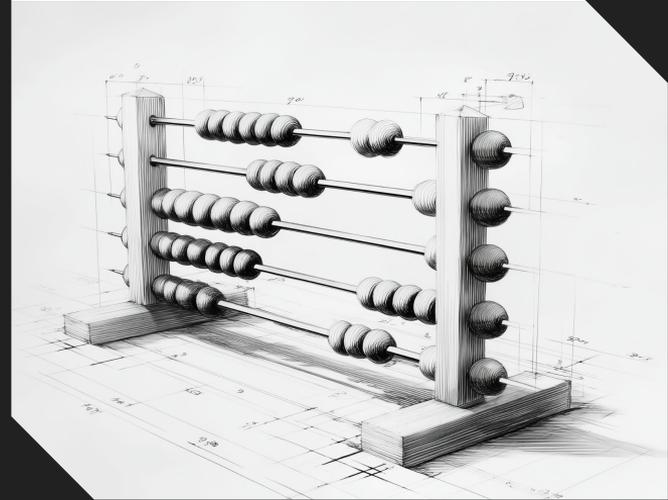
Industry associations play an important role in shaping public understanding of Canada's economy and policy environment. This review finds that *paid media is often treated as a supporting channel rather than a strategic tool* within digital advocacy.

It examines where popular digital platforms could play a more deliberate role in supporting clear, well-informed public understanding.

