
Anticipated Impact of US Tariffs on the Canadian Magazine Industry Survey Report from Magazines Canada

Overview

Magazines Canada surveyed the potential impact of proposed US tariffs on the Canadian magazine industry. The survey gathered nationwide responses from magazine publishers, focusing on concerns related to printing costs, advertising revenue, and overall business sustainability.

51 Canadian publishers completed the survey, representing over 70 print and online titles at B2B, general interest and niche consumer, arts and literary titles, and one Indigenous magazine.

Respondents by region:

- Ontario 39%
- Alberta 25%
- BC 20%
- Quebec 6%
- Other provinces 10%

In addition to those who completed the survey, Magazines Canada and our provincial magazine association colleagues heard from many more publishers who said they anticipate significant negative impacts but cannot yet quantify the extent to which tariffs will affect their magazine publishing businesses.

Key Findings

1. Primary Concerns Regarding US Tariffs

Survey respondents expressed significant apprehension about how tariffs would affect their operations.

The most cited areas of concern include:

- **Increased printing costs**
- **Loss of advertising revenue**
- **Reduced subscriptions**
- **Overall financial strain**

"We are already operating on tight margins. If advertisers pull back due to uncertainty, we could see a devastating impact on our revenue streams."

"My magazines are made in Canada with Canadian post-consumer recycled paper; they are already expensive; another 25% would make them unattainable for many [US readers]."



2. Financial Impact: Estimated Losses

The financial impact of tariffs varies widely, depending on the size of the publication and its reliance on US-based revenue streams, but the potential losses are substantial.

Publishers cited:

- **Financial losses to individual media businesses ranging from \$250,000 to \$2.7M**
- **\$500,000 to \$800,000 in direct impacts** from increased printing costs and lost advertising revenue
- **The exchange rate further exacerbates financial challenges**, making imported materials and services more expensive.

"The estimated impact on our operations is between \$500,000 and \$800,000 annually, which could force us to drastically cut operations."

"We are looking at losses exceeding \$2.7 million due to increased costs and declining ad revenue. This is unsustainable."

"The exchange rate is already hurting us. If tariffs add even more costs, it will be catastrophic."

3. Awareness of Price Increases

When asked if they had already experienced or been informed of potential price increases:

- **60% of respondents said they have not yet seen price hikes.**
- **However, suppliers have warned many to expect higher costs should tariffs come into play.**

"We've been told to expect increases, but no numbers yet. We are bracing for a hit."

"We anticipate that if paper costs go up, those increases will be passed on to us immediately."

4. Intra-Provincial and Domestic Barriers

While respondents didn't cite specific intra-provincial trade barriers, many commented on other domestic challenges hampering their businesses, including:

- Ongoing high Canada Postal rates, combined with unreliable service.
- Extended Producer Recycling fees are unpredictable in many jurisdictions and unfairly burden magazine publishers compared to other producers. For example, magazine publishers in Quebec saw fee increases ranging from 72% to 151% between 2023 and 2024. Alberta, however, has acknowledged that magazines and newspapers are unique among other packaging and printed paper products and, as a result, exempted those publishers supplying less than 200 tonnes annually of a specific magazine or newspaper.
- Government, agency and media buyer ad spends bypassing local media for tech giants in the US.

"The halo effect of the threat of tariffs is affecting the confidence of Canadian businesses, which is causing a slowdown or pause in decision-making. This will have a direct threat on our ability to increase reach and sales in Canada as spending may slow, and budgets may be cut."

"It's frustrating that we have so many obstacles within our own country. Eliminating those could help us survive these new challenges."

"Blue Box fees in certain provinces add another layer of cost that makes it harder to operate efficiently."

Conclusion and Next Steps

The findings of this survey highlight the serious direct and indirect financial threat that US tariffs pose to the Canadian magazine industry. Canadian publishers are deeply concerned about rising costs, declining revenue, and overall business sustainability.

Canadians continue to rely on our country's local and diverse magazines to stay informed about their communities and the stories that are significant to them. Outside pressures are mitigated, in part, through thoughtful government policies and investment, strengthening a Canadian magazine media sector that is essential to our democracy and sovereignty.

