Older, lower-middle-income town couples and singles

Who They Are

Older folks gravitate to the relaxed lifestyle of Old Town Roads, a collection of small towns across Canada where more than a third of maintainers are over 65. Unlike more upscale retirement communities, these rustic towns are home to downscale seniors who are aging in place. Households here contain a mix of older singles, empty-nesting couples and widowed individuals. Most own older, inexpensive homes, though a significant percentage rent a low-rise apartment or live in a mobile home; the average dwelling value is less than half the national average. Education traditionally hasn't been a top priority for Old Town Roads members—less than 15 percent have gone to a university—and those still in the workforce earn lower incomes from jobs in manufacturing, farming, services and the trades. These third-plus-generation Canadians enjoy time-honoured and outdoor-oriented leisure pursuits like fishing, hunting and gardening, though they'll also attend craft shows and auto racing events. Even though pensions and government transfers improve the financial picture here, these townsfolk keep close tabs on their wallet: their top-ranked value is Financial Concern Regarding the Future.

Their far-flung communities may lack cultural amenities, but Old Town Roads residents are willing to drive to the city to see a comedy movie, community theatre show or nightclub act. With few shops or restaurants along their Main Streets, they'll stock up at major stores like Giant Tiger, Shoppers Drug Mart and Walmart then hit Home Hardware and Canadian Tire for their many DIY projects. They're less interested in travelling abroad, vacationing mostly in Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces. Old Town Roads is a “Buy Canadian” segment, where members drive domestic vehicles—especially large pickups, midsize sedans and compact SUVs—invest in Canada savings bonds and drink domestic wine and whisky. As for media, they're mostly traditionalists, enjoying curling, hockey, auto racing and figure skating on TV and radio stations that play oldies, classic rock, gospel and country music. Though few read daily newspapers, they like community papers and magazines like Canadian Geographic, Live Better and Our Canada. Light Internet users, they'll go online to play games, clip coupons and read e-books.

How They Think

In their small-town communities with bucolic surroundings, the members of Old Town Roads seek a more authentic way of life that shields them from the vagaries of the modern world (Attraction to Nature, Aversion to Complexity). They enjoy the disorder of rural living and have little use for formality or hifalutin manners (Rejection of Orderliness). Like other rural households, they tend to be conservative in their social views, maintaining that too much immigration threatens society (Xenophobia) and believing that immigrants should give up their cultural identities in their new country (Cultural Assimilation). In their homes, the father still rules the roost and unconventional definitions of family have no place (Patriarchy, Traditional Families). In the marketplace, they are ambivalent towards brand names and choose products for their functionality rather than their aesthetics (Brand Apathy, Utilitarian Consumerism). And though they're committed to Saving on Principle for a more secure financial future, they admit to sometimes Buying on Impulse, especially products from companies that they perceive to be good corporate citizens (Ethical Consumerism).
Where They Live

How They Live

LEISURE
- fishing/hunting
- country music concerts
- ATV/snowmobiling
- community theatres

SHOPPING
- Giant Tiger
- Walmart
- Canadian Tire
- Real Canadian/Atlantic Superstore

TRADITIONAL MEDIA
- TV curling
- Investigation Discovery
- oldies radio
- community newspapers

INTERNET
- read magazine or newspaper on computer
- weather sites
- auction sites
- eBay

FOOD/DRINK
- cheddar cheese
- frozen vegetables
- light beer
- casual family restaurants

FINANCIAL
- GICs
- RRIFs
- private disability/health insurance
- financial planners

AUTOMOTIVE
- domestic large pickups
- domestic intermediate cars
- $30,000-$49,999 spent on vehicle
- one vehicle

SOCIAL
- Facebook
- access social media via computer
- video/photo sharing on social media

HEALTH
- Visit an ER because primary care provider was unavailable

MOBILE
- health content on phone
- view store flyers using tablet
- post photos to Facebook on phone
- research products on tablet

ATTITUDES
- “It is important that the country should hold a strong position in the world”
- “In a household where both partners are working, it is not right for the wife to earn more than the husband”
- “Life in the country is much more satisfying than life in the city”
- “New technologies are causing more problems than they are solving”