



Matthew T Grant, PhD, works for Aquent, a global staffing firm specialising in marketing, communications and creative talent. Bearing the title, 'Minister of Enlightenment', Matthew serves as director of New Media Marketing producing e-newsletters, blogs and podcasts. Matt can be contacted via [mgrant@aquent.com](mailto:mgrant@aquent.com).

# GOING GLOBAL



HAVE YOU WORKED IN CANADA? WHAT'S YOUR EXPERIENCE?  
[marketingmag.com.au/magazine](http://marketingmag.com.au/magazine)

## Marketing the maple leaf.

This month **Matthew T Grant** takes you through the pros and cons of a move to Canada's marketing industry.

As home to many well-known brands and source of influential creative work, the US is a natural destination for Australian marketers and designers interested in seeking new career opportunities. Since the process of getting permission to work in the US can be complicated and time-consuming, however, those seeking overseas experience frequently set their sights further north and choose to spend some time working in Canada.

One thing that makes Canada attractive and accessible to Australians is the country's Work Holiday Program. Under this program (in which participation used to be, but is no longer, restricted by a quota) eligible Australians between the ages of 18 and 31 can work in Canada for up to two years. One benefit of going this route is that the program does not require that you have work lined up before you head over.

Of course, if you fall outside the age range, or were planning to stay and work in Canada

for a longer period of time, you may have to apply for a more traditional work permit. To get all the details on working in Canada, I suggest that you consult the following website, conveniently named 'Working in Canada': <http://workingincanada.gc.ca>.

At a glance, median salaries for various marketing specialities in Canada look like this:

Speciality	1-4 years experience	5-9 years experience	10-19 years experience
marcom manager	\$47K	\$57K	\$67K
product manager	\$55K	\$69K	\$75K
marketing manager	\$49K	\$59K	\$68K
junior designer	\$34K	\$40K	\$47K
senior designer	\$40K	\$48K	\$50K
account executive	\$40K	\$50K	\$58
web designer/ developer	\$40K	\$45	\$50K

(data taken from <http://www.payscale.com/index/CA/Job/>; figures in Canadian dollars)

While the marketing environments in Australia and Canada are comparable, indeed, "The

similarities are greater than the differences," as one expat put it, there are some unique aspects of marketing in Canada that should be noted. According to Nathan Rosenberg, a native Australian who serves as CMO of Virgin Mobile, Canada, one interesting challenge is "dealing with mandatory bilingual communications". As he explains, "There are cultural idiosyncrasies between English Canadians as compared to French Canadians, and getting on top of this can guarantee success nationally."

Another difference that Rosenberg highlights is the fragmentation in the media that one will encounter in Canada. With "broadband rates that make Australian High Speed look like dial-up", the media landscape has created a high demand for people with digital marketing expertise.

Proximity to the US creates its own challenges. "So much US media is consumed in Canada," Rosenberg says, "and [because] customers are exposed to products, services and pricing from the US [they] will often use it as a benchmark when shopping." In other words, marketers working for Canadian brands will not only have to compete with US brands directly, they will also be competing against the perception of these brands in the minds of Canadian consumers.

On the other hand, this means that there are also opportunities in Canada to work on US brands, though, as Rosenberg advises, "If you work for a US company you may have less control than you are used to, as many marketing functions [here] are just execution vehicles for their US offices."

The peculiar brand environment in Canada means that hiring managers, in both the marketing and design space, are very interested in the brand-specific experience of job candidates. "Make sure you have a lot of brand information on your CV," recommends Romy



“With broadband rates that make Australian High Speed look like dial-up, the media landscape has created a high demand for people with digital marketing expertise.”

Pearse, a designer who has worked in both the marketing and film industries in Toronto.

Pearse was told by an employment agency to revise her CV to fit the Canadian market. “My CV initially focused on the type of work I had done – annual reports, ads, etc. – and I was told to redo it to emphasise the brands I had worked on, particularly brands that Canadians would recognise. Luckily, I had a couple since, unfortunately, we have a lot of brands in Australia that are not well-known here.”

The manager of Aquent’s office in Toronto, Julie Robinson, concurs. “Ideally, candidates will have Canada-specific brand experience. And though it might seem kind of a paradox, we’ve found that, especially in marketing, there is a strong preference for hiring people who have worked in Canada already, even if they come from elsewhere.”

In general, Australian marketers who do end up finding work in Canada will notice a few subtle differences in the work environment that may require some adjustment. “The workplace is taken very seriously here,” says Pearse. “It feels more pressurised and intense, not as laidback.”

Designer Nigel Harvey has a slightly different take on the Canadian workplace. “Canada’s culture is very similar to Australia’s in lots of ways, but people in Canada have a much healthier work ethic and are highly appreciative of people that get a job done right and on time.”

In addition to differences in the atmosphere at work, many of the expats I speak with point to some practical differences, especially when it comes to leave and holidays. Whereas four weeks annual leave can be standard in Australia, “You’re lucky to get three in Canada,” as one person says, and two weeks per year is not uncommon. Furthermore, annual leave is not cumulative and



does not carry over into the next year, as is the practice in Australia. The same goes for sick leave.

Finally, aside from the need to know French, especially when seeking work in the province of Quebec (Montreal, located in Quebec, is Canada’s second largest city, about the size of Melbourne), there are differences in communication style that Australians should be aware of.

“Aussies are much more direct than a lot of Canadians,” states Virgin Mobile’s Rosenberg, “so you have to be conscious of the way you interact with colleagues.” Harvey elaborates, “Canadians are always respectful and polite, accepting and forgiving. This means, though, if you ask a question, expect the answer you want to hear, rather than what the person really thinks.”

In the end, if you are considering working in Canada, you could do worse than heed

the advice of those who have gone before you. Although not necessary for the Work Holiday Program, Jackie Cooksey, currently working in Montreal, says, “I wish I had had something lined up before I came here. I’ve been quite lucky, but here as elsewhere, this industry can be a hard one to crack into. Try to make as many contacts before you arrive as you can.”

As challenging as it can be, Cooksey still encourages people to try it out. “You’ve got to give it a go to know!” Similarly, Harvey says, “Go and check it out while you have the opportunity. A working holiday in another country is a great experience and I highly recommend it.” He adds, “Be sure to put your paper waste in the appropriate recyclable bins – Canadians love it!”

Perhaps the most important advice Australians pondering a move to the Great White North should bear in mind comes from Nigel Rosenberg, “Bring warm clothes.” **M**