

Canadians' Social Circles - Canada - 2022

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This report looks at the following areas:

- How often Canadians spend time in person with friends.
- The origins of friendships.
- Ways that friends spend time together.
- How Canadians keep in touch with friends when they aren't together.
- The most important similarities that friends should have with each other.
- How Canadians interact with the people around them who aren't in their social circles.
- How the COVID-19 pandemic has affected social lives.

Digital interactions have become the norm in Canada, but there is not one centralized meeting place. Text messages are now as common as phone calls, but consumers are also using instant messaging, email, private social media messages, public social media posts, video calls, group chats and video game chats to connect with one another. And considering there are multiple platforms within each of those categories, there is significant fragmentation. Canadians have more ways to connect than ever – but that amount of choice can be overwhelming.

The market has undoubtedly impacted Canadians' social lives. The COVID-19 pandemic made socializing in person incredibly difficult – and while there has been a return to normalcy, there will continue to be lingering effects. More recently, inflationary pressures will affect how consumers spend time with their friends. Outings that cost money will stand out as potential budget cuts to help weather the current economic climate – which means at-home gatherings will become that much more relevant as a more cost-controlled way to socialize.

A major challenge going forward will be ensuring that Canadians continue to engage in social behaviours that can be monetized. Digital innovations have made it easier to connect with friends, and they require little (if any) spending by consumers. At-home gatherings also make it easier for friends to avoid much spending at a time when price sensitivity is high. Canadians may be content



“The past two-plus years have been irrefutable evidence of the importance of social connections for Canadians. They want to spend time together and do so in myriad ways. While market factors may affect how they socialize, the reality is that there will always be demand for ways to spend time together.”

– **Scott Stewart, Associate Director, Lifestyles & Retail**

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with their social lives going forward, but it will pose a problem to stakeholders if they increasingly interact in ways that involve minimal expenditure.

Nevertheless, the foundation for social connections is very strong. The pandemic has been the greatest social challenge that most Canadians will ever experience – yet they still found ways to stay in touch. Canadians want to spend time together and will go to great lengths to do so. Stakeholders that benefit from these behaviours can look ahead knowing that the demand for social interaction will remain strong – the key question will be how companies can position themselves to profitably provide value to those social circles.

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