

Marketing targets shift, growth in ethnic populations

B.C.'s two fastest growing ethnic populations, Chinese and South Asian, also represent one-in-three grocery dollars spent

CURT CHEREWAYKO

For the first time, more than one million people living in British Columbia identify with a visible minority group, according to the latest data from the 2006 census.

It's a significant milestone, but Statistics Canada's most recent ethno-cultural portrait of B.C. is largely predictable, reflecting past immigration patterns.

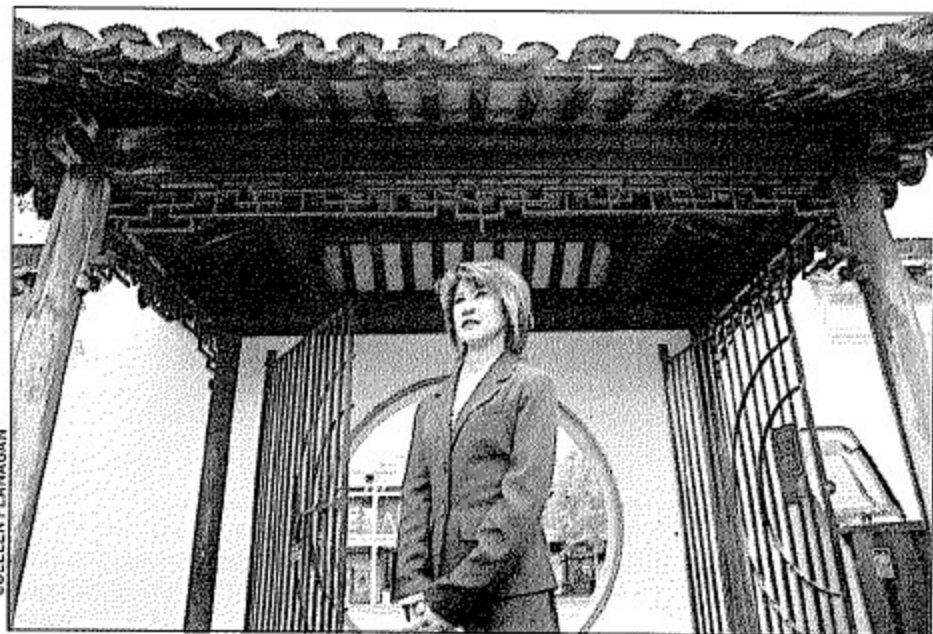
What has caught the eye of some marketing firms in B.C. are shifts within specific ethnic populations – particularly within Chinese and South Asian populations, the two largest visible minorities in B.C.

"Organizations are coming to us to revisit their whole strategy for ethnic marketing because, now, people from Hong Kong are no longer coming," said Alisa Choi Darcy, president of Quote EndQuote Cross-Cultural Strategy, recalling the influx of Chinese that arrived in Canada when Britain transferred sovereignty of Hong Kong back to the Chinese in 1997.

"[Now] it's people from Mainland China who are immigrating to Canada," said Darcy.

Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese differ in their spoken and written languages.

To reach an ethnic audience, said Darcy, it is not enough to simply translate an existing marketing cam-



Alisa Choi Darcy: "Someone from Beijing is different than someone from Shanghai. A literal translation is impossible"

campaign by language alone: businesses must eliminate all cultural barriers that exist between them and the audience.

Even within Mainland China, said Darcy, there are many different cultures.

"Someone from Beijing is different than someone from Shanghai. A literal translation is impossible."

As well as helping clients to develop marketing strategies to target the Asian and South Asian consumer, Vancouver-based Quote EndQuote provides management teams with cultural sensitivity training.

"We keep everything in layman's language because we know that cross-cultural issues and differences do tend to be scary."

Darcy noted the Hong

Kong Chinese that came to B.C. in the late 1990s and early 2000s tended to arrive as business-class immigrants.

"The people from Mainland China, some of them are coming in under the business classification, but more often than not they are coming in under the family class," she said.

