



2018–2023 STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

Connect. Inspire. Advance.

Magazines Canada is the national association representing the majority of Canadian-owned, Canadian-content consumer, cultural, specialty, professional and business magazines. French and English member titles cover a wide range of interests across multiple platforms, including arts and culture, business and professional, lifestyle and food, news and politics, sports and leisure, women and youth. The association focuses on government affairs, professional development, coordinating national awards programs and marketing campaigns, and delivering services that meet the needs of the magazine industry.

Overview

The Canadian Magazine Publishers Association was founded in 1973, and adopted the name Magazines Canada in 2005 following an earlier merger with Magazines Canada, the advertising services group. In 2016, the Boards of Magazines Canada and the Canadian Business Media Association / Canadian Business Press announced the B2B sector would also come in under the Magazines Canada banner; and in 2017 the Circulation Marketing Association of Canada also joined Magazines Canada.

This current five-year Strategic Plan will span Magazines Canada's 50th anniversary, and continue the association's tradition of advocating and serving the Canadian magazine industry that goes back over 100 years, to the original founding of the Canadian Business Press in 1920.

In May 2016, the Magazines Canada Board initiated an internal review and consultation to assess its membership policies and scope, and to initiate work on a new Strategic Plan. This current document is informed by that process and presents the association's strategic priorities for the coming years, and its response to the evolving needs and shifting business context of its members and key stakeholders.

Since the organization's 2012 Strategic Plan, Canada's magazine media have witnessed major disruption and change in their industry: a rapid decline in print advertising and a proliferation of digital and social channels; the shift of some industry leaders into digital-first content while certain niche publishers see a resurgence in the value of print; a series of mergers and consolidation in both the industry and the groups that serve and represent it; and a series of reviews and changes in government support programs (including provincial bodies, the Canada Periodical Fund, the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as larger discussions on Canadian "digital content" and the role of news and journalism within democracy).

Against this backdrop, Magazines Canada has continued to be the big-tent association that its diverse members turn to for policy insight and leadership, for professional development and skills training, for collective promotions and market development, and for research and data to base their strategic business decisions upon. Although the industry is going through major disruption,

Magazines Canada's membership is at an all-time high. This is a reflection of its strengthened position as the one national voice for magazine media and also an endorsement of a renewed commitment to the needs and strategic priorities of magazine media at all levels and in all segments of the industry: whether emerging, industry-leading, consumer, cultural or business-to-business.

Mission

As the lead advocate and focal point for Canada's magazine industry, Magazines Canada considers our role to be to *Connect* our members to one another and key stakeholders, to *Inspire* our industry as it evolves by showcasing best practices and the latest information on the trade, and to *Advance* magazine media in Canada by playing the critical role of advocating for our sector to policy-makers, funders and the public.

Magazines Canada Mission

Magazines Canada is a member-driven, not-for-profit organization. It believes in the interconnected cultural and economic value of a vital Canadian magazine publishing industry. Magazines Canada works to foster an environment where new magazines are nurtured, established magazines are supported and skills are developed. Its original and continuing purpose is to promote the value of the sector to government and to customers.

Our Diverse Membership and Community

Magazines Canada and its members are part of a broader community: magazines are supported and enabled by a rich value-chain of suppliers and service providers, public policies, and diverse audiences. Magazines Canada seeks to connect, inspire and advance our members within the context of this broader community, both private and public, by providing a venue for education and meaningful exchange.

Magazines Canada's membership typically falls into three general categories, all of which receive specialized services, benefits and representation:

- Consumer magazines
- Business-to-business magazines
- Arts, literary and cultural magazines

We will expand our membership:

As well, in an effort to adapt the association to better serve emerging and evolving players in Canada's magazine media, in 2017 the Magazines Canada Board of Directors moved to broaden membership to recognize and accommodate digital-only magazines, as well as to review the eligibility of some custom publications and content publishers, as these share the same needs as traditional magazines do in the areas of audience development, research, professional development and best practices. We will also look at other ways to better engage and involve the broader supply-chain and stakeholder community.

We will reflect the diversity of Canadian magazines and Canadian communities:

In addition to serving our members in relation to the kind of content they produce, Magazines Canada has also begun to reflect the full diversity of Canadian communities served by our diverse

members, as magazines' ability to create community is what makes them unique. This community is seen in the readers who coalesce around a shared locality, ethnicity, profession and trade, artistic practice, or area of interest, information and entertainment. Further, as members of the media, our members also bear a significant responsibility to question social bias and ensure they are open, transparent and committed to incorporating and responding to a diverse population.

