

The 2016 Canadian Census - An Alberta Perspective



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Statistics Canada carries out a census of the Canadian population every five years. The results from the most recent version performed in 2016 have been periodically released throughout the last year. Taken together it gives an interesting snapshot of what Canadians (and Albertans) look like today.

Since knowing the consumer is the foundation for any marketing strategy, the census

provides the very basic profile of the domestic customer for Alberta companies. It can also provide hints of what may be on the horizon in terms of consumer demand for food and beverages.

Alberta Population

In 2016, Alberta's population was 4,067,175, representing almost 12 per cent of Canada's total population. Compared to the 2006 census, this constitutes a 24 per cent increase over the 10 years. The population is closely divided between gender with slightly more males in Alberta than females (50.1 per cent compared to 49.9). Alberta's average age is 37.8 years which is a little younger than the average age for Canada (41 years). This is not surprising given that Alberta's age distribution pyramid does generally skew younger with a noticeably lower proportion of its citizens over 65 years and more under 14 years.

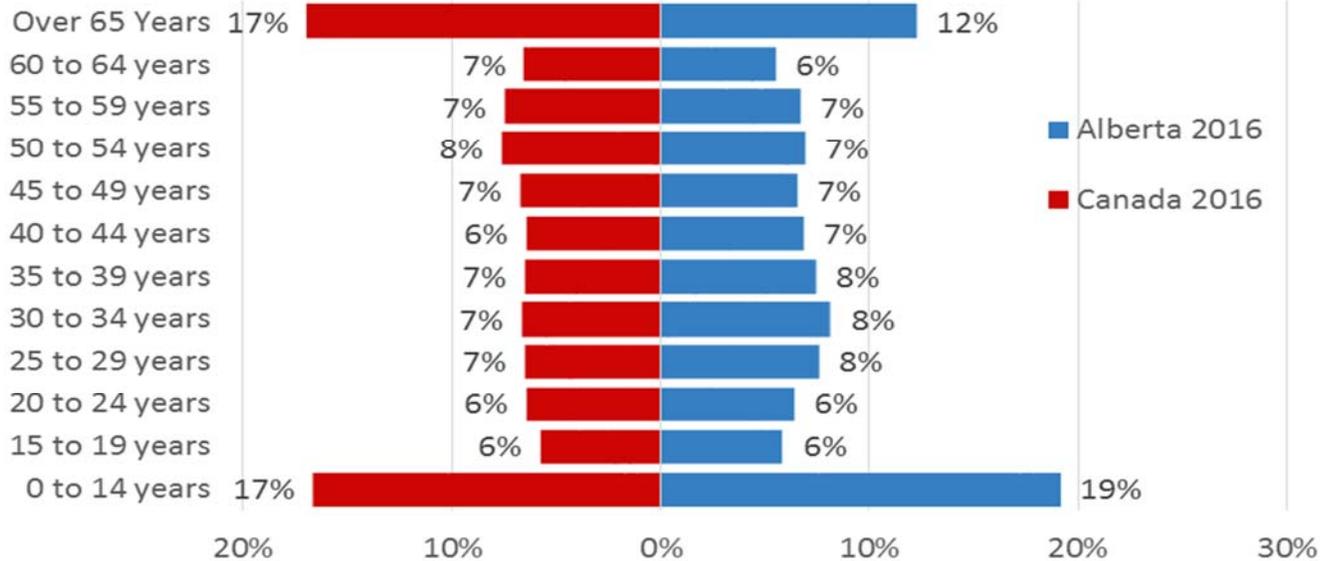


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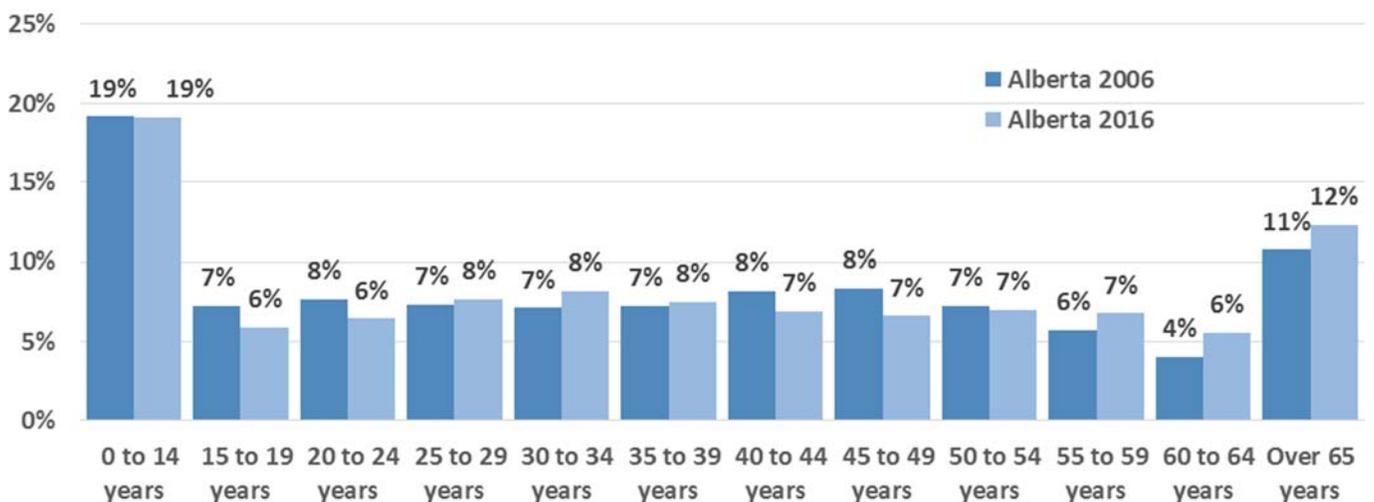
2016 Age Pyramids: Alberta and Canada