"They are skilled workers and mid-management level [workers] ready to work, and not necessarily business owners like they used to be coming from Hong Kong."

Darcy has witnessed a similar shift in B.C.'s South Asian population that has, historically, been comprised of immigrants from the Punjab region of India.

"Those immigrants are no longer coming in the

droves that they once were," said Darcy.

She said immigrants from other areas of South Asia, such as Pakistan and other provinces in India, are making up an increasingly

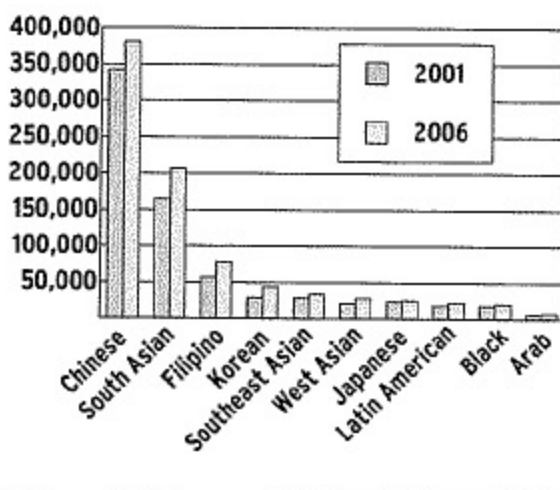
"The first thing [businesses] can do is embrace the need to reach these markets"

—Sonny Wong, president and creative director, Hamazaki Wong Marketing Group

larger share of B.C.'s South Asian population.

The largest visible minorities in B.C. are Chinese (40%), South Asian (25%) and Filipino (9%).

B.C.'s growing ethnic population



A comparison of Metro Vancouver's visible minority populations in the years 2001 and 2006, using the latest data from the 2006 census

The visible minority population in B.C. grew 21% between 2001 and 2006 and now represents 25% of the province's population of more than four million.

Since 2001, 80% of immigrants to Canada have belonged to a visible minority group.

Sonny Wong, president and creative director of Vancouver's Hamazaki Wong Marketing Group, said the Chinese and South Asian populations in B.C. are among the most attractive ethnic audiences because – as well as being the largest visible minority groups – they have the province's most established networks of ethnic media.

"The first thing [companies] can do is embrace the need to reach these markets and to have a longer-term interest in doing so," said Wong. "Rather than saying: 'I'll do it for a year and see what happens.'"

A study released in April by Solutions Research Group found that Fairchild Radio was the top radio station among Cantonese-speakers in Vancouver, while the English-language News

1130 station attracted the most Mandarin-speaking Chinese.

The recently launched Red-FM was the leading South Asian station in Vancouver, with a 43% weekly reach.

More than three-quarters of Canadian Chinese and South Asian consumers in Vancouver, according to the study, find advertising in their own language "useful." More than half find it "very useful."

The study also reported that Chinese and Asian populations account for nearly one-in-three dollars spent on groceries in Vancouver.

Wong said that telecom, airline and financial industries have all recognized the opportunities associated with marketing to different ethnic groups.

"I've heard some companies tell me that they don't need to do it. That's their prerogative," he said. "Others are quite proactive in seeing the trends in the marketplace and going after these markets in a concerted way." ■

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Save-On-Foods strike narrowly averted

GLEN KORSTROM

Overwaita Food Group narrowly averted a strike at 27 Save-On-Foods stores between Squamish and Chilliwack when B.C.'s Labour Relations Board accepted the grocer's application for a government-appointed mediator.

B.C.'s Labour Code requires that a strike be suspended while a government mediator (expected to be veteran negotiator Vince Ready) is in place.

United Food and Commercial Workers' Union Local 1518 announced June 25 that its members, who work at the chain's parent Overwaita Food Group, voted 58%

to reject a five-year contract offer that union leaders suggested they accept. Simultaneously, the union announced that they would start striking at the 27 Save-On-Foods stores at 6 p.m. on June 28.