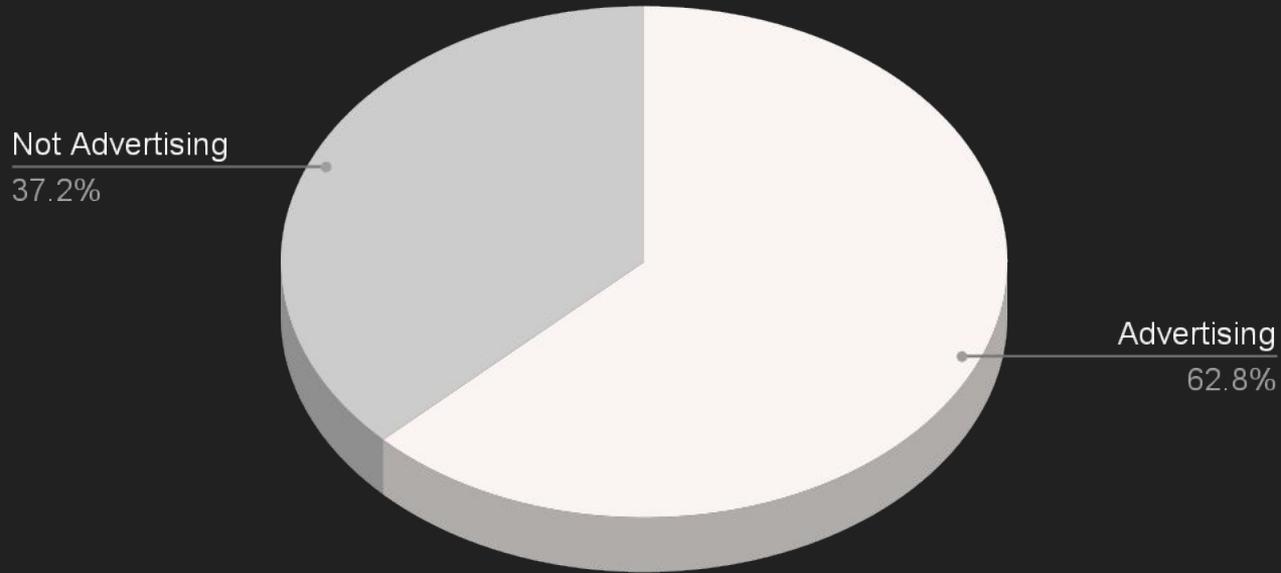
Method



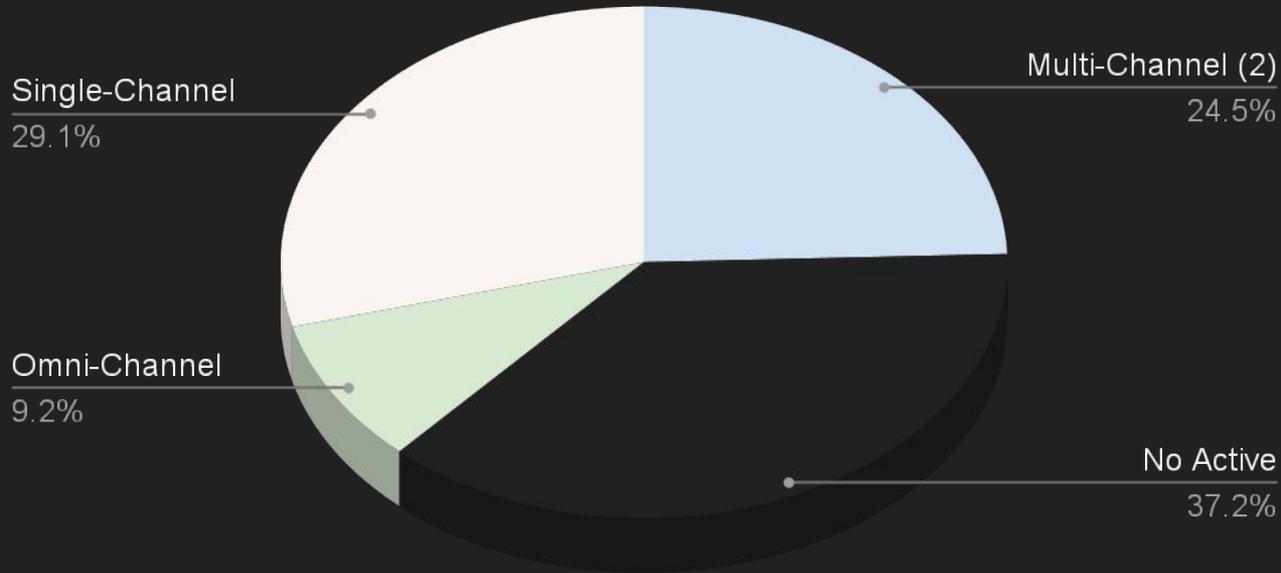
- Reviewed paid media activity from 196 national industry associations across key Canadian sectors
- Used a consistent, internally developed evaluation framework, supported by AI-assisted analysis
- Reviewed and interpreted through *human analysis* to identify opportunities