Source: Statistics Canada

Even though it is a younger population, Alberta populace is still aging. Compared to 2006, the age categories that show increases are in the 25 to 34 age range and over 55. The roughly even split between men and women holds for all Alberta age groups except the seniors (over 65 years). At this stage of life, women represent 54 per cent of the category.

Alberta Population by Age Group 2006 & 2016

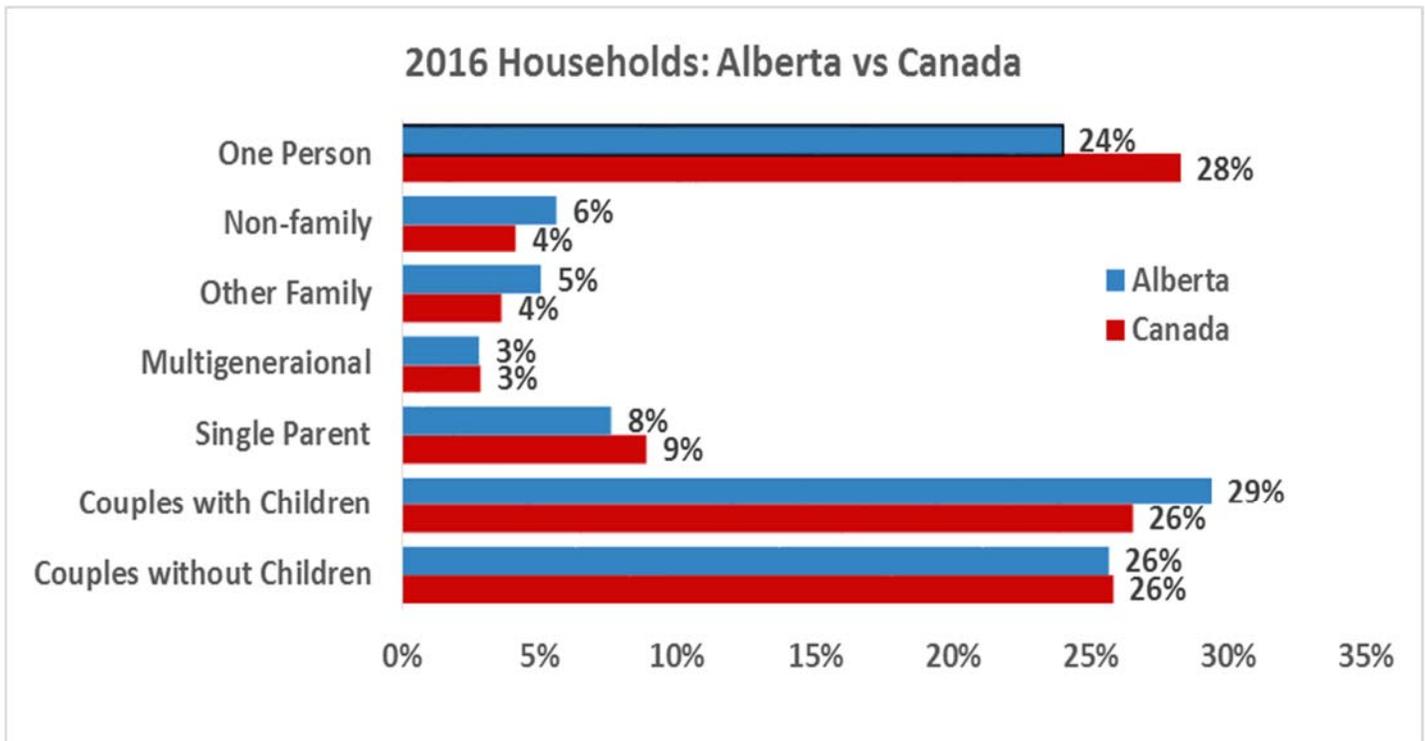


Source: Statistics Canada

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Alberta Households

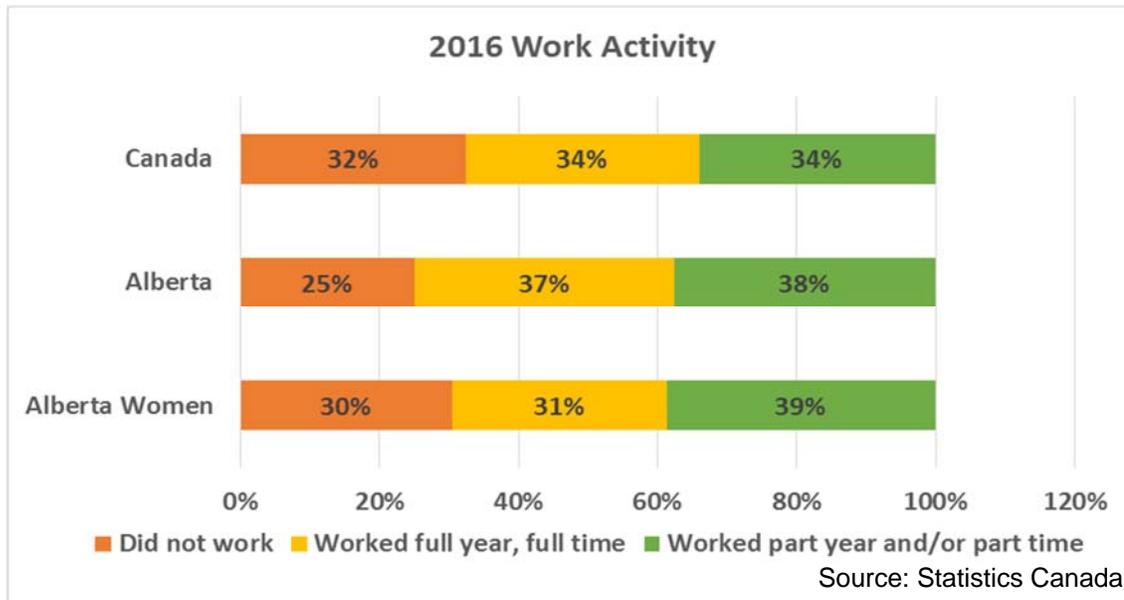
The drift toward a younger population in Alberta is also seen in the make-up of households. Statistics Canada news releases during 2017 touted that for the first time there were more one person households than couples with children. That is true for Canada but in Alberta, couples with children still represent the largest percentage of households at 29 per cent. That is not to say that the percentage of one person Alberta households is insignificant (it represents 24 per cent) but it is not yet the largest.



Work and Income

In 2016 only 25 per cent of Albertans were not working compared to 32 per cent in Canada. Full and part time work have roughly similar proportions of the Alberta population at 37 and 38 per cent respectively. A higher percentage of Alberta women work part time work (39 per cent) compared to full-time work (31 per cent) but that still translates to there are more women in the workforce. For Albertans over 65, nine per cent are still working full time while 19 per cent have a part time job.

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The median household total household income for Alberta in 2015 was \$93,835 compared to the Canadian figure of \$70,336. This ranked 3rd in the country behind the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and represented a 24 per cent change from the 2005 value of \$75,684 (in 2015 constant dollars). The proportion of the Alberta population in lower income in 2015 was 9.3 per cent compared to Canada’s 14.2. The median employment income for those between 25 and 54 years of age in Alberta was \$52,743 compared to the Canadian figure of \$43,349.

New Residents