The proposed new contract would have given new workers a \$1 raise, moving the starting wage to \$9.75 per hour and creating a \$15.60-per-hour top wage.

Longer-term employees would have received a \$2.50 pay raise during the term of the contract, putting their top wage up to approximately \$23.50 per hour.

The voted-down proposed contract would have also limited the company to convert

no more than seven Coopers Overwaita- or Save-On-Foods-branded stores to the PriceSmart brands. And, each conversion would have come part and parcel with a new Overwaita-branded store.

UFCW Local 1518 director of communications Andy Neufeld said strike action remains possible in the future at Safeway Canada stores.

"Safeway is in limbo," he told *Business in Vancouver* June 26. "We were scheduled to meet with Safeway yesterday and today. But, with everything going on with Overwaita right now, we're madly making our final strike preparations." ■ gkorstrom@biv.com

Select ports now permitted to obtain private financing

ANDREW PETROZZI

Select Canadian port authorities will now be able to obtain private financing to support development after Bill C-23 amending the Canada Marine Act recently received royal assent June 18.

As reported in *BIV* 963, April 8-14, "Feds to unfetter port financing", the bill altered the operating framework for Canada Port Authorities (CPAs) by modifying the current borrowing regulations, providing for access to contribution funding and clarifying some as-

pects of governance.

"These amendments promote financial flexibility for the marine transportation sector, consider the long-term role of ports in their communities and foster partnerships with other levels of government," said Lawrence Cannon, minister of transport, infrastructure and communities.

The amendments include provisions regarding amalgamation of CPAs and introduce new provisions to make the enforcement of minor violations easier to manage as well as proceeding on policy initiatives

to modernize the National Marine Policy, streamline the process for borrowing limits and enhance the flexibility in management of port lands.

"Overall, the amendments and complementary policy initiatives help establish a framework for CPAs that promotes the development of necessary infrastructure, maximizes operating efficiencies and fosters a more flexible, commercially based financial environment with increased accountability," according to the federal government. ■ apetrozzi@biv.com

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\$10.5M BCLD tech upgrades plagued with major glitches

Liquor distribution monopoly defends need to change despite bothersome bugs

GLEN KORSTROM

The British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch spent \$10.5 million on technological upgrades that were rife with glitches, according to information gleaned from a freedom of information request. Those snafus not only frustrated resellers, they included botch-ups such as the liquor distribution monopoly accidentally sending cheques to suppliers.

The BCLDB would only reveal how much money it had spent on these upgrades up until March 31, 2008.

But, the BCLDB is continuing to spend money on its Wholesale Ordering and Management System and its Sales Collection, Inventory and Audit System.

The total spending revealed in the FOI request far exceeds the \$800,000 that the BCLDB told *Business in Vancouver* in February that it spent on Oracle Corp. software to run its wholesale ordering system.

Upgrades to that system and to the sales and audit system have been mired with miscues so troublesome that some beer

and wine store managers are actually scared what the BCLDB might implement next.

The government agency plans to launch an Internet-based ordering system later this year.

"I'm terribly afraid that if they can't handle a fax order very well, that, Lord forbid what should happen if you were to remove the human factor," said Tyler Dawson, who manages Liberty Wine Merchants' Park Royal location.

The BCLDB's January introduction of its new wholesale order management system elicited a chorus of jeers from private alcohol retailers.

Many initial glitches have been fixed. For example, retailers no longer receive invoices with text small enough that they need to use a magnifying glass. Nor do they still get invoices that lack pertinent information, such as how much money they have to pay for each product.

However, Dawson stressed that even with the glitches fixed, the new system is no better than the old system.

ContainerWorld Forwarding Services Inc. president Dennis


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Marketing ethnic change

As we celebrate Canada Day, more than one million people in B.C. identify with a visible minority group, which creates new challenges and new opportunities, says Alisa Choi Darcy of Vancouver -6

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