Paid digital advertising is widely used, but not consistently positioned



Advocacy messaging is often limited in scope

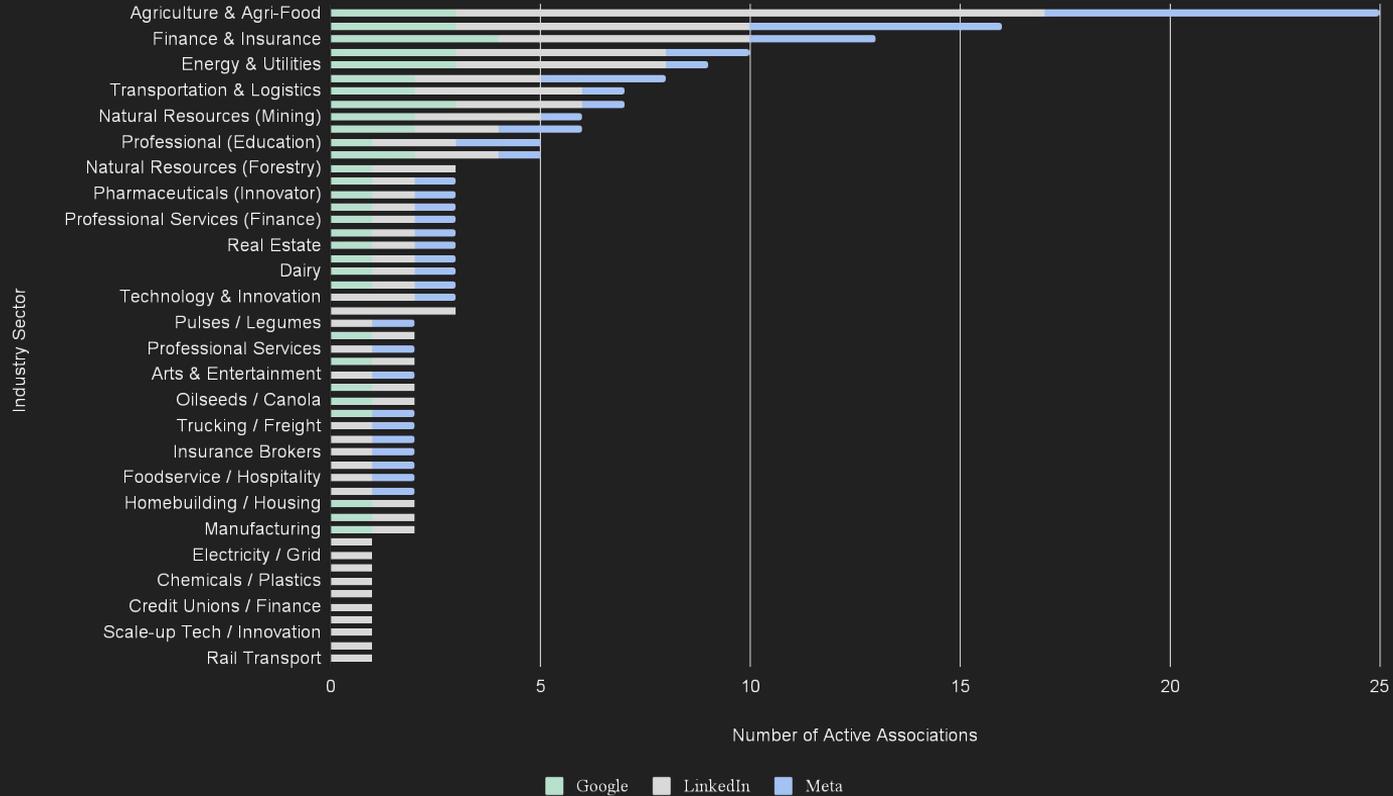


9.2%

take an omni-channel approach to advocacy messaging

**Defined as active on 3 or more digital ad platforms*

Messaging platform adoption varies by sector



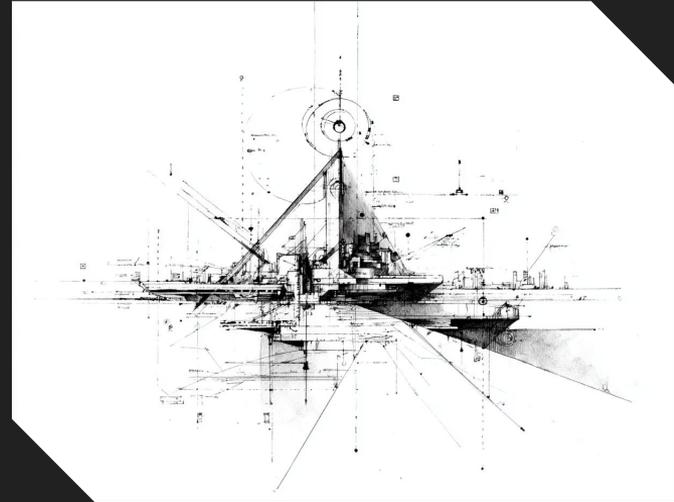
Creative Insights



Low-Impact: Creative execution often prioritizes clarity over attention and recall.

Limited Persuasion: Messaging often prioritizes insider audiences, limiting broader public reach.

Measurability: Limited use of explicit next steps can reduce opportunities to learn how audiences engage with advocacy.



LinkedIn: What's working, and what's getting in the way



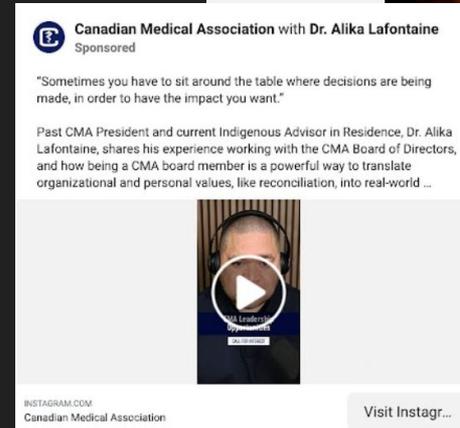
- Most campaigns are presentational, reflecting institutional priorities more than audience context.
- Message clarity varies, with many ads *assuming a level of prior knowledge*.
- Creative execution is often information-dense, which can limit attention and recall.



Meta: Common Advocacy Messaging Patterns



- One-way messaging: Most Meta campaigns are structured as announcements.
- Information density: Creative execution can be challenging to absorb in fast-scrolling feeds.
- Symbolic visuals: Often rely on industry or policy symbolism that may not translate broadly.



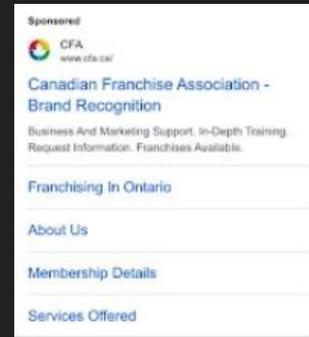
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Google: Search & Display as a Stewardship Channel



- **Defensive search presence:** often used to support branded or issue-adjacent searches, reinforcing context.
- **Assumed prior knowledge:** display ads are often unclear to non-specialist audiences.
- **Information-first framing:** primarily emphasizes facts, reports or policy positions.



Canadians Shape Their Opinions Online



82% of Canadians use at least one Meta product.

83% of working adults are on LinkedIn.

These platforms represent a large share of where public understanding and professional discourse now take shape.

Communicating through small, incremental points of presence is how many organizations maintain relevance.



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