As part of this, Magazines Canada's commitment to an open, accessible Canadian magazine sector will be underscored by diversity-focused programming for our signature events including our annual conference and network event, MagNet, as well as other industry meetings and professional development activities.

Diversity is also a hallmark of the Canadian Magazine Awards / Grands prix du magazine, launched in 2017. We designed core principles to govern the awards to ensure they would be more inclusive and diverse, and to redefine standards of cultural excellence. From an equity perspective, we strove to go beyond "token" inclusion of an individual on an assessment committee, in which an isolated minority perspective is present, and instead encouraged a multiplicity of perspectives, including Indigenous, Black and people of colour (IBPOC), and members of other equity-seeking communities (deaf/persons with disabilities, queer/trans, etc.), in relation to each other. In this way, the assessment process also becomes a space of inquiry into excellence, innovation and relevance, and the curation of new visions. Magazines Canada can do more and a better job of this, and we plan to internalize this approach throughout our work in the coming years: in our events and activities, in the models and best practices we present to our members, and in our own internal processes and policies moving forward.

Strategy and Governance

We will shape the internal structure of the organization to reflect the priorities of our industry:

- Under the leadership of the President and CEO, Magazines Canada will organize its structure to best align with this Strategic Plan, the ongoing strategic direction(s) from the member-elected Board, and member needs in general. The association will focus its efforts in the following areas:
 - Member Services, including professional development, and
 - Integrated Communications, including government relations.
- In recognition of the recent mergers with the Canadian Business Media Association (Canadian Business Press) and Circulation Marketing Association of Canada (the CMC), Magazines Canada will renew and empower select committees to ensure the Board and staff can engage these important constituents on their ongoing needs and priorities.
 - These new committees are in addition to existing committees, including Government Relations, Professional Development Curriculum, and Arts and Literary Magazines.
- Magazines Canada will coordinate and provide a venue for regular meetings between the regional magazine associations and groups: establishing a space for exchange, models and collaboration that strengthens our national magazine sector. We will continue to build strong partnerships to support the development of the Quebec industry, which may include provincial government support programs.
- Magazines Canada will launch a robust data-collection project to provide industry members with benchmarking and insights on trends and government partners with valuable policy-setting tools and information. This data focus will also include specialized or industry-specific research (e.g., B2B, cultural titles, fact books and consumer newsstand or circulation trends) as needed.

Member Services & Professional Development

We will focus our efforts on providing the skills-training, best practices and peer-exchange that a rapidly changing industry needs as it evolves and retools:

- Magazines Canada will continue to prioritize member professional development, adapted to meet member needs and delivered through an array of events and resources, such as: MagNet, the Travelling Consultants Program, Webinars, Hotsheets, AudioMags, as well as other events or efficiencies found through increased partnership beyond our traditional audiences.
- Magazines Canada will ensure a responsive and respectful relationship with members and sponsors is maintained, while targeting new prospects and partnerships with other groups outside of our traditional base. We will further grow a diversified revenue base outside of membership dues.
- In the context of the review of membership scope, Magazines Canada will strengthen the Code of Reader and Advertiser Engagement as a practical guide and tool for editors, making it relevant in a digital context and also relevant to our business media and arts and literary titles.
- Magazines Canada will continue to manage direct-to-retail distribution services for independent members and find effective ways to promote discovery of Canadian magazines at newsstand and other venues (e.g. airport lounges and in emerging / export markets).

Integrated Communications & Government Relations

We will showcase a dynamic and diverse industry to all of our stakeholders—from industry members to government and funding stakeholders, to the public at large:

- Magazines Canada will refresh its approach to communications, including government relations, with an integrated, all-platforms approach that allows for a better connection with current audiences and opens conversations with new partners and audiences.
- Magazines Canada will deepen our engaged and effective relationships with relevant ministers and their senior staff in Ottawa, including relevant Parliamentarians and Standing Committees, as well as with key partners such as Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Media Development Corporation, Ontario Arts Council, Alberta Culture and Tourism, and other partners.
 - In particular, Magazines Canada will lead consultations and advocacy on the future of the Canada Periodical Fund and other key funding supports for the sector.
- Magazines Canada will remain active and vigilant on key files and policies that have a direct bearing on members' business, including CASL, Canada Post, NAFTA and international trade agreements, the Income Tax Act, etc.
- Magazines Canada will invest in audience development by making smart investments in collective marketing that aligns with our other communications objectives: promoting the discovery of Canadian magazine media across all platforms, and celebrating excellence through the Magazine Grands Prix awards program.

We will prepare for our 50th anniversary in 2023 by ensuring our association reflects the membership and the industry it seeks to represent: expanding into digital platforms, investing in new skills and technologies, and being focused in our promotion of Canadian magazine media to the public.