Almost 40 per cent of Alberta immigrants name one of four countries as their country of birth: Philippines (15 per cent), India (11 per cent), United Kingdom (7 per cent) and China (also 7 per cent). Though in a slight different order those countries are the top four for Canada as well. Twenty-one per cent of Canadian immigrants who were born in the Philippines landed in Alberta. One of the more interesting things is that for immigrants from the Philippines, 48 per cent landed between 2011 and 2016. For those born in India, 54 per cent arrived after 2006. Whereas 54 per cent of those who came from the United

Kingdom, did so prior to 1981. It appears that some of Alberta’s largest groups of new residents have only arrived in the last decade.

Implications

It is important to know the characteristics and structure of a population of a chosen market as those factors will have impact on market demand and purchases. The make-up of household will influence not only product choice but also package size. Households that are comprised of couples with children will need “family size” packages compared to single person households that would lean more towards individual servings. Looking at the 2016 Census, product and package sizing that will serve both these types of households will be needed in Alberta. As women in the workforce are a traditional driver of convenience products, with 70 per cent of Alberta women still working in some capacity, the need for these products convenient offerings will remain. An argument could be made that working seniors could also be a driver of convenient foods.

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New immigrants can bring novel tastes and different demands into a market. From the census data, there appears to be a significant number of Alberta's larger groups of immigrants that have come in a recent wave. This could result in innovation in future food products and restaurants as companies respond to these new residents of the province.

These are only a couple of insights about the Alberta population and its impact on the market that can be derived from the 2016 Census. Depending on the data, the census does allow one to gain insight at a city and municipality level. Information that can define the basic characteristics of a selected geographic target market for any company. It is the very first step in getting to know the consumer.



References

Statistics Canada

- ◆ 2016 Census : <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm?HPA=1>
- ◆ 2006 Census: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/index-eng.cfm>

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