

## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **Sir Richard Branson to be featured guest speaker at Canada's inaugural Advertising Week**

International icon to inspire influential business audience and help launch  
the careers of some highly-talented advertising students

Toronto, ON – Today, the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) announced that Sir Richard Branson, the world-renowned entrepreneur revered for his marketing genius and incredible business success, will be celebrating this country's first-ever Advertising Week (January 26-30, 2009) with Canadians. He will be a featured guest speaker at a special business luncheon on January 28, 2008.

"Advertising Week is a celebration of both the industry's exemplary creativity and its \$24 billion contribution to the economy," said Brett Marchand, Chairman of the ICA. "That's why it couldn't be more fitting than to highlight the week with Sir Richard Branson's presence – his marketing savvy has turned the Virgin Group into one of the world's most valuable and recognized brands."

Branson will be the special guest speaker at the Financial and Communications Industry Luncheon on January 28, 2009 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. being held at the Toronto Film Studios. Generously sponsored by the Torstar Group, this will be a major event for Toronto's business and communications community, attracting a highly influential audience. Corporate and VIP tables, and individual tickets are available for purchase now at: [www.advertisingweek.ca](http://www.advertisingweek.ca). Proceeds from the luncheon will help support Virgin Mobile's RE\*Generation campaign – a grassroots initiative, to help support at-risk youth in Canada and around the world, supported by Richard Branson's not-for-profit entrepreneurial foundation, Virgin Unite.

Aspiring young advertising students will also have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity during Branson's visit to jumpstart their careers, and see their creative campaign used to raise awareness for Virgin Mobile's RE\*Generation campaign..

The ICA has designated Wednesday January 28, 2009 as "Youth Day" within Advertising Week, and the day is geared towards inspiring Canada's best and brightest young talent. This day will introduce new graduates and industry hopefuls to both young and young-at-heart professionals currently working in the industry. It will create meaningful, professional mentorship opportunities with leading advertising agencies and will support a great, local cause in the process.

An open call for student registrations has been launched by the ICA on [www.advertisingweek.ca](http://www.advertisingweek.ca). Up to 150 students will have the opportunity to participate in the project for Virgin Mobile's RE\*Generation, developing original creative campaigns in groups, that will be judged by Virgin Unite. Students will be mentored by teams from leading communication firms including: DDB, Cossette, Bos, Quiller and Blake, Grey Canada, Ogilvy & Mather, Starcom MediaVest Group, Leo Burnett, TBWA, Publicis, Agency 59, Lowe Roche, Bensimon Byrne, BBDO, Due North Communications and Cundari Group. One winning team will get to see their creative campaign developed and launched nationally in 2009, thanks to a generous donation from Astral Media.

"Positive impacts, no matter how big or small can collectively change the world. That's what Virgin Mobile's RE\*Generation is all about," said Sir Richard Branson. "I am passionately committed to inspiring both businesses and our youth to become a force for good, and it's great to see the Canadian advertising industry rally around the cause against youth homelessness during Advertising Week."

Advertising Week will be celebrated simultaneously across Canada in Halifax, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. The week will be comprised of seminars, workshops, and educational sessions featuring leading Canadian and international industry professionals who will explore the dynamic world of advertising and marketing communications. Also scheduled during the week are two industry awards ceremonies including the CASSIES and the Canadian Marketing Hall of Legends.

The Canadian advertising industry generates \$24 billion for the economy, provides \$1.5 billion for programming, and donates \$500 million in pro-bono work each year. Advertising Week will serve as a platform for the industry to celebrate these contributions with the public. Canadians will get a rare glimpse into the advertising business as the industry opens its doors to the public during that week. Similar events have been organized – and are growing each year – in the United States and in France.

Advertising Week is made possible by the generous volunteer contributions of several leading agencies who are 'Founding Partners', including: DDB Canada (public relations services), Publicis (Youth Day events), Cossette Communications (communications services and leadership of the luncheon for the financial community), Bos (graphic and web design, advertising, interactive and guerilla marketing services), Marketel (public service announcements), and PHD Canada (media buying services).

Advertising Week is being spearheaded by the ICA with support from the following "Founding Contributors": Association of Canadian Advertisers, Advertising Standards Canada, Canadian Marketing Association, Canadian Newspaper Association, Canadian Community Newspapers Association, Association Marketing de Montreal/PCM, National Advertising Benevolent Society, Radio Marketing Bureau, Association of Quebec Advertising Agencies, Interactive Advertising Bureau of Canada, Out-of-Home Marketing Association of Canada, Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, and Canadian Media Directors' Council.

Key media sponsors of Advertising Week include: Corus Entertainment, CTV, Canwest, CBC and Torstar. *Marketing Magazine* is a silver sponsor. Additional bronze sponsors include: Leger Marketing, *The Globe and Mail*, Puma, Transcontinental PLM, Yahoo! Canada, Colour Innovations, Pollination, Cinélande, 4WS, Studio Apollo, Sonart, AICE and Stealing Time. Several other media sponsorships are pending.

### **About Advertising Week**

Canada's inaugural Advertising Week ([www.advertisingweek.ca](http://www.advertisingweek.ca)) is taking place from January 26 to 30, 2009. The week is designed to celebrate the advertising industry's social and economic impact to the Canadian landscape, create a dedicated public platform to showcase the industry's creativity in business communication, and to inspire and develop the next generation of talent for this industry.

### **About the ICA**

The Institute of Communication Agencies or the ICA ([www.icacanada.ca](http://www.icacanada.ca)) is the professional business association which represents Canada's communication and advertising agencies. ICA promotes thought leadership, higher standards and best practices. It serves as the largest source of information, advice, education and training for Canada's communication and advertising industry. ICA's member agencies and subsidiaries account for over 75 per cent of all national advertising in Canada, with an economic impact worth more than \$18 billion annually.