



SPRING 2008 MULTICULTURAL PUBLISHERS' NETWORKING EVENT
Tuesday, May 6, 2008

ADDRESS TO DIVERSITY MEDIA MEMBER PUBLISHERS

By Lori Abittan, President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Colleagues and guests

I am honoured to address you tonight and I am especially pleased that so many of you have accepted our invitation to attend our first ever Media for the New Mainstream™ function.

No other group in media today is poised to take the lead in forging a deeper understanding of our connections to one another in Canada. After decades of being visible only in our communities, ranking second best, feeling marginalized in the wider Canadian society – and yet all the while persevering, our time has finally come.

For the last 3 years we have witnessed an unprecedented evolution of media, more so than in the past 3 decades. Our vision, efforts and passion have helped us to transform how we communicate with and integrate our many communities within the Canadian fabric. Although much more needs to be done, we can be proud of how far we have come.

In the words of Confucius, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. Each of us independently and courageously took that very first step the day we launched our careers of informing our communities with no expectation of fame or wealth. Now the wisdom and knowledge gained through our past

experiences may guide us collectively. We can draw on our past achievements, existing relationships in our communities and organizations, and come together with the understanding that we want and must work toward common goals. Those goals go far beyond our communities, far beyond our newspapers, far beyond our families and individual needs.

Our goal should be and must be to reach out and become an integral part of the Canadian fabric. It is not enough to say we are Canadian. It is not enough to say we are passionate about Canada. Nor is it enough to boast about what a wonderful country we live in. It is equally not enough to talk about discrimination, marginalization and labels if we are not prepared to act.

I want each of you to recall the driving force that inspired you not only to come to Canada, but to choose a career in publishing. Whatever it was, let that same driving force and passion guide you now along this journey we have embarked on together. There is much more to be done and much wisdom in choosing a united front and collective voice...there is strength in numbers.

In our joint efforts in creating Diversity Media Services, I have had the pleasure of speaking with many of you. Unanimously you have conveyed your commitment to Canada in all its wonderful forms, an all-inclusive Canada made up of people coming together from many parts of the world. You have wholeheartedly proven to be “Fiercely Canadian” and “Proud of your culture”. This is the true expression of our identity and an encouraging promise of things to come.

Our perseverance is contagious and our belief that there is no greater cause than peoples’ rights to information and connection to one another is compelling. We as multicultural publishers bridge communities to the larger Canadian community and assist new Canadians in the integration process all the while providing a rearview look to the countries we have left behind.

Some of you have expressed disappointment with those who think we come to Canada with “cultural baggage” and we take away jobs from Canadians and contribute to the fragmentation of Canada. But we mustn’t take the distorted views of a few individuals as the voice of the many and become downhearted.

We know that Canadian immigrants are highly educated and yet when they come to Canada they often end up with jobs no one else wants or needs. This is probably the experience of many of us in this room, or in our families and among our friends. But we also know that the problem is harmful to more than just a few of our communities. It also comes at a great cost to Canada. Cherry picking the best the world has to offer only to leave them to fend for themselves is a waste of knowledge, talents and energy that members of our communities could offer Canada.

Thanks to some of our efforts, more Canadians are coming to understand this important issue. We are gaining the moral support by many who want to see us taking positions alongside them as contributors. But the problem is still not being taken seriously and solved at the highest levels. We need to press for this. What role do you think we can play in all of this? What role have we played in changing and shaping legislation and swaying political will so that change could be inspired?

What have we done to convey the message that Canadians rejoice in one another’s cultures and we connect to one another like no other people in the world? What have we done to deliver the message that “this is what Canadians do”? Not enough.

In Canada we celebrate Christmas, Ramadan, Lunar New Year, Hanukah, Diwali and many more festivities. Yet we are united in what we want: the best for our families and our communities, to contribute on the work front and whatever other cause we take on.

We are Canadian, we think Canadian. We must want no other label but so long as we label ourselves please expect that others will respect us and follow our lead.

We are gathered here tonight as fellow publishers to get to know one another and to discuss how we reach out to the widest Canadian audience and be recognized as an integral part of Canadian media; this is a fair and noble cause and it is rightfully so that we seek such status. In order for us to achieve accreditation and be noticed within the entire Canadian media landscape we must identify what has been holding us back.

With your permission I would like to outline what the mainstream view is of our sector of media:

- Advertisers don't know who we are.
- We are not accredited by organizations mandated to monitor media.
- We don't actively worry about issues outside of our community.
- We don't always publish the frequency or numbers we claim.
- We are not on the governments' cost guides.
- We have political views contrary to Canada's mainstream tolerance.
- We simply create jobs for ourselves.
- We are not professional, etc.

This may sound disturbing. Even discouraging. But unfortunately it is a perception and reality. What is more disturbing is that we have contributed to shaping this view. So, how do we change this?

Identifying the problems is the first step. We are fortunate to have identified these issues at a time when Canadian media is at a crossroads

We also need to learn to work within Canadian frameworks and come to realize that these frameworks are a set of rules, written or unwritten, to assist and afford everyone a fair process that allows for the exchange of information that will serve as a guide to those who wish to reach out to our media. These expectations are no different and in line with your own expectations when you conduct business.

As I was writing this address I recalled the many hours I spent with you reminiscing about the traditional role of media for the New Mainstream in Canada as compared to traditional media. The general consensus has been that we have always been invisible and ignored by traditional medias in Canada. Perhaps!

Allow me for a moment to challenge you to think instead that we were being noticed the whole time and that we in fact were and are the competition. I believe the mainstream media understood we were and are an important sector of media; if this wasn't the case why were we left out of organizations like OCNA, CARD, CCAB etc? This is simply competition and in a competitive market there is always an attempt made to protect market share especially among "EQUAL" partners. We must take responsibility for our past inertia.

The one lesson I have learned from the mainstream media is that they will join forces when necessary to protect their industry and still compete on a day-to-day basis. This has not been the case with multicultural publishers. How do we foster change? How do we undo what has been done? How do we come together?

As Media for the New Mainstream™ we must learn to work side by side with one another, as well as with traditional media in Canada. We must work within the existing Canadian establishments to demonstrate our credibility to those who are willing to deal with us and sway the opinions of those who have not yet embraced our

sector of media. We must understand that publishing is not just about how many agate lines of paid advertising we can get in our papers – advertising is only a means to a greater cause – our responsibility as publishers must go beyond dollars and cents. Our responsibility to our communities, and really to our country, is to capture in our publications all the elements – the aspirations, the hardships, the successes – that go to tell our great story.

History tells us media arose as a response to injustice by governments and the well-to-do in society, sparking the desire of some to fight back by empowering the masses through information. An informed citizen is a participating and empowered citizen. An empowered citizen is a contributor who looks past his own shadow. In this welcoming country where all things are possible, no one should be denied the right to reach their potential if they work hard.

It is for these reasons that Multimedia and DMS took the leadership role of representing you. It was never our intention to throw ads at you. This approach has been tested and has failed. I do not wish to duplicate it. We build relationships, we bring value, we uphold standards and we understand the fundamentals of building a business or concept on solid foundations: trust, integrity, and delivery of value.

Believe, have the courage of your own convictions and inspire change. It is within your grasp.

This is not naïve bravado it is the ultimate empowerment of a group of people who no longer want the status quo. You have become my greatest source of inspiration and I will walk side by side with you for as long as you allow me the privilege of doing so. If you are committed to this program please be prepared to take on challenges so ultimately we can enjoy the reward.

Embrace all of Canada. Move beyond tolerance and accommodation. Think Canadian. Act Canadian. And you will be Canadian. There is no greater contribution you can make to society and future generations. The journey is not about what we will find at the end – it's about what we do with each step we take, please decide how history will write this chapter of our lives.

Some of you may be happy with the way things are, but I challenge you to think of what might be instead. I want you to dream of things beyond your reach. You have a voice, opinions, aspirations and an obligation to contribute to society – do not allow complacency to be your limitation. We must never cease to be satisfied, we must never cease to dream and above all we must never stop fighting for Canada.

I urge you to recognize the infinite wisdom of the collective to fill in the gaps of where individual thought process fails – as we set off with our first steps on this wondrous journey of a thousand miles ... and more I urge you to:

1. Remain united - let no outside force derail us from our collective goals... fill in your questionnaire because it provides critical information we need to fully represent you.
2. Let us reach out to one another in raising the standards in our industry... join OCNA and actively live up to the standards they set so we may all proudly establish our equality within the wider industry.
3. Welcome the opportunity of working side by side with your competition - there is strength in numbers... be proud of the circulation and distribution you have built and do not believe that it is not enough ...together we outnumber the reach of the old mainstream
4. As a member of Media for the New Mainstream™ take your place side-by-side with traditional Mainstream media in Canada... be a part of this great endeavour, endorse DMS by

signing the representation contract. We use it, to confidently prove your active participation in the DMS program to those we meet.

Lastly, I am sure you have noticed that this address is a self-reflection of you - after all it was inspired by your wisdom, tenacity and self-expression and I am profoundly thankful for all you represent and all you have taught me. Please allow me to lead my team toward achieving our common goals.

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Diversity Media Services is the multicultural marketing subsidiary of Multimedia Nova Corporation, an integrated communications company publicly traded on the TSX Venture Exchange under the symbol MNC